

**Public Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting held on
Monday 11 April 2022 at 4.30pm at the Wimbledon Common Golf
Club, Camp Road, London SW19 4UW**

Conservators: Mrs Diane Neil Mills, Chairman (DNM)
Mr Oliver Bennett
Mrs Sue Bucknall (SB)
Mr Michael Johnston (MJ)
Mr Mike Rappolt (MR)
Mr Nigel Ware (NW) Mr David Hince (DH)
Mr Peter Hirsch (PDH)

Officers: Mr Steve Bound, Chief Executive (CE)
Maggie May, Fundraising Officer (FO)
Angela Evans-Hill, EA to Chief Executive and
Communications Officer (PA to CE)

Members of the public: One member of the public attended

ITEM		ACTIONS
04.22.1	<p>Confirmation of Attendance and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from</p> <p>Mr Peter Haldane (C&EO) Ms Paula Graystone, Deputy Clerk & Ranger (DCR) Mr Peter Haldane (Conservation and Engagement Officer)</p>	
04.22.2	<p>Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests in Respect of Items to be Considered in this Part of the Meeting</p> <p>MR declared he was involved in fundraising for another charity. DNM declared she was a member of the Thames Hare and Hounds.</p> <p>The Board agreed that there was no reason for either not to participate in any discussions.</p>	
04.22.3	<p>Election of Chairman of the Board of Conservators</p> <p>The Chief Executive took the chair for this part of the meeting. He asked if anyone wished to stand as Chairman or nominate anyone as Chairman.</p> <p>David Hince nominated Mrs Diane Neil Mills and this was seconded by Mrs Sue Bucknall. There being no other candidates, all Conservators were in favour and DNM was therefore duly elected as Chairman of the Board of Conservators for the ensuing year.</p> <p>DNM thanked the Conservators. Being Chairman was not a position she took for granted and she considered it a great privilege. With that</p>	

	<p>privilege came responsibility and she wished to say thank you to the Board for their support. This was the most engaged group of Board members and Officers and staff that she had ever worked with and the sense of passion and commitment shared by everyone was phenomenal. The organisation was in a good position to take forward a number of major initiatives over the next two years. The charity was fortunate to have strong public support and good will and the engagement exercises that we undertake are critical in maintaining that public engagement. It was particularly special that everyone was in post during the 150th Anniversary of the Commons and although celebrations were delayed and not quite as envisaged, this made them all the more meaningful.</p>	
	<p>The Chairman advised those attending that the meeting that it was being recorded.</p>	
04.22.4	<p>WPCC Board Meetings</p> <p>i. Resolutions of the Part A(1) Board Meeting of 14 February 2022</p> <p>The Minutes of the Part A(1) Board meeting held on Monday 14 February 2022 were approved.</p> <p>ii. Minutes of the Part A(1) Board Meeting of 14 February 2022</p> <p>The Minutes of the Part A(1) Board meeting held on Monday 14 February 2022 were approved.</p>	
04.22.5	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the Stakeholder Forum and the Constitution Committee had been updated.</p>	
04.22.6	<p>WPCC Forum/Group Meetings</p> <p>i. Draft Minutes of the Wildlife and Conservation meeting held on 29 March 2022</p> <p>The Board received and noted the draft notes of the Wildlife and Conservation Forum held on 29 March 2022.</p>	
04.22.7	<p>Conservation Update</p> <p>The Board received and noted the conservation report prepared by the Conservation and Engagement Officer. The CE reported in his absence.</p> <p>March 2022 was a quiet month for conservation work as it was the start of the bird nesting season so all tree work had been halted and the</p>	

