



Wimbledon and Putney Commons

Media Statement July 2021

WPCC Committees and Forums

Following the March 2021 triennial elections, the newly constituted Board has now approved the appointment of Conservators to serve on the committees and forums as follows:

Finance and Investment Committee – Nigel Ware (Chairman), David Hince and Diane Neil Mills

Audit and Risk Committee - Mike Rappolt (Chairman), Michael Johnston and Peter Hirsch

Constitution Committee – Diane Neil Mills (Chairman), Sue Bucknall, David Hince, Nigel Ware

Friends' Committee - Sue Bucknall (Chairman), David Hince and Diane Neil Mills

Wildlife and Conservation Forum - Oliver Bennett (Chairman) and Michael Johnston

In addition, the Board agreed to co-opt the following individuals to support the committees:

Audit and Risk Committee – Sarah Wilton

Friends' Committee – Sarah-Jane Holden, Belinda Leathes and Syeda Zainab

Constitution Committee – George Laurence QC and Francesca Quint

Public Open Meetings

In an effort to further promote openness and transparency, the newly constituted Board has agreed to hold meetings of the Board in public wherever possible. As such, from 1 October 2021 members of the public will be welcome to attend the non-confidential part of Board meetings and to ask questions on matters being considered. At the conclusion of the non-confidential part of these meetings, Conservators will consider all remaining matters that are deemed to be confidential in nature and members of the public will not be allowed to attend this part of the meetings.

Given the confidential nature of the matters discussed in WPCC's committee meetings, these meetings will not be held in public.

All levy-payers and members of the public are welcome to attend the non-confidential part of Board meetings and both the agenda and accompanying papers will be published on the Conservators' website and at the Ranger's Office at least three days before the meeting. Details of the location will also be advised at the time.

The policy governing public access to meetings that has been agreed by the Conservators is available [here](#).

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Ministry of Defence Appointed Conservator Vacancy

The Conservators are working with the Ministry of Defence to recruit for the role of a Conservator to be appointed by the Secretary of State for Defence. The selection process has now been agreed and the advertisement for the role was published on 12 July 2021. Applicants must be able to demonstrate military experience and/or a connection to the MoD and ideally have experience of being part of a multi-disciplinary Board of Trustees. Candidates would be expected to have the requisite drive and enthusiasm necessary for the role; an appropriate balance of skills to complement experience within the existing Board would also be welcome.

A copy of the Application Pack can be found here: [MoD Conservator Application Pack](#).

Conservation Reports

Annual Conservation Report - WPCC's Conservation and Engagement Officer, Peter Haldane, has produced the Annual Conservation Report, which provides a comprehensive summary of the conservation, volunteering and public engagement activities that have taken place on the Commons from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The Report provides a fascinating insight into the day-to-day life of the Commons and the work that goes into maintaining them as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation and as a safe place for both visitors and wildlife. The Annual Conservation Report can be found [here](#).

Ecological and Environment Monitoring Report 2020 - The Wildlife and Conservation Forum, through the joint efforts of WPCC's dedicated wildlife monitoring volunteers and its staff, has produced its seventh consecutive Ecological and Environment Monitoring Report. This is the final report produced by Dr Ros Taylor before her recent retirement as the DEFRA-appointed Conservator and provides detailed information on the recording of the flora and fauna of the Commons. This information is particularly relevant given the increased pressure on the Commons over the last year. The Ecological and Environmental Monitoring Report 2020 can be found [here](#).

First Tier Tribunal

The First-tier Tribunal hearing regarding a request under Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) for information relating to Mill House was held on 15 March 2021. The decision notice was published on 21 May 2021. The judge upheld the Information Commissioner's (and WPCC's) decision that the information did not constitute 'Environmental Information' and dismissed the appeal. A copy of the Decision Notice may be found [here](#).

Friends' Events – Postponement

The Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons had hoped that the lifting of restrictions on 19 July 2021 would allow the long-planned series of celebratory events for the 150th anniversary of the founding of Wimbledon and Putney Commons to finally go ahead. Unfortunately, the ongoing developments with the pandemic and the implications for both visitors and staff have put at risk the holding of large public events on the Commons.

Games Day –15 August 2021 - It is therefore with great regret that the Conservators have taken the difficult decision to postpone the Games Day that was planned for Sunday 15 August 2021, the eve of the date on which the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act received Royal Assent in 1871. In taking this decision, the Conservators recognise the considerable thought, time and planning contributed by all those organising the events and wish to express their sincere gratitude for the enormous contribution of so many. Needless to say, this important year has not unfolded as had been originally anticipated and we only hope that conditions allow us to properly hold these celebrations when times are better.

Reception at Palace of Westminster – 28 October 2021 - The Conservators have also regrettably agreed to postpone the evening reception on the Terrace Pavilion of the Palace of Westminster that was scheduled for 28 October 2021. A significant part of the evening's programme was a tour of the Houses of Parliament and unfortunately these tours have been cancelled until early 2022. It is hoped that a new date for the reception will be arranged that will allow the tours to be a part of the evening.

Early 2022 – It is still hoped that the afternoon tea at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, with a performance by the Wimbledon Civic Theatre Trust of a specially commissioned play on the history of the formation of the Commons, will be able to proceed. Further information will be available closer to the date.

Commons Open Day

The ongoing issues with the pandemic have also taken their toll on this year's Commons' Open Day and the decision has been taken to cancel the event for 2021. We hope that 2022 will find us in a position to come back with a bigger and better event.

Business Planning

At the Board Meeting of 12 July 2021, the Conservators agreed the charity's draft Business Plan for the three-year period from 2021 to 2024 subject to certain amendments. The final version of the Business Plan will be brought back to the Board in October 2021 for agreement. In the meantime, work will continue on the priority initiatives. The report sets out the achievements delivered over the course of the past year and the priorities for the future including constitution reform, ecological projects and improvements in infrastructure. A summary of the progress on key initiatives in the Business Plan will be made available on website once finalised.

WPCC Annual Open Meeting

The Conservators' Annual Open Meeting (AOM) was held on 30 June 2021 via Zoom. A total of 52 people attended the meeting at which the charity's annual financial statements were approved. The AOM also included presentations that reviewed the activities of the charity over the past year, WPCC's financial position and the latest developments relating to the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons. Board members and senior staff answered a series of questions from the public. The draft Minutes and a recording of the meeting can be viewed [here](#) and will be available until 8 October 2021.

Governance

The Resolutions of the meetings of the Board of Conservators held on [7 June 2021](#) and [12 July 2021](#) are now published on the Conservators' website.

ENDS

NOTES for Editors - Wimbledon and Putney Commons is a charity managed by the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators (WPCC). It was established under the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act of 1871. The Commons comprise some 1,140 acres across Wimbledon Common, Putney Heath and Putney Lower Common.

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