



A STRATEGY FOR WIMBLEDON AND PUTNEY COMMONS

Approved June 2017



INTRODUCTION

Wimbledon and Putney Commons is a self-financing public body dedicated to caring for over 1140 acres of publicly open and accessible land split between three sites, Wimbledon Common, Putney Heath and Putney Lower Common. Transferred from parts of the wastes of the Manor of Wimbledon from Earl Spencer's estate to a body representing both public and local interests by way of an Act of Parliament in 1871, Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators is an incorporated body, with perpetual succession, it is also a registered charity with land held in trust for public benefit.

This is our first strategic plan and sets out our vision and priorities for managing the Commons and our work over the next ten years. It shows how we will play our part in making this part of south-west London a great place to live and work, contributing towards a world class city. We have some major challenges and aspirations of how we would like to see the Commons enhanced for the benefit of users and wildlife over the next ten years, but with particular emphasis on the things we need to do in the next five years.

VISION

“Wimbledon and Putney Commons will be recognised as an exceptional and welcoming natural place for visitors where wildlife thrives”

MISSION

As stewards of the Commons and through our independent governance structure, we will safeguard their natural aspect and condition so that they are safe, available, welcoming and accessible for all.

This will require WPCC to:

- conserve, enhance and protect the Commons natural aspect and wildlife for present and future generations to enjoy;
- demonstrate sound governance and financial discipline by constantly reviewing operational procedures and all aspects of management;
- seek to balance the enjoyment of the majority of users who come for informal activity and appreciation of the Commons quiet natural aspect with the needs of groups who undertake formal and/or more rigorous recreational activities;
- improve understanding and identity of Wimbledon and Putney Commons and interpret its rich and varied heritage;
- work in partnership with stakeholders to promote and achieve the Vision;
- improve facilities used for organised recreation, sport and events;
- encourage volunteering as a rewarding activity engaging people of all ages and abilities;
- work in an environmentally sustainable manner.

VALUES

In delivering our Vision and Mission we will be guided by the following Values:

Dependable - We will maintain the Commons with pride and professionalism working in and for the community, taking responsibility for our actions.

Respectful - We will respect and value others giving time and being courteous in considering all viewpoints.

Committed – We will commit to engaging and communicating with the public to build a greater understanding of the Commons and its management.

Creative – We will provide innovative approaches to sustain the Charity and protect the Commons.

Excellent - We will use our energy, resources and skills, striving for excellence in all we do.

PURPOSE

The Commons were created by the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act 1871 which provided for a Board of eight Conservators, more commonly known today as Trustees, to ensure the lands are kept:

“open and unenclosed and unbuilt on... and preserve them as open spaces

at all times preserve, as far as may be, the natural aspect and state of the commons

for public and local use, for purposes of exercise and recreation and other purposes”.

Governance is prescribed within the separate Commissioners Clauses Act 1847, as amended by the 1871 Act that sets out what would be known today as the Standing Orders of the organisation.

In April 1972 the site was registered as a charity with a founding objective:

“to preserve the Commons as open spaces for purposes of exercise and recreation and other purposes.”

These obligations must be seen in the context of the need to manage and maintain the Commons in the pursuance of the above objectives.

Five Conservators are elected triennially by those who live within the Levy-paying area who are entitled and registered to vote, if their place of residence (or place treated as their residence) is within three-quarters of a mile of Wimbledon Common or anywhere within the old Parish of Putney. Three other Conservators are appointed by central government departments – currently the Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence.

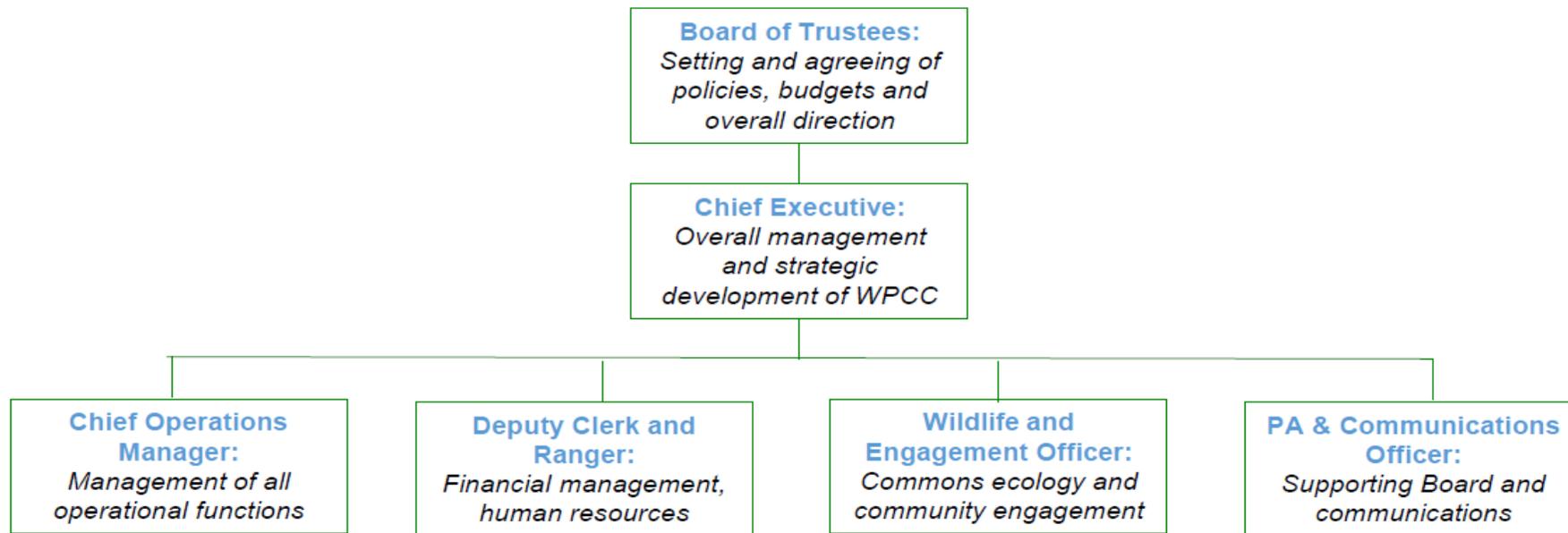
The Commons are a part of the UK series of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) reflecting the importance of their grassland and heathland habitats. Under European Conservation Law they are also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with importance for beetles and insect diversity. The Commons are also designated as Metropolitan Open Land, which affords the land the same level of protection as the Green Belt.