	<p>ground was still too wet to carry out some of the more regular summer works.</p> <p>Pond management – As was customary at this time of year, the ponds had been checked for frogspawn and good quantities were found in many of the ponds. However, much of the vegetation at the margins of the ponds was degrading and in order to help it recover, sections of Scio Pond and Hookhamslade Pond would be fenced off.</p> <p>Bird – Nesting – Several bird nesting boxes had been put up for the smaller woodland species such as Tits, Wrens and Robins. In addition, duck tubes had been installed for Mallards on Kingsmere. Mallards are currently in decline and the tubes help protect the ducks from flooding and predation.</p> <p>OB asked if at future meetings the Board could have sight of a forward work plan so they could have oversight of what was going on, and be able to talk about priorities. This was agreed.</p> <p>It was thought this could be helpful when talking to potential volunteers and for the Fundraising Manager to see whether upcoming projects could be funded.</p>	SB/DNM
04.22.8	<p>Land Management Plan (LMP)</p> <p>The CE reported in the absence of the Conservation and Engagement Officer. Good progress was being made on the Land Management Plan with section one early completed.</p> <p>Given the likely size of the document, the Board considered whether it was appropriate to come straight to the Board. The CE felt that it would be helpful for the Board to see this first section which was a description of the Commons and what exists here at present and should generate too much discussion. The Chairman commented that as this was a key deliverable in the Business Plan, the Board should have some oversight as it was being written. OB suggested that some sections would require more in depth discussion by the Board and consideration would need to be given to how this was approached.</p> <p>The final document should be completed by the end of December 2022.</p>	SB
04.22.9	<p>Chief Executive’s Report – non-confidential items</p> <p>The Board received and noted the Chief Executive’s report.</p> <p>Audit Timetable – The Audit timetable had now been agreed by all parties. It had been compressed as the Board meeting to approve the Accounts and Annual Report had been moved forward. It was noted that the draft Annual Report would need to be prepared by 30 April 2022.</p>	

Break-ins at REMPF – The CE reported that there had been a series of break-ins into the changing rooms at the REMPF. There had been signs of drug taking in the rooms. The police had been called and had sent a forensics team. They later reported that from the evidence left behind, they had been able to identify a person of interest and who they would be interviewing under caution. The CE had indicated that WPCC would support a prosecution if the police had enough evidence. Additional CCTV cameras had also been fitted around the building.

Pollution Incident – Beverley Brook – The CE reported on the oil pollution incident that occurred on 27 March 2022. The Environment Agency (EA) felt that the dilution levels of the oil meant that there should be no significant effect on the fish, and this appeared to be the case, but there had been reports of ducks and herons covered in oil.

Contractors working for the EA were currently on site cleaning up. It was currently thought that this was deliberate contamination.

MR asked the following questions:

- Had a suspect been identified? The CE advised that as far as he was aware the EA had some evidence of who was responsible but were not currently passing on any information.
- What were the costs to WPCC – The CE reported that all the costs involved in the clean up were borne by the EA. He thought they would endeavour to recover those from the guilty party. Minimal staff time had been involved in publicising the issue and accompanying the contractors when they first arrived.
- Where WPCC insured for this type of risk? The CE would look into it. It was agreed that insurers should be advised.
- Was this type of incident on the Risk Register? Yes, environmental incidents were on the Risk Register.

SB

In response to a question from PDH, the CE reported that he had spoken to the Regional Director of the EA as he was concerned that it appeared that they were more concerned about preventing pollution to Richmond Park than any impact to the Commons. The EA had confirmed that as the Commons had already been polluted, they were simply keen to ensure that the oil didn't get any further.

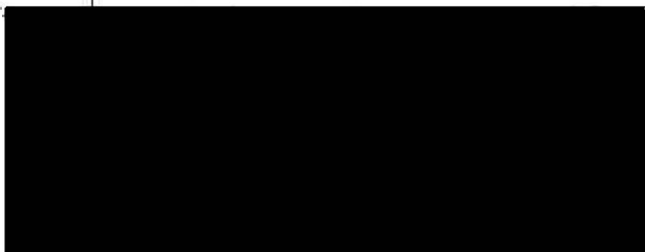
MR asked if this approach would mean more damage to the Commons. It was noted that it wouldn't. Secondly, he asked if there would be an audit to assess the environmental damage. The CE had asked PH to liaise with SERT on this.

The CE reported that the contractors were currently siphoning off the oil collected at the bridge near the A3, and at several other berms further upstream.. