

# THE COMMONS NEWS



Wimbledon  
and Putney  
Commons

Wimbledon Common Putney Heath Putney Lower Common

Summer 2021



## 150th Anniversary Edition



# Chairman's Welcome

The 16 August 2021 marks 150 years since the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act received Royal Assent and this important milestone is indeed a cause for celebration. Following hard on the heels of the most stringent restriction of freedoms any of us has ever experienced, we are all acutely grateful for the unstinting efforts of the staff who manage this special open space that has been a source of solace, sanctuary and inspiration to so many of us over the past months.



It is also a moment when we should pause and record our appreciation to the individuals who had the vision and foresight in 1871 to recognise that open space was at least as important to the well-being of the population as homes and transportation. We are all beneficiaries of their efforts and we should be reflecting not only on the great physical legacy that they created but also on their determination and courage to defy convention and challenge what must have appeared to have been an inevitable outcome.

Through their efforts, they not only defeated Earl Spencer's seemingly innocuous Bill to enclose a portion of the Commons, but they galvanised support for the establishment of Wimbledon and Putney Commons under a separate Act of Parliament, and in doing so, created an independent organisation defined by a unique model of governance and funded by a local levy. And it is this independence that has been so fundamental in preserving the character and culture that make this resource so unique. In the words of its founder, Sir Henry Peek, 'Wimbledon and Putney Commons had no parallel in the United Kingdom'.

The pandemic has not only highlighted the importance of this unique resource but also its fragility and the need to think about the way in which the Commons are managed. Recognition of this fact has played an important role in furthering the development of our Masterplan, which will provide a long-term vision for both the natural and built landscapes of the Commons.

As the nation takes its first tentative steps towards a return to normality, we will continue our focus on developing this framework and, as part of that process, allow the ideas to be tested through public consultation. Delivery of the Masterplan will however only be possible with the funding necessary to support the initiatives and we have agreed to bolster our fundraising efforts for that purpose. As we have previously stated, we are also considering a reform of the levy though despite any increase, there will always be a need for fundraising to support capital projects. Constitutional reform will also be required to provide the legal certainty necessary to underpin certain investments and our collective resolve to progress this initiative remains undiminished.

At the end of 2020, we announced with deep regret the decision of Simon Lee to retire as Chief Executive, having provided outstanding leadership for the Commons throughout the course of his six-year tenure. There is no question that his dedication to the Commons furthered the sense of loyalty and selflessness that defines the organisation. We are immensely indebted to Simon and the entire staff team for their relentless effort in providing what has rightly been recognised as an essential service. To lead the

organisation through the next period of the Commons' history, we are delighted to have appointed Stephen Bound as Chief Executive. Since joining WPCC in January 2016 as Chief Operations Manager, Stephen has assumed responsibility for the day to day operations of the Commons, a role that has been particularly critical over the past 15 months as the Commons proved to be a lifeline for the community. We are indebted to him and congratulate Stephen on his appointment.

I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to all of those who have given freely of themselves to support the Commons through volunteering, membership of a committee or in another capacity. Some are well known to us whilst others remain anonymous but all are motivated by nothing more than a love of nature and a sense of community and I am grateful to everyone for their support and their guidance. We are also enormously indebted to those who have supported us financially either in aid of a specific project or more generally, including membership of the Friends. The generosity of all our donors and the public goodwill it represents is humbling and we value each and every contribution.

In closing, I hope that we will take this opportunity of the 150th anniversary to celebrate the cherished open space that we are so fortunate to have on our doorstep. At the same time, I encourage all of us to take to heart the legacy that Henry Peek and others bestowed upon us, of vision, foresight and sense of purpose to ensure this precious resource remains with us forever.