Today, the Conservators need to spend on average £1.6m a year managing and maintaining the Commons. The largest contribution to this, just over £1.05m in 2016/17, was derived from the local Levy. The remaining funding is generated from rental income including concessions, events, way-leaves and investments.

We work closely with other organisations and businesses who manage or use land or facilities on the Commons, including the Grade II* Listed Windmill, the golf course, Windmill Tea Rooms, tennis courts, a bowling green and horse-rides. Our work is carried out by an experienced and dedicated team of staff.

The Conservators have established a Stakeholder Group, this is a body of people with knowledge and interest in the Commons, providing views and suggestions to the Board. There are fourteen members of the Group, representing many of the different constituencies using the Commons, from horse-riders

and dog walkers to runners and golfers. Both Putney and Wimbledon amenity societies are represented, together with a number of local Residents' Associations. There is also a Wildlife and Conservation Forum with volunteer experts supporting the Commons' staff protecting the natural environment of the Commons.



WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGY?

This is the first ever Commons Strategy. The Commons have provided a place for relaxation and enjoyment in an intrinsically beautiful natural environment close to the centre of the capital for nearly 150 years. We know that people care passionately about the Commons.

There is a clear mandate through our founding legislation, charitable objectives and the special designations of our sites' for our duty to protect and preserve the Commons making them available for the purposes of exercise and recreation. We should not look to alter these.

Rather, we should focus on securing the long-term future of the natural environment of the Commons and of their facilities, and on improving the understanding and identity of the Commons together with ways to balance competing demands for use and engagement by visitors. We need to be able to respond to changing demands e.g. the decline in golf and potential increase in cycling. We can achieve national standards of excellence in open space management and the quality of our facilities enabling everyone to learn more about the importance of the sites.

There are many reasons for having a strategy for a site as complex and special as the Commons:

- Providing a framework for consistent, long-term management based on an agreed set of policy priorities which identify the objectives of site management and seek a balance between any conflicts of interest;
- Allowing for the views of site managers, Commons users and the local community to be heard;
- Guiding day-to-day work and helping increase job satisfaction;
- Helping management of resources and exploring funding opportunities;
- Stimulating ideas and encouraging a better understanding of the Commons management.

This strategy sets out a broad framework for how WPCCC intends to achieve this over the next ten years, whilst still allowing us the freedom to respond positively to new opportunities that may emerge before the strategy is next reviewed in 2022. This document provides an opportunity to step back from the day to day activities associated with managing the Commons and create a vision for the Commons in years to come. It is a chance to identify tasks and opportunities that might otherwise get lost amid the necessity of managing such busy sites. The strategy does not aim to provide all the answers nor attempt to cover every aspect of the Commons management. Many of the routine tasks that are fundamental to the smooth running of the Commons are not described here. This does not mean that they are not important, if litter were not collected there would be an immediate and obvious impact on the appearance of the Commons.

The purpose of this strategy is to identify what needs to be done to conserve and safeguard the special qualities of the Commons and to look at ways of managing resources more efficiently. Not all the actions in this strategy can be addressed at once; some will require additional resources, some will require the support of external organisations others will need to be delivered through innovative funding sources.

RESOURCES

The Conservators' principal funding source comes from the Levy. In accordance with the Statutory Instrument 1993 No. 128 for 2016/17 this was set at £1,055,635 and accounted for 68% of the total income received by the Charity in that year. Total expenditure for the year 2016/17 amounted to £1,993,440.

Given the on-going need to optimise the use of our resources and recognising the requirement to commit investment to the Commons buildings and infrastructure, the Conservators increased the Levy for 2017/18 to its maximum of £1,135,935. This represents £28.58 per annum per property for the average 'D-band' Council Tax cost, an average increase of £1.61 compared to 2016/17.

The Conservators believe that this still represents remarkably good value for money for the 39,742 contributing local households (39,148 in 2016/17). Given the increasing costs of operations, particularly on-going restoration projects, the Conservators will need to maximise income in future years and have agreed to set the Levy to its maximum until 2021/22.

Through this strategy we need to develop sustainable funding for management of the Commons, together with opportunities to raise funds for one-off restoration projects. These will need to form part of the Business and Financial plans.

The Commons Strategy therefore needs to be realistic and capable of delivery within these increasingly challenging financial constraints. Whilst aspirations will remain high, some difficult choices will need to be made by the Conservators about current and future priorities for funding.

OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

- 1) **Safeguard** and improve for the public benefit the natural environment and wildlife conservation together with the use of Wimbledon and Putney Commons in a manner appropriate to its rich heritage;

- 2) **Engage** with the Commons communities to promote and foster for the public benefit a wide knowledge and understanding of the historical, ecological and recreational significance of the Commons.

We will **achieve** these through exemplary organisation and management, delivering services, projects, and attracting more resources to the benefit of the Commons.

KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commons are significant in many ways – for their natural and cultural heritage, opportunities for recreation and sport. Our plans and priorities for the next ten years are be grouped under five strategic areas of key responsibilities, each with its own overriding objective.

