



Wimbledon and Putney Commons

Media Statement March 2021

Wimbledon and Putney Commons Levy 2021/22

At the Board's 8 February 2021 meeting, it was reported that the three Councils responsible for billing and collecting WPCC's levy (ie, Wandsworth, Merton and Kingston) had determined that the number of Band D equivalent properties within the levy area for the purposes of the 2021/22 levy calculation was 40,714, a decrease of 323 from the previous year. As previously reported in the Media Statement following the Board's 14 December 2020 meeting, the aggregate levy for 2021/22 was set at £1,262,008. On this basis, the levy per Band D property for 2021/22 would be £31.00, an increase of £0.59 (1.7 percent) relative to the rate for 2020/21.

Protection and Restoration of the Commons

The Acting Chief Executive reported that he had met with Natural England to discuss what action, if any, could be taken to protect/restore the Commons, particularly the 80 percent that was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Natural England was not supportive of reseeded with the exception of the golf fairways and also expressed concerns about roping off areas as it may result in more widespread damage. Natural England was however prepared to consider spiking or slitting of some areas to reduce waterlogging and poaching. To progress this, WPCC would need to make a formal application for consent on an area-by-area basis. Reseeding of the fairways has been taking place over recent weeks and we hope that these areas will begin to recover from the heavy footfall.

Information Requests

In its May 2020 Media Release, the Board reported that the Information Commissioner's Office had issued a Decision Notice dated 12 May 2020 supporting WPCC's position in relation to a request for information from a levy-payer under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. This related to an exchange of use of land between WPCC and the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club, that had been agreed in 1979, enabling the Conservators serving at the time to build a maintenance centre.

WPCC was notified on the 9 June 2020 that the complainant had appealed the Information Commissioner's Decision Notice to the First-tier Tribunal. The First-tier Tribunal was held on 4 February 2021 and a judgment was issued on 12 March 2021, which dismissed the appeal. A copy of the Decision Notice from the First-tier tribunal may be found [here](#). The Board remains hopeful that this judgment will put an end to this matter and allow the organisation to focus on its charitable objectives of protecting and preserving the Commons.

In relation to an earlier information request, in its October 2019 Media Release, the Board reported that the Information Commissioner's Officer had issued a Decision Notice dated 15 October 2019 supporting WPCC's position in relation to a request for information from a levy-payer under the Environmental Regulations 2004 relating to the forced sale of Mill House in 2006. The complainant appealed the Information Commissioner's Decision Notice to the First-tier Tribunal. The First-tier Tribunal was held on 15 March 2021 and a judgment is awaited.

Retiring Conservators

Two of the current elected-Conservators, Mrs Shirley Gillbe and Mrs Sarah-Jane Holden, decided not to stand for re-election in WPCC's 2021 election. At the meeting of 8 February 2021, the Conservators recorded their enormous gratitude to both Conservators for their commitment to the Commons during their terms of office, which will officially end on 7 April 2021.

Mrs Gillbe has served for six years and has provided valuable input to the Constitution Working Group, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Wildlife and Conservation Forum. During her first term Mrs Gillbe had also served as Vice-Chairman. Her contribution across a wide and diverse range of areas was recognised, particularly in relation to ensuring that views of Putney residents were considered in decision making by the Board.

Mrs Holden has served for three years and had been instrumental in the formation of the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons and had also provided valuable contributions to both the Golf Club Working Group and to the Wildlife and Conservation Forum.

The Board wished them both well in their future endeavours.

Governance

The Resolutions of the meetings of the Board of Conservators held on [8 February 2021](#) and [19 March 2021](#) have been posted on the Wimbledon and Putney Commons 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.

Contact: Stephen Bound, Acting Chief Executive
Tel: 020 8788 7655, E-mail: rangersoffice@wpcc.org.uk website: www.wpcc.org.uk

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