*Thank you*

## Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators

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### Trustees:

Diane Neil Mills - Chairman, Elected  
Sue Bucknall - Elected  
David Hince - Elected  
Peter Hirsch - Elected  
Michael Johnston - Elected  
Mike Rappolt - Appointed, MoD  
Oliver Bennett MBE - Appointed, Defra  
Nigel Ware - Appointed, Home Office

### Officers:

Stephen Bound, Chief Executive  
Paula Graystone, Deputy Clerk & Ranger  
Peter Haldane, Conservation &  
Engagement Officer  
Angela Evans-Hill, Executive Assistant &  
Communications Officer

### Find us on Social Media:

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## Conservators' Annual Open Meeting 8pm, 30 June 2021

In accordance with the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act 1871, the Annual Open Meeting of the Conservators at which the Annual Report and Accounts are presented to levy-payers will be held on **Wednesday 30 June 2021**.

With the risks inherent in holding a large indoor meeting so soon after the proposed ending of the legal limits on social contact (21 June 2021), the meeting will again be held by means of a Zoom Webinar.

Details on how to register to attend the meeting can be found on our website: [wpcc.org.uk/AOM21](http://wpcc.org.uk/AOM21)

The accounts and Trustees Annual Report will also be available on the website.

# Meet the Conservators

March 2021 saw the most recent triennial elections for the five elected Conservator positions on the Board of Trustees that provide the governance for Wimbledon and Putney Commons. Twelve very able candidates stood for election and levy-payers re-elected the three incumbent Conservators: David Hince, Peter Hirsch and Diane Neil Mills; and elected Sue Bucknall and Michael Johnston as new Conservators. Conservators Shirley Gillbe and Sarah-Jane Holden decided not to re-stand after serving six years and three years respectively, and we would like to record our gratitude to them for their contribution to the Commons. We also thank Dr Ros Taylor, who served as the DEFRA appointed Conservator for eight years and retired at the end of 2020. That role has now been taken up by Oliver Bennett MBE. Nigel Ware was reappointed as the Home Office Appointed Conservator in March 2021 and Mike Rappolt remains the Ministry of Defence Appointed Conservator.



## The Commons welcomes a new Chief Executive

The Commons said farewell to its Chief Executive of six years at the end of December 2020 when Simon Lee took early retirement.

Chairman of WPCC, Diane Neil Mills, commented "Simon was instrumental in developing an ambitious long-term vision for the Commons, included setting in motion the development of a masterplan and successfully securing external funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support this major initiative. The inspiration and sense of purpose that Simon brought to the organisation was critical in allowing it to move forward despite the challenges inherent in working in an environment of limited resources. Simon will be deeply missed and we wish him well in the future."

In May this year, the Conservators were delighted to announce that Stephen

Bound had been appointed Chief Executive with effect from 1 June 2021. Stephen joined the Commons in 2016 as Chief Operations Manager, and had been Acting Chief Executive since January.

Diane Neil Mills said, "On behalf of the Conservators, I congratulate Stephen on his appointment, which carries the unanimous support of the Board. I would also like to reiterate our appreciation to Stephen for the commitment that he has made to WPCC since he joined us and over the past few months in particular. I personally look forward to working with him in the future".

Following his appointment, Stephen commented "I look forward to working with the Conservators and the dedicated staff who manage the Commons day to day. My focus will very much be on the conservation of this important natural habitat, with an emphasis on ensuring that the Commons are able to recover from the increased visitor numbers and sustain longer-term environmental change whilst remaining welcoming to all the visitors who want to enjoy this open space for exercise and relaxation".



### Sign up for our E-Newsletter

If you'd like to stay up to date with our latest nature news, or be the first to hear about events taking place on the Commons, do please sign up to our e-newsletter. Sent out every six weeks or so, it is a great way to keep in touch and has lots of information on what to look out for on the Commons and also our latest conservation works.

Sign up on our website  
[www.wpcc.org.uk](http://www.wpcc.org.uk)



# A Year of COVID-19

In our 2020 Newsletter we commented, with a feeling of optimism, that a “new sense of normality is slowly returning”.....twelve months later and still “normal” has not returned. Not unsurprisingly, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the Commons.