Over the next few pages, we have set out the challenges, our desired outcomes and how these will be realised through our actions over the life of this strategy, together with the policies that will guide and inform our work. There is also an indication of whether action is considered to be a priority, marked by a red flag. Information on timescales, budget, work programmes and any partnership agreements will flow from two other key documents, a Land Management Plan setting out over the next five years all aspects of the operations needed to manage the site and an Annual Business Plan that will form the mechanism for delivery, which is based on a rolling three year programme of our priorities and actions with supporting financial plans. An appendix describes relationship between the Commons Strategy and other strategies and plans, together with the key priorities at a glance.

Natural & Cultural Heritage

Access & Recreation

Community

Communication & Promotion

Governing Wimbledon and Putney Commons

Natural & Cultural Heritage

Overriding Objective:

The Commons will be protected to take account of their distinctive heritage and managed so as to retain and enhance the natural habitats to enable visitors to continue to enjoy and appreciate them and as a home to abundant flora and fauna.

“Nature is sometimes taken for granted and undervalued. But people cannot flourish without the benefits and services our natural environment provides. Nature is a complex, interconnected system. A healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing.”¹

Today's Commons landscape is the product of continuous changes in ownership and management, against the background of pressures for development and industry (gravel extraction). The natural landscape is the Commons most precious attribute. It is a unique remnant of London's former countryside, now surrounded by urban development. It is a landscape that has been shaped over the centuries by the way humans have lived on it, exploited it and enjoyed it.

The scenery of the Commons is particularly varied because of its underlying geology and topography providing for five distinct spaces. The Rushmere at the south east with its open aspect and pond leads into Wimbledon Common, the largest of the three Commons. Soils are impoverished Plateau Gravels, ideal for heathland and bogs. The land falls away to the west down through the other main habitat, mature woodlands. Continuing northwards from the Windmill up to the A3 and beyond, the plateau of Putney Heath is characterised by extensive areas of heathland, interspersed with groups of trees. Lying south of the Beverley Brook on London Clay is the Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields, a large expanse of formal sports pitches. Separated from the main body of the Commons by a distance of just over a mile is Putney Lower Common. The alluvial deposits of the River Thames and Beverley Brook create broad grass meadows and the Common merges seamlessly into Barnes Common to the west.

The landscape character of the Commons has changed dramatically over the past 150 years. In 1871 it was largely open heathland with views from Wimbledon Village to the spires of Putney. Extensive secondary woodland only developed when grazing ceased during the last century.

There is a huge diversity of habitats, from heathlands to woodlands, supporting an impressive and surprising range of flora and fauna, examples of particular natural interest include:

- 267 hectares of secondary woodland
- 40 hectares of heathland
- Nine ponds
- The Farm Bog is one of only a very few examples of *sphagnum* peat bogs in London
- Eight species of bats
- 96 species of birds of which at least 45 species breed on the Commons.

The Commons have special designations as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) reflecting the importance of its grassland and heathland habitats, as well as the range of beetles and insects.

To manage and protect this unique landscape, we will continue to support local, regional, national and international strategies for enhancing wildlife and biodiversity, and will introduce new detailed habitat management plans and policies, guided by improved monitoring.

The Commons associations with people and events are well documented. From denizens such as feared highwayman Jeremiah Abershaw who operated from headquarters at the Bald-Faced Stag in Kingston to famous duellists including Frederick, son of George III – he became the “grand old Duke of York” and didn't fire a shot in May 1879 when called out by Colonel Lennox over a misunderstanding in the mess - the Commons have been witness to many

¹ (Government, June 2011)

sensational events.

The open space lent itself to assemblies, parades and manoeuvres and associations with the military can be seen across the landscape today. The National Rifle Association met on the Commons every summer without a break for some 30 seasons. With scarlet cord attached to the trigger, Queen Victoria fired the first shot on 2nd July 1860. Some 30,000 troops passed through a training encampment on the Commons during the First World War. The Commons boast the second oldest golf course in the land, its origins closely linked to the military heritage through the London Scottish Regiment. There are also many historical manmade structures. These include the Grade II* Listed Wimbledon Windmill, together with three War Memorials, several memorial stones and the ancient Pounds. The remnants of the National Rifle Association butts can still be seen.

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTION	PRIORITY
<p>NCH1. Enhancing biodiversity, reversing the deterioration of the natural fabric of the Commons.</p>	<p>NCH1.1 To conserve, enhance and protect the traditional semi-rural landscape of the Commons and its statutory designations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prepare a Land Management Plan to support the on-going management of the Commons and to enhance specific habitats (heathlands/woodlands/ meadows & aquatic) and to support external funding bids (including Higher Level Stewardship). b. Continue the work to improve the SSSI and SAC to achieve “favourable” status, particularly by restoring the heathland and woodland habitats and managing invasive species that threaten existing habitats. c. Implement the findings of the Phase II Vegetation Survey as base-line of different habitats present across the Commons. d. Work with other open space partners to support the management of habitats including our conservation volunteers, London Wildlife Trust, The Wandle Trust, Friends of Barnes Common, National Trust and Richmond Park. e. Investigate options for Geographical Information System/electronic data capture to enable appropriate monitoring and management of habitats. f. Continue our species monitoring, mapping and recording procedures for specific wildlife and habitats. g. Monitor, protect and maintain ponds, water courses and drainage systems. h. Work with bodies responsible for highways and utilities to minimise the impact of infrastructure, noise, air and light pollution on the immediate environs of the Commons i. Consider the re-introduction of grazing to restore parts of the historic landscape of the Commons. j. Monitor the impact of climate change and ensure that our management practices take account of the potential long-term impacts on the landscape. 	<p style="text-align: right;"> ²</p> <p style="text-align: right;"></p> <p style="text-align: right;"></p>

² The red flag identifies those actions that are considered the priorities for implementation over the next three years.

