



Wimbledon and Putney Commons

Media Release November 2020

Triennial Election

Five of the eight Conservators (Trustees) of Wimbledon and Putney Commons are directly elected every three years, with the last election being held in 2018. At their meeting in October the Board agreed that the closing date for the receipt of completed ballot papers for the 2021 elections would be Wednesday 10 March 2021. All those on the electoral register who live within three-quarters of a mile of Wimbledon Common or in the old parish of Putney are eligible to vote. Ballot papers will automatically be distributed to eligible voters by the appointed election scrutineer, Civica Election Services Limited; votes may be cast via post or online.

Following the 2018 elections, the Returning Officer recommended that clear written guidelines for management of the election should be produced to assist the Returning Officer, prospective candidates and incumbent conservators. These guidelines have now been completed and approved by the Board. They can be downloaded [here](#).

Anyone interested in standing as a Conservator in the election will be able to find details on eligibility and the election process, along with critical dates, on the Conservators' [website](#) from 9 November 2020.

General Open Meeting

At their meeting in October, the Board agreed to hold their General Open Meeting by means of a Zoom Webinar on Wednesday 2 December 2020. In contrast to the more formal Annual Open Meeting held in July, the General Open Meeting will provide an opportunity to update levy payers and other interested parties on operational activities on the Commons. Further details of the programme and registration details will be available on the Conservators' [website](#) by 18 November 2020.

Volunteering on the Commons

With the onset of COVID-19 in March, all formal volunteering on the Commons came to an abrupt halt. As lockdown eased, many local residents offered their help in dealing with the volume of litter created by the many additional visitors to the Commons, and the Conservators remain enormously indebted to the many volunteers who continue to help.

We have been receiving a number of enquiries in relation to when volunteer work parties will be starting again. It had been hoped to recommence volunteering in November and a session for our weekend 'scrub bashers' was trialed on Sunday 1 November, in order to assess the ability for volunteers to operate in a safe, socially distanced manner. Whilst this was successful, the government's announcement of a second lockdown means that these plans will be put on hold. We hope to welcome our much-valued volunteers back onto the Commons when lockdown ends. Their work is incredibly important in maintaining the important heathland habitats found on the Commons.

New Path along Beverley Brook, Wimbledon Common

Following on from the work to restore the river habitats along the Beverley Brook where it flows through Wimbledon Common, WPCC has now completed an £80,000 project to provide a surfaced route along the Brook between the Pavilion at the Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields and the Brook Cottage Bridge. Regular users of this route will know that the path became extremely muddy and difficult to negotiate during the winter months. The new route, which is suitable for pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchairs and pushchairs etc., will be useable all year round.

The path has already begun to blend in with its surroundings and its appearance will continue to soften as the vegetation at the sides of the path grows back.

The Conservators are extremely grateful to the Southern Western Railway's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund for their grant of £60,000 and to the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons who generously contributed the remaining £20,000 from funds raised during its first year of operation.



Governance

The Resolutions of the meeting of the Board of Conservators held on 12 October 2020 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.

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Issued November 2020