With travel restricted, the Commons became a focal point for the local community and demonstrated their value to the mental and physical well-being of local residents. The downside of such a considerable rise in visitor numbers, has been the additional pressure on the infrastructure of the Commons, and our paths and open areas, as well as the sensitive habitats such as the heathland, have suffered.

Most visibly, the increase in the amount of rubbish and litter being left on the Commons added to the pressure on our staff. We had reason to be even more grateful than usual for the support we received from the local community across the whole of the Commons with a small army of individuals and groups taking it upon themselves to help with litter picking. The benefit of this cannot be overstated and our thanks go out to you all.

Despite this welcome voluntary input, costs for additional bins, skips and rubbish removal, as well as additional cleaning to ensure our public toilets remained sanitised for use, rose by over £70,000. All of the organised activities and events which would normally take place on the Commons were cancelled, which had an unavoidable impact on WPCC's income. Grassroots football and rugby came to a halt and the Rosslyn Park Schools Rugby Sevens tournament was cancelled for the second year running. Golf was played only sporadically and the weekly running races and the weekly parkrun disappeared. The touring circuses and funfairs, which have been part of life on the Commons for over a century, were unable to visit. Of the major events which normally form part of our annual calendar, only Wimbledon Bookfest was able to go ahead, albeit on a much-reduced scale.

The lockdown also meant that other than the litter-pickers, nearly all other volunteering activities came to a halt. The most noticeable result of this can be seen on Putney Heath with the growth of the scrub, normally kept at bay by the volunteer “Scrub-bashers”. Equally important was the drop in the amount of wildlife recording that took place, with many of our volunteer recorders unable to visit the Commons, or reluctant to do so



given the increase in the number of visitors. Again we are grateful to those who were able to carry on recording as part of the “daily exercise”, and the results of their activities can be seen in both the 2020 Bird Report and the 2020 Ecological and Environmental Monitoring Report - both available on our website.

From May 2021, smaller events have started to be re-introduced and volunteers will hopefully be returning very soon. Thought is also being given to how best we can restore the damaged areas of the Commons and allow it to recover, whilst still providing that vital open space for all our visitors.





## Mounted Keepers

Our Mounted Keepers can be seen out patrolling the Commons on horseback seven days a week, providing a friendly and reassuring face to our visitors.

At the heart of the Mounted Keeper's role is their duty to uphold the Commons' Byelaws that are set out in the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act of 1871. As well as being there to help visitors with problems or queries, they are also a visible presence to prevent crime and reassure our visitors that the Commons are safe to be enjoyed.

Alongside the public face of their role, the Keepers often have to face more demanding problems - they are often first on the scene of life-threatening medical emergencies, assist police in apprehending criminals and often have to deal with people who are incapacitated through alcohol and/or drugs. Dealing with conflict resolution from the back of a horse requires considerable skill and trying to record evidence with pen and paper can prove challenging in such a situation, particularly as the Keepers' primary objective is to ensure that everyone in the situation is

safe. Our Head Keeper, Richard Thompson, has therefore been looking into the use of body worn cameras, as used by the police and many other enforcement or security teams. Following a successful trial, the cameras were introduced in April this year.

Using body worn cameras gives an accurate, indisputable record of an incident whilst enabling the Keepers to fully concentrate on controlling the situation and the horse safely. Richard commented "We can see a great benefit in using these cameras, for both visitors and our staff. As we are keen to ensure that we maintain public confidence, the protocols governing the use of cameras will be very strict and the cameras would only be activated if they were required to gather evidence or record an incident. The Keepers will always advise a visitor when they are going to turn the camera on".

## Join the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons

The Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons was established to bring together all of those who are connected by a passion for the Commons, for the purposes of collective celebration and fund raising.