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTION	PRIORITY
NCH2. Recognise the Commons' history and draw upon this to guide future management.	NCH2.1. Improved understanding of the rich and varied heritage of the Commons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Interpret and make accessible to as wide a public as possible the rich history of the Commons. b. Compile a full register of all historic sites within the Commons and avoid further damage where possible. c. Make the link between landscape history and landscape management, so that visitors and others can have a better understanding of current management and interpretation strategies. d. Maintain existing views and consider the restoration of lost views where appropriate. e. Consider opportunities to undertake LIDAR survey of the Commons to identify features of archaeological interest. f. Maintain the archive and improve accessibility to archive material. g. Work in partnership with the Wimbledon Society, Wandsworth Historical Society and Wimbledon Windmill Museum Trustees to promote the heritage of the Commons. h. Undertake an oral history project to capture the social history of the Commons. i. Research historic weather records to show the long-term impact of climate change on the natural environment. 	

To this end, we will develop a rolling annual work plan setting out the work necessary to maintain and preserve the commons which will:

- protect and conserve the historic aspects of the Commons and take due account of the distinctive histories of its component parts.
- manage the Commons to maintain their existing character by sensitive and judicious management techniques to reflect the importance of conserving and protecting this much valued public open space.
- conserve, enhance and protect the natural aspect of the landscape and amenity value of the Commons retaining the SSSI and SAC Designations.
- manage its landscapes to create and maintain diversity for the interest of visitors and for the benefit of wildlife.
- retain, restore and manage the scrub and woodlands according to good practice and improve their diversity and distinctiveness.
- retain, restore and manage the Commons' heathlands, grasslands to enhance their nature conservation value.
- manage the Commons' ponds to enhance their nature conservation value.

Access & Recreation

Overriding Objective:

To be as accessible as possible, recognising that the main beneficiaries of the Commons are those visitors who come to enjoy the quiet beauty and that formal activities will be managed to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practical, they do not adversely affect others'

enjoyment of the sites.

The benefits of improving access go beyond meeting legal requirements. It is an opportunity to attract new audiences, increase the likelihood of repeat visits and improve the quality of experience for all visitors. Access improvements should be planned to respect the special qualities of a particular site³.

For the Commons to fulfil their objectives, they need to be welcoming and offer an enjoyable experience for visitors. To achieve this we need to provide opportunities for recreation and exercise through events, activities and providing facilities that are 'fit for purpose'.

Open spaces have a significant role to play in tackling inequality and improving health. *The value of green space for exercise is unquestionable. Good quality spaces will encourage people to make short journeys on foot or by bike. Regular physical activity contributes to the prevention and management of over 20 conditions including coronary heart disease, diabetes, certain types of cancer and obesity.*⁴

The Commons' buildings and infrastructure include a diverse range of structures that have generally been provided on a piecemeal basis to serve specific purposes. Whilst some structures are iconic, such as the Grade II* Listed Wimbledon Windmill, there are other examples of unattractive buildings that may serve a purpose but actually detract from the natural qualities of the Commons.

The Commons' main beneficiaries are those who come for informal activity. By far the highest percentage of these come to walk (with or without dogs). Others come to run, to enjoy nature, the views, to sunbathe, to picnic and to meet friends.

There is a vast network of made and unmade walking routes across the Commons, including approximately 10km which are shared with cyclists. There are other accessible facilities, providing opportunities for sport, recreation and relaxation, including twenty two football and rugby pitches at the Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields, an eighteen hole golf course managed by two independent Golf Clubs, tennis courts, cricket tables and a bowling green. There are also two horse-rings utilised by local stables and approximately 22km of horse rides. Model boating is a pastime on Rushmere.

A number of formal running clubs utilise the Commons throughout the year, the Thames Hare and Hounds are based at the REMPf pavilion and Wimbledon Windmilers provide regular social runs. Parkrun is now a popular fixture every Saturday morning. Of increasing importance are Forest Schools and use of the Commons as an outdoor classroom.

The Windmill Tea Room offers refreshments for the public opening 364 days a year, whilst the Windmill Museum is open on weekends and Bank Holidays during the summer period.

Many facilities are run on behalf of the Conservators by tenants, licensees, and associations. The Conservators will continue to work closely with these bodies to support them in providing excellent standards of service, events and facilities.

When opportunities arise to review these arrangements, we will seek opportunities to upgrade and refurbish facilities. We need to consider ways to enhance accessibility around the site, including interpretation and signage.

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
AR1. Maintain the asset with a view to	AR1.1 Recognition of the	a. Balance the interests of ecological value/landscape	

³ (Heritage, 2005)

⁴ (CABE, 2015)

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p>its long-term preservation recognising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degrading/Aging Fabric • Equality/Accessibility • Health & Safety <p>Maintaining a balance between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation/Preservation • Use and Over-Use • Organised and Informal Activities 	<p>importance of the quality of the Commons and its location and character as an asset attracting businesses, residents and visitors to the area, all supporting local communities.</p>	<p>character and recreational use of the Commons by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. protecting sensitive habitats, through careful management techniques including dead hedging and judicious planting; ii. balancing the interests of formal recreational users and their impact on those who use the Commons for informal activities; iii. considering opportunities to develop the natural play environment in the Nature Trail, but without detriment to other users' enjoyment of the site; iv. addressing barriers to access and comply with the Equality Act, including promotion of Easy Access Routes to guide users away from more sensitive habitats. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> b. Strengthen opportunities to promote the health/well-being/recreational and educational potential of the Commons. c. Develop a policy on external events to encourage participation and support for the use of the Commons, including Forest Schools. d. Work with service providers such as Transport for London and local authorities to improve directional signage outside the Common and highlight the best routes from existing public transport links, since it is highly desirable that visitors to the Commons come by public transport and consider the control of car parking on site. e. Work with local Residents' & Business Associations to promote the Commons as part of the local attractions of the area, particularly areas such as the Windmill complex, seeking opportunities for such organisations to make use of the Commons iconic status for their advertising and sponsorship opportunities. f. Build upon engagement structures enabling all constituents to recognise the impact they have on the site and on others' enjoyment of it and where appropriate enforce existing Byelaws. g. Develop proportionate and consistent measures to implement the Commons' Byelaws. 	
	AR1.2 Working collaboratively with	a. Investigate opportunities as part of the fund-raising	

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
	partners to maintain and develop site infrastructure, sports facilities and other assets ensuring appropriate provision and access for all.	<p>strategy (see G2.1.c) wherever possible in partnerships with others to assist with restoring the Commons' infrastructure, sports facilities and other assets.</p> <p>b. Support organisations/Clubs that utilise the Commons to enhance recreational activities and the infrastructure that supports them (short-medium term)</p> <p>c. Support proposals that ensure the continued sustainable provision of golf on the Commons.</p> <p>d. Investigate opportunities to enhance operational depots, particularly REMPF and Maintenance depots, providing welfare facilities for staff that are fit for purpose.</p>	

To this end, we will develop a rolling annual work plan setting out the work necessary to continue to provide opportunities for recreation and exercise across the whole of Commons:

- ensuring that the Commons remain accessible and attractive to the whole community.
- managing facilities in a way which recognises the right and ability of everyone to use and enjoy the Commons.
- restoring and maintaining the Commons' assets whenever opportunities arise.
- working with tenants and licensees to ensure that a consistent and high quality of visitor service is achieved across the Commons.

Community

Overriding Objective:

The Commons will be a place that improves the quality of life for local communities offering opportunities for healthy relaxation, exercise, learning and active public engagement.

Wimbledon and Putney Commons are a place for people as well as everything that lives or grows there. It is a place where everyone should feel welcome and informed, whether pursuing active recreational pursuits, or simply seeking relaxation. We want our visitors to take real pride and have respect for the Commons and for their flora and fauna.

The Commons currently provide a venue for a wide range of community events and activities. These range from events run by the Charity, including the Annual Open Day and BioBlitz, to those managed by other organisations, including the Wimbledon Village Fair, Bookfest, the Rosslyn Park Seven's Rugby tournament, fairs and circuses.

We know that the Commons are already highly valued, but we want to engage more widely with communities and Levy-payers to encourage increased participation and understanding of the natural environment through active volunteering and life-long learning opportunities. We want to be an exemplar in volunteer management, offering a diverse range of opportunities for local people to support the Commons and their management.

The Commons also help support the economic prosperity of the local area, and we recognise our responsibility to work pro-actively outside the Commons' boundaries to support local businesses and its communities.

Whilst the Commons benefit from good access by road, cycle, footpath and railway, we will engage more widely with different sectors of the community to understand any barriers to their use of the Commons, and work with organisations to improve awareness and accessibility.

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
C1. Improving and Increasing Public Engagement	C1.1 To have improved understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership • Management • Funding • Biodiversity • Place in Society • Differences/Conflicts • The proper balance of respect for habitats and wildlife with encouraging people to use and enjoy the Commons for recreation. 	a. Carry out visitor and non-visitor surveys as a base-line for understanding of people's perceptions about the Commons. b. Develop a structure to deliver and increase inclusive volunteering opportunities and to ensure that the value of volunteering, both for the Commons and for individuals, is fully recognised. c. Initiate a Supporters of Wimbledon and Putney Commons as a means to help raise the profile of the Commons within local communities and to assist with raising funds to support specific initiatives. d. Continue to develop 'softer' community engagement activities, including walks/talks and attendance at AGM's, schools, care homes and other public organisations. e. Develop and promote a year round programme of WPC events.	

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
		f. Develop measures to understand how many visits are received each year across the Commons.	

We will actively seek to engage with the public, consulting stakeholders on the significant issues within our annual work plans by:

- developing and implementing effective consultation procedures for the annual management of the Commons.
- recognising the contribution made to the care and management of the Commons by volunteers and every effort will be made to support, sustain and diversify the number of volunteers and the work they undertake.
- launching appeals to fund-raise with local communities and stakeholders for specific restoration projects.
- permitting use of Commons for appropriate events that are commensurate with our charitable objectives and are not detrimental to the site.
- promoting the potential to offer life-long learning opportunities for the local community.

Communication & Promotion

Overriding Objective:

The Commons will be recognised an important natural open space, both locally and regionally, with easily accessible information, enabling enjoyment and understanding of the site.

We recognise that raising awareness of the purpose and objectives of the Commons within the local area and region is critical to its success and to the long term sustainability of the Charity.

We will make continued improvements to promote the Commons, making use of the website, developing new interpretation material, including provision of gateway maps and signage, leaflets and actively publicising our work through the local media and social networking sites.

The Charity recognises the need to work collaboratively with other organisations to encourage economic investment and growth into the local area, through promoting the benefits that the Commons provide to the quality of life locally.

Our staff team are our most valuable and appreciated means of communicating with visitors and users, being visible, approachable and knowledgeable of our sites.