**Why Support Us?** Every path, heathland, bog, stream, pond and woodland has an incalculable value that requires ongoing investment. Without skilled conservation officers, mounted keepers and our very committed staff, our unique Commons would not be as they are today: safe, clean and preserved. That is why every contribution and donation made, however small or large, is so important. By becoming a Friend of Wimbledon and Putney Commons, you can play a crucial role in preserving, protecting and maintaining this unique and special place.

Find out more on our website at [wpcc.org.uk/friends](http://wpcc.org.uk/friends)





# As we approach the 150th Anniversary of the formation of the Commons as we know them today, we look back at how the Commons came into being.

What is a Common? Historically, a Common was a large area of wasteland which had never been brought into cultivation, either because it was not needed for a small population or because the soil was poor. In theory, the waste land was owned by the lord of the manor, but over the centuries, his tenants gained certain definite rights "of Common". When and how these rights came into existence is uncertain, but their value to every villager was considerable. Wimbledon and Putney Commons, as they were transferred to the Conservators in 1871, were what remained of the waste of the manor of Wimbledon.

By 1864, very few commoners remained in the Manor of Wimbledon and the Commons became very vulnerable. The then Earl Spencer, Lord of the Manors of Wimbledon and Battersea, followed the example being set across the country and had a bill drafted for submission to Parliament. On 11 November 1864 he called a meeting, at very short notice, of some local residents at the Lecture Hall in Wimbledon, without giving any indication to what the meeting was about.

At the meeting, he explained that the Bill would provide for the enclosure of no less than 700 acres of the Commons as a park, and for the sale of large portions of the remaining 300 acres to compensate him and the surviving commoners and to defray the costs he would incur. The Bill also provided for the building of a "manor house" on the site of the windmill, with two acres for grounds.

The reason he gave for this? "The land was boggy and noxious mists and fogs arose from it and great nuisance was caused by gypsies whose encampments and activities he had insufficient power to control"

Whilst most of those attending were in favour, second thoughts prevailed and as a result, committees were formed in Wimbledon and Putney to watch the progress of the Bill through Parliament. Early in 1865, Lord Spencer's Bill was referred to a committee to enquire into the condition of the Commons and open spaces in the vicinity of London, and the Committee found against Lord Spencer. He withdrew the Bill before it was put before a Select Committee. But the danger had not passed as Lord Spencer still claimed that the Commons were his absolute property and sought to strengthen his position by buying up copyhold properties in order to extinguish the rights of Commons attached to them, and intensified his exploitation of the Commons to increase his revenue.

In March 1866, another meeting of the residents of the parishes adjoining the Common appointed the Wimbledon Common Committee with the object of "the preservation of the whole of Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath unenclosed, for the benefit of the neighbourhood and the public." Its chairman was Henry W Peek.



The Windmill © London Borough of Merton



Rushmere Pond  
© London Borough of Merton

The Rushmere, Wimbledon Common.

In April 1870, Lord Spencer indicated he was willing to come to terms. The negotiations that followed were prolonged and difficult, and included Putney Lower Common for the first time. Terms of settlement were eventually agreed and embodied in a Bill which was deposited on 17 December 1870 and passed by the House of Commons on 22 May 1871. Further difficulties arose when demands came from the War Office for the use of the Commons for military purposes. At length, on 16 August 1871, the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act finally received Royal Assent.

## What were its provisions?

Of course the property had to be paid for. The price agreed was based on the average income received by Lord Spencer during the preceding 10 years, a sum of £1,200 to be paid as a perpetual annuity. For this, Lord Spencer's estate and interest in the whole of the Commons was conveyed to a body of Conservators, whose duty it was to keep the Commons open and unenclosed, protecting the turf, gorse, trees and other natural products. The yearly payment of £1,200 was the first charge on the Commons Fund and in order to provide the money to pay for this annuity, and to cover the cost of keeping, preserving and improving the Commons, the Act empowered the Conservators to levy a charge on the occupiers of properties situated within three-quarters of a mile of Wimbledon Common or Putney Heath (distances to be measured by nearest available road or footpath), and the Parish of Putney. It is by this means that the upkeep of the Commons was funded in 1871, and still is today.