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
CP1. Improve local comprehension and identity of the Commons	CP1.1 It will be easy for interested parties to get an understanding of current and future management policies for the Commons and its governance structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To understand through research where WPCC sits in terms of its purpose and place within Greater London, with a view to developing and promoting a brand for WPCC that defines its special qualities. b. Undertake a communications/interpretation audit and develop a communication and interpretation plan. c. Engage more widely with a range of local organisations including the Local Authorities, Amenity Societies, Business and Residents' Associations, educational and health authorities and more widely with national open space fora to raise awareness of the Commons and the contribution it offers in terms of enhancing the quality of the social, environmental and economic benefits for the region. d. Utilise new technologies such as our website BLOG, Facebook and TWITTER to promote positive aspects of the Commons management. e. Attend and contribute to the London Parks and Greenspaces Forum/London National Park and other Fora, promoting the Commons governance model as an exemplar for open space management. f. Develop opportunities for disadvantaged young people to experience the Commons as an essential part of 	

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
		their personal development.	
<p>CP2. Improve interpretation and identity of the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Features/Events • Flora and Fauna • Positive Information about the Commons • Walks/Trails 	<p>CP2.1 To make continuous improvements to the availability, content, quality and accessibility of information about Wimbledon and Putney Commons.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a masterplan, as a basis for proposals for future funding, for the buildings and facilities within the “Windmill enclosure” enhancing this area as an important “gateway” and visitor attraction on the Commons. Improve the natural appearance of the area around the Putney Lower Common Depot to enhance it as a major “gateway” onto the Common with welfare facilities for staff that are fit for purpose. To provide appropriate “gateway” signage at the main entrances to the Commons with an appropriate design, content (a new map), quality and durability. Produce new suite of leaflets on the Commons (Welcome/Heritage/Walking Trails/Cycling etc.) Continue to develop the website and e-newsletters. 	
<p>CP3. Interpret and make accessible to as wide a public as possible the history of the Commons.</p>	<p>CP3.1. Build on the Commons rich heritage linking the villages of Wimbledon and Putney and with the wider green network in south-west London and neighbouring counties.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the provision of better historical information at appropriate points and “gateways” onto the Commons and on the website. Renovation of the Information Centre and Windmill Museum displays. Encourage greater involvement of volunteers and local historians in research, producing information, such as themed leaflets and guided walks. Work with partners, including the Wimbledon Windmill Museum Trustees to identify opportunities to utilise heritage assets for life-long learning. 	

We will continue year on year to improve communication with the general public, promoting the Commons special qualities by:

- making continuous improvements to the availability, content, quality and accessibility of information about the Commons.
- enabling a range of volunteering activities and undertaking “softer” engagement events such as walks, talks and events
- utilising advances in technology to provide information in a variety of formats.

Governing Wimbledon and Putney Commons

Overriding Objective:

The Commons Conservators will be respected for providing an exceptional natural open space, and the model of governance will be recognised as an exemplar, being independent, whilst sustainably supported financially through a local Levy and other sources of funding.

As the managing body, the Conservators recognise their responsibility for protecting the Commons, but also realising the opportunities it offers. Whilst the Charity can set its own priorities, they also recognise their accountability to local Levy-payers who generate the greater part of the funds required to manage the Commons. The Conservators as Trustees of the charity are also bound to comply with the requirements of *The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do*⁵

Essential in protecting and preserving the interests of the Commons and the Charity is the independence of the governing body, provided through its founding legislation. Although there is a need to reform and modernise the constitution, retention of its independence and relevance as body remains a core objective.

Ensuring long term financial sustainability, and that the financial stability of the Charity is not compromised must always be one of our key strategic priorities.

There will always be competing demands on our resources and we need to review our diverse income strategy regularly to ensure long term financial security.

We will continue to review our income generating assets to ensure they are being utilised to their best and most efficient effect to further the aims of the Charity.

Through our risk management policies we will protect our assets and seek to enhance/restore them as opportunities arise.

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
G1. Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators will be recognised for sound governance.	G1.1 To ensure that the constitution of the charity and statutory corporation created by the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act 1871 (WPCA) is revised to enable continued independent governance and management in the 21 st Century, enabling resolution of Board conflicts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As part of the reform process seek appropriate amendments to the founding legislation to enable the Conservators to manage the Commons effectively in the 21st Century and to minimise so far as possible a repetition of the governance difficulties which have arisen in recent years. b. Implement a programme of induction and continuing professional development for all Conservators (Trustees). c. Undertake recruitment of appointed Conservators and 2018 Conservator elections. 	

⁵ (Charity Commission, 10 July 2015)

CHALLENGE	DESIRED OUTCOME	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
G2. Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators will remain financially sustainable.	G2.1 WPCC will ensure that its financial stability is not compromised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement a three year rolling Business Plan enabling priorities to be determined ensuring that the Charity's limited resources are utilised effectively in the furtherance of its objectives. b. Staff remuneration policy to be reviewed in light of prevailing conditions within the charity and public sectors. c. Develop a fund-raising strategy including identifying potential sources of grants, public appeals and other measures to help deliver major projects. d. Maintain investment in professional training and development of staff to retain a flexibility and ability to respond to changing circumstances. e. Develop a Sustainability Strategy ensuring all staff, contractors and volunteers are working to maintain, conserve, support and improve these unique green spaces. f. Review existing third party Licences/Leases to ensure that the Charity is obtaining the best terms that could reasonably be obtained. g. Consider the introduction of car parking controls, including initially a donation scheme, to regulate use of these facilities for genuine Commons' users. h. Consider seeking an amendment to change the Statutory Instrument enabling the Charity to set a Levy that covers the sustainable management of the Commons. 	

We will continue to improve our governance arrangements to ensure the effective management of the Commons by:

- seeking to implement a model of governance commensurate with best practice for the charitable sector
- seeking to ensure that our financial independence and stability are not compromised
- managing our resources efficiently and effectively

Teamwork

We will continue to develop and invest in all those who contribute to the work of the Commons, creating an organisation and culture where everyone's contribution is valued and respected.