In the mid-1950s, the then Conservators created a Redemption Fund, and after 10 years, succeeded in raising enough money to purchase the annuity.

And so here we are today – the Commons and the Conservators are governed by the same Act of Parliament, and although it has been amended over the years to remove aspects relating the National Rifle Association and to change the way in which the levy is collected, its fundamental core remains. Today, the Conservators are equally bound to keep the Commons “uninclosed and unbuilt on, their natural aspect and state being, as far as may be, preserved”.



## 150th Anniversary Events

A series of special events has been planned to mark and celebrate the 150th anniversary of the date on which the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act 1871 received Royal Assent, and brought the Commons as we know them today into being. We had hoped to have the first of the celebrations in March but the lockdown restrictions unfortunately dictated otherwise. Several of the planned event dates have changed but we are hopeful that restrictions will be sufficiently eased that the events will go ahead.

### Sunday 15 August 2021 - Celebration Games Day

The 1871 Act clearly stated that the Commons were established “for the purposes of recreation and exercise” and in recognition of this aim, the first event of the celebrations, taking place on the eve of the 150th anniversary, will be a celebration of the sports that have been played on the Commons throughout our history - including golf, cricket and running, and hopefully many other sports too. Preparations for the day are in full swing and events are being organised by local clubs and groups:

- Thames Hare and Hounds will hold running race
- Wimbledon Stables will present a riding display and, of course, no event would be complete without the Stables' Shetland pony, Mr Fudge

- Wimbledon Golf Club will be running a putting event
- FIT 8 will run a series of informal Tug of War games
- London Cornish Rugby Club and the Wimbledon Rugby Club will play a series of short demonstration rugby games - with some even in period costume!
- AFC Wimbledon and the Old Thorntonians will do similar, but with football and we hope to welcome Haydon the Womble, AFC Wimbledon's mascot, back to the Commons.
- In addition, there will be Dog Flyball, Cricket, Bowls, Hockey, Stoolball, Cycling and Archery

Many of the events will be demonstrations but there will also be plenty going on that you can take part in. There will be food stalls and a bar, and in the evening there will be a band playing until 8pm. No need to book, just come along and join in the fun!

**28 October 2021 - Evening Reception on the Terrace Pavilion of the Palace of Westminster (to include a tour of the Houses of Parliament);**

**November 2021 - Outdoor Performance on the Commons.**

**28 February 2022 - Afternoon Tea at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club;**

**Details of all the celebration events will be available on our website very soon!**



## Nature Notes

Without doubt the landscape of the Commons has changed significantly over the last 12 months. New paths have been created and existing paths are much wider; whilst many grassy areas have been denuded of anything green.

Despite the pressures, several species are beating the odds to flourish here. The flora and the fauna of the Commons are resilient and with time, and a little helping hand from us, they will recover.



## Birds

The total species count for our bird population in 2020 was 85. Although a lower count than in recent years this was perhaps not surprising with many of our regular bird observers unable or simply refraining from visiting the Commons during lockdown.

There is still a worrying decline in the abundance of some species particularly Meadow Pipit, Wheatears, Swifts and Hirundines such as House and Sand Martins. Whether this is primarily due to lack of insect food is still uncertain but just one record of Snipe and no records of Woodcock in 2020 certainly suggested increased disturbance was a factor. Delightedly, there have been at least six sightings of Woodcock in March 2021, along with brief sightings of a Snipe and a Jack Snipe.

Some species of birds are thriving however, not least the Firecrest, Buzzard and Red Kite and the Commons still happily resound to the song of Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs each year. Kingfisher sightings seem to be increasing on Beverley Brook on Wimbledon Common, hopefully indicating that the work carried out in 2019 is having an effect - especially as there has also been a marked increase in sightings of herons and also a Little Egret. Thankfully, the Swallows have once again returned to breed in our stables. Unusual records for 2020 included Shelduck, Pheasant and Cetti's Warbler.

## Butterflies

With the warm start to the spring in 2020, several butterfly species emerged earlier than usual and with weather conditions remaining exceptionally dry with sunny periods for much of the spring and early summer, the year looked promising. However, the good start did not seem to have resulted in any significant increase in butterfly abundance and in fact the common high summer "brown" species, in particular Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper and Ringlet seem to have suffered.

On a more positive note, 30 butterfly species were seen on the Commons in 2020, compared to 28 in 2019. The two additions to the list were Essex Skipper and Brown Hairstreak. Green Hairstreak, a species which was only discovered on the Commons a few years ago, is expanding its range across Putney Heath.



Essex Skipper  
(Stock Image)



# Paths and Restoration Work

The value of the Commons in providing an opportunity for everyone to exercise and have some relief from four walls as we went into lockdown after lockdown over the last year has been immeasurable. However, the additional footfall, particularly over a very wet winter, has taken its toll on many areas of the Commons with footpaths and grassy areas reduced to mud baths during the wettest part of winter. Around the Windmill Car Park, large areas of ground have been so badly trampled that all vegetation has been destroyed and a number of the most well-used paths have more than doubled in width as the increased number of users attempted to socially distance from each other.

Although undertaking major restoration projects is not immediately possible given the need to source additional funding, either through grants or an appeal, there are measures our staff can take to help alleviate the pressure on some of the worst affected areas and allow them to start to recover. These include dead hedging, drainage and the installation of temporary fencing.

Dead hedging is a really simple technique which aims to form a barrier made from cut branches - in this case our staff have made use of the scrub cut out from Putney Heath. It's a technique that we've used many times on the Commons and it is a great way to encourage visitors to keep to the path and allow the verge to recover. Our staff will also be putting up some temporary fencing around larger areas near the Windmill Car Park to allow the ground to rest and recover.



Dead hedging on Inner Windmill Road

## NEWSBITES

- The 2020 Birds, Butterflies and Dragonflies of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Annual Report is now available to download free of charge from our website, or £4 for a hard copy from the Ranger's Office.
- Oak Processionary Moth remains a problem on the Commons and we advise keeping children and pets away from Oak trees from May onwards when the caterpillars are most prominent.



Given how busy and largely unprotected Queensmere Pond is, life will never be without an element of danger for the wildfowl that call the pond home. Nevertheless, many wildfowl make their home here, most prominently our pair of Swans. During 2020, the pair raised five cygnets to adulthood. In readiness for the 2021 breeding season, our staff spruced up the floating platform with new nesting material, much to the delight of the Pen who quickly took up residence and has hatched four surviving cygnets this year. Two further platforms were added, along with two further platforms on Kingsmere.

*Photo Swans by Bartek Olszewski*



## Restoration of Stag Bog



Marsh Pennywort

Yellow-flag Iris

The unique geology, topography and drainage patterns of Wimbledon Common, along with human intervention, have all contributed to the formation of wetland areas, traditionally containing a rich assemblage of wetland plants and associated fauna. Spring-fed bogs supply several streams which flow directly into the Beverley Brook, or via artificially created ponds.

Historically, there have been three bogs on the Commons - Farm Bog, Ravine Bog, and Stag Bog. Stag Bog is located to the west of the Wimbledon Common Golf Course and just below the Paradise Fairway and, in November 2020 as part of the Countryside Stewardship agreement with the Forestry Commission, the Maintenance Team started the first phase of some much overdue management of the area.

When our book "Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath, A Natural History" was published in 2000, Stag Bog was recorded to have Yellow-flag Iris, Marsh Pennywort and Purple Moor Grass, with only a small area of bramble and bracken on show. Over time, unfortunately, the bramble and bracken have become the dominant vegetation and, given this dense cover, it has been very difficult to see whether the bog had managed to retain any dampness from its water source - an underground natural spring.