This strategy has been developed, (*agreed and approved*) through close collaboration between the Board of Conservators, Charity staff and Stakeholder Group. The members of these teams are set out below:

Board of Conservators		Staff	
Ms Prue Whyte	Elected - (Chairman)	Mr Simon Lee	Chief Executive
Mrs Shirley Gillbe	Elected - (Vice Chairman)	Mr Stephen Bound	Chief operations Manager
Sir Ian Andrews	Appointed by Secretary of State for Defence	Ms Paula Graystone	Deputy Clerk and Ranger
Mr John Cameron	Elected	Ms Angela Evans	PA to CEO & Communications Officer
Mr Derek Frampton	Appointed by Home Secretary	Mr Peter Haldane	Wildlife and Engagement Officer
Mr Keith Luck	Elected	Mr Bill Rowland	Head Ranger – Putney Lower Common
Dr Ros Taylor	Appointed by Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	Mr Jim Hutchings	Property Maintenance Officer
		Mr Barry Wing	P/T Property Operator
		Mr Richard Thompson	Head Keeper
		Mr John Shipton	Deputy Keeper
		Mr Guy Brown	Mounted Keeper
		Mr Chris Bye	Mounted Keeper
		Mr Tim Gilbert	Mounted Keeper
		Mr Davey Hunter	Mounted Keeper
		Mr Jack Rowland	Maintenance Manager
		Mr John McCafferty	Fitter
		Mr Daniel Bentley	Maintenance Operator
		Mr Jason Cheney	Maintenance Operator
		Mr Phil Crainey	Maintenance Operator
		Mr Joe Harrison	Maintenance Operator
		Mr Gary Jepson	Sportsground Manager
		Mr Mark Lumm	Sportsground Operator
		Mr James Paulffley	Sportsground Operator

WPCC Stakeholder Group

Mr Adam Curtis

Richmond Park

Mr Andrew Simon	Wimbledon Windmill Museum Trustees
Mr Bob Cromwell	Kingston Vale Residents' Association
Ms Carol Andrews	representing horse riders (Wimbledon Village/Ridgway/Stagg Lodge)
Mr Mike Farmery	representing running clubs on the Commons
Edward Harris	representing golf on Wimbledon Common
Jane Curtis	representing commercial dog-walkers
Jenny Brickman	Wimbledon Common Users Group
John Mays	Wimbledon Society
Judith Chegwidden	Putney Society
Peter Anthony	Roehampton Church School
Robin Healey	Wimbledon Union of Residents' Associations
Clive Hilton	Wimbledon Common West Residents' Association
Tracy Pattison	Lower Putney Commons User Group
Simon Riley	representing ecological interests on the Commons

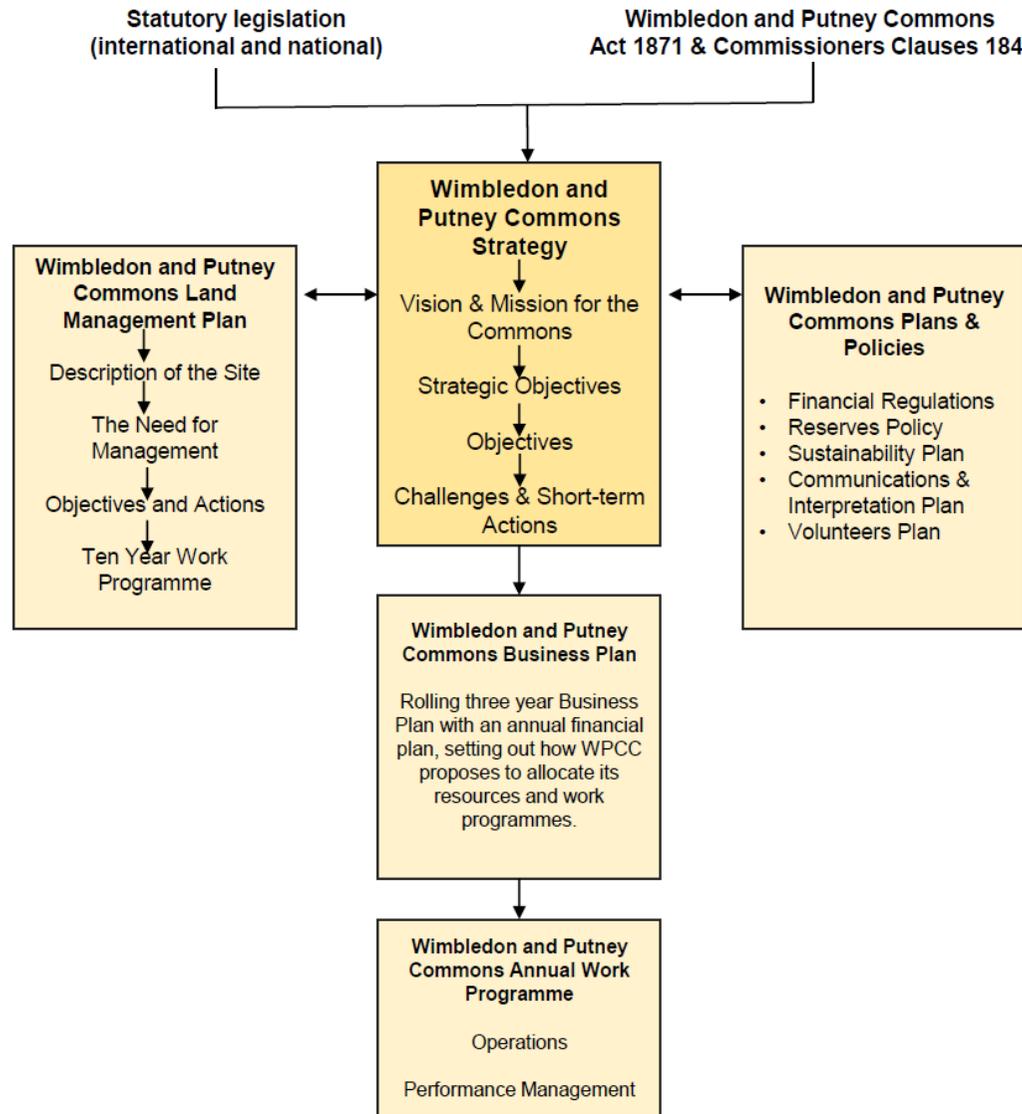
Strategy Working Group

Simon Lee	Chief Executive
Stephen Bound	Chief Operations Manager
Angela Evans	PA to CEO and Communications Officer
Clive Hilton	Wimbledon Common West Residents' Association
Judith Chegwidden	Putney Society
Claire Seignior	Putney Lower Common User Group