The first step of the work to open up the bog required the use of a tractor mounted mower to reduce the coverage of bramble to allow the team to trim out the remaining areas and start to reduce some of the tree cover. Given the easily accessible location of Stag Bog, trampling across this area has long been a problem so in order to try and reduce the impact, a dense screen of vegetation including Holly has been left standing on two sides

of the bog. On the other two sides, which are far more open, dead hedging has been created with large sections of timber sourced from other woodland work on the Commons.

To help ensure that Stag Bog is kept as wet as possible, the drainage ditch which runs into the bog from the bottom of the valley below Paradise Fairway has been re-instated along with the three dams, originally created in the late 1990s, across the stream/ditch, which should raise the water level and prove to be very beneficial in retaining water in the area.

While a full restoration of the bog may not be possible, the creation of an area of wet woodland on the Commons will certainly be of benefit and provide an additional habitat to the Commons as a whole, and hopefully the Marsh Pennywort and Yellow-flag iris will start to recolonise the area.

According to the Woodland Trust, wet woodlands are now some of our least common wooded habitats. Following the initial phase of work, we hope that a regular group of volunteers will be able to monitor this site and provide occasional visits in order to keep the invasive bramble and bracken under control.

## NEWSBITES

Both Wimbledon Common and Putney Lower Common won Gold awards in the "Common of the Year" category of this year's London in Bloom competition.



# Putney Lower Common

Protecting the wildlife and natural aspect of Putney Lower Common remains a high priority but this area of the Commons has also felt the pressure of the last year with litter and muddy, widened paths a real problem here too. Our Head Ranger at Putney Lower Common, Bill Rowland, has had his work cut out but again, thanks must be extended to everyone who has helped with litter-picking - we don't know who all of you are but please know we are very grateful!

Our Wildlife and Conservation Officer, Peter Haldane, has focused additional resources on the wildlife this year and we are delighted that he has installed two new Tawny Owl nesting boxes to encourage the local population to breed.

The Zoological Society for London (ZSL) has continued its Hedgehog survey of the Common and the surrounding open spaces and their most recent survey indicates that hedgehogs were found on three of the six sites they are monitoring - fortunately Putney Lower Common is one of those sites. Whilst this is cause for celebration, this colony is still extremely vulnerable as a viable population.

Local group, SW15 Hedgehogs, also carried out some night surveys and recorded four healthy Hedgehogs on the Common and have positioned two new hedgehog nesting boxes on the site. Wandsworth Borough Council have also cut a series of small holes through the wall that surrounds the Cemetery with the hope that this additional linking up of Putney Lower Common and Barnes Common should help to stop Hedgehogs from crossing the busy Lower Richmond Road where they have been found in the past as fatalities of road collisions.



## 2021 Events Diary

**25-27 June -**

### **BioBlitz Weekend of Nature**

Bats, Moths, Birds, butterflies, bees and all manner of insects and small mammals to be found and identified. Join our experts for a series of walks around the Commons. This year we will also have a visit from Reptile Events with a selection of snakes for you to meet. Full details are available on our website

**30 June at 8pm -**

### **Conservators' Annual Open Meeting**

Presentation of Accounts and Annual Report. The meeting will be held via Zoom - details can be found at [wpcc.org.uk/aom21](http://wpcc.org.uk/aom21)

**7 July at 7.00pm -**

### **Summer Evening Walk**

A Guided Evening Walk led by our senior staff. Learn about our history and conservation work.

**15 August - Celebration Games Day**

(see page 6 for details)

**12 September -**

### **Commons Open Day**

Our annual day of fun and merriment here at the Ranger's Office! Meet the horses, birds of prey, and this year we are delighted to welcome Pedal Power v Parkour! And, of course, not forgetting the Wacky Dog Show! Free entry all day.

**13 October at 10.30am -**

### **Autumn Morning Walk**

A Guided walk led by our senior staff. Learn about our history and conservation work.

**29 November Conservators'**

### **General Open Meeting Venue TBA**

Open meeting with updates from the Conservators and staff

**11 December at 4pm - Carols at the Windmill**

Join us and the Wandle Concert Band for some rousing carols, mince pies and mulled cider!

## TRIAL OF GOLF PLAY ON BANK HOLIDAYS

The Conservators have agreed to allow a trial of golf on Wimbledon Common on Bank Holidays during 2021.

The two golf clubs, which have had a presence on the Commons since before the Commons came into existence, need to attract new members to ensure their long term viability, and Bank Holiday golf is one potential means of ensuring the future of these historic clubs.

Following the trial, the Conservators will carry out a consultation to gather the views of other visitors who use the Commons before taking a decision on whether Bank Holiday play should become a more permanent fixture. Details of the consultation, and how you can take part, will be on our website later in the year.





# Memorial Benches

Have you, your family or someone you know donated a memorial bench to the Commons?

We would like to make sure our database is as up to date as possible so we can contact the donors, especially about benches that are beginning to show signs of wear and tear and may need to be replaced, or have simply disappeared into the growing trees and scrub and may need to be re-sited.

Do please contact us by e-mail at [rangersoffice@wpcc.org.uk](mailto:rangersoffice@wpcc.org.uk)



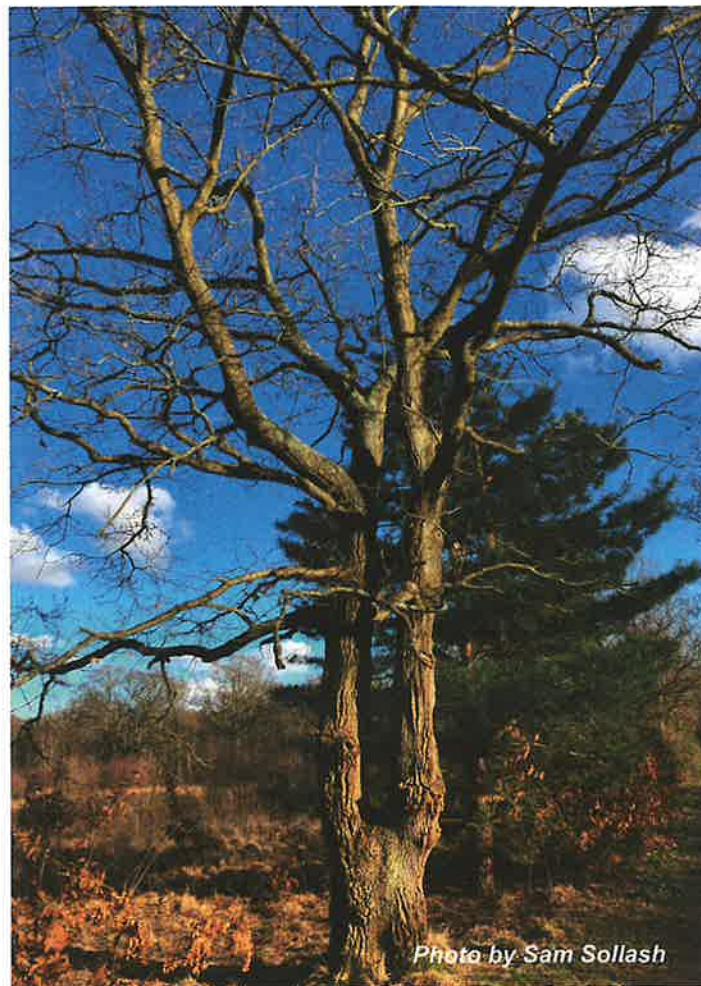
*Photo by Kai Betteridge*

Some of the amazing photographs posted in our two Facebook groups

"Wimbledon and Putney Commons Nature Notes" and  
"Photographs of Wimbledon and Putney Commons"



*Photo by Gideon Miller*



*Photo by Sam Sollash*



*Photo by Sarah Lavender*