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APPENDIX 1 Relationship between the Commons Strategy and other Strategies and Plans



APPENDIX 2 Priorities for Action 2017 - 2019

The following priorities for action have been identified:

Action	Link to Key Strategic Objective	Lead Contributors	Outcome
<i>NCH1.1a Prepare a Land Management Plan to support the on-going management of the Commons and to enhance specific habitats (heathlands/woodlands/ meadows & aquatic) to also support external funding bids.</i>	Safeguard	WPCC, Wildlife and Conservation Forum & Stakeholder Group	<i>The basis of future management actions to conserve, enhance and protect the Commons are agreed and understood.</i>
<i>NCH1.1b Continue the work to improve the SSSI and SAC to achieve “favourable” status, particularly by restoring the heathland and woodland habitats and managing invasive species that threaten existing habitats.</i>	Safeguard	WPCC, Wildlife and Conservation Forum & Volunteers	<i>100% of the SSSI and SAC are in “favourable” condition.</i>
<i>NCH1.1d Work with other open space partners to support the management of habitats including our conservation volunteers, London Wildlife Trust, The Wandle Trust, Friends of Barnes Common, National Trust and Richmond Park.</i>	Engage	WPCC & Wildlife and Conservation Forum	<i>Improved coordination and direction of biodiversity management.</i>
<p><i>AR1.1a Balance the interests of ecological value/landscape character and recreational use of the Commons by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>v. protecting sensitive habitats, through careful management techniques including dead hedging and judicious planting;</i> <i>vi. balancing the interests of formal recreational users and their impact on those who use the Commons for informal activities;</i> <i>vii. considering opportunities to develop the natural play environment in the Nature Trail, but without detriment to other users’ enjoyment of the site;</i> <i>viii. addressing barriers to access and comply with the Equality Act, including promotion of Easy Access Routes to guide users away from more sensitive habitats.</i> 	Safeguard	WPCC, Wildlife and Conservation Forum, Stakeholder Group & User Groups	<p><i>Biodiversity protected and improved understanding of how different activities impact on others enjoyment of the Commons.</i></p> <p><i>Increased use and enjoyment of the Commons by children.</i></p> <p><i>Increased use of the Commons, particularly by ‘hard to reach groups’.</i></p>
<i>C1.1a Carry out visitor and non-visitor surveys as a base-line for understanding of people’s perceptions about the Commons.</i>	Engage	WPCC	<i>Better understanding of people’s attitudes towards the Commons and what barriers prevent them from visiting.</i>
<i>C1.1b Develop a structure to deliver and increase inclusive volunteering opportunities and to ensure that the value of volunteering, both for the Commons and for individuals, is fully recognised.</i>	Engage	WPCC, Wildlife and Conservation Forum & Stakeholder Group	<i>Increased opportunities to engage people in a range of volunteering activities.</i>
<i>C1.1c Initiate a Supporters of Wimbledon and Putney Commons as a means to help raise the profile of the Commons within local communities and to assist with raising funds to support specific initiatives.</i>	Engage	WPCC & Stakeholder Group	<i>Increased awareness and understanding by local communities of WPCC responsibilities and issues and support for the Commons.</i>

Action	Link to Key Strategic Objective	Lead Contributors	Outcome
<i>CP1.1a To understand through research where WPCC sits in terms of its purpose and place within Greater London, with a view to developing and promoting a brand for WPCC that defines its special qualities.</i>	<i>Engage</i>	<i>WPCC</i>	<i>A clear and consistent WPCC 'brand' that defines the special qualities of the Commons with an associated set of key messages.</i>
<i>CP1.1b Undertake a communications/interpretation audit and develop a communication and interpretation plan.</i>	<i>Engage & Safeguard</i>	<i>WPCC</i>	<i>Improved understanding of how people can enjoy the Commons in a safe and sustainable way.</i>
<i>CP1.1c Engage more widely with a range of local organisations including the Local Authorities, Amenity Societies, Business and Residents' Associations, educational and health authorities and more widely with national open space fora to raise awareness of the Commons and the contribution it offers in terms of enhancing the quality of the social, environmental and economic benefits for the region.</i>	<i>Engage</i>	<i>WPCC, Wildlife and Conservation Forum & Stakeholder Group</i>	<i>Increased awareness of the Commons, its governance and contribution it makes to local communities.</i>
<i>G1.1a As part of the reform process seek appropriate amendments to the founding legislation to enable the Conservators to manage the Commons effectively in the 21st Century and to minimise so far as possible a repetition of the governance difficulties which have arisen in recent years.</i>	<i>Safeguard</i>	<i>WPCC & Stakeholder Group</i>	<i>A constitution 'fit for purpose' in the twenty first century.</i>
<i>G2.1a Implement a three year rolling Business Plan enabling priorities to be determined ensuring that the Charity's limited resources are utilised effectively in the furtherance of its objectives.</i>	<i>Safeguard</i>	<i>WPCC</i>	<i>Agreed course of action to deliver the Commons Strategy within resource constraints available.</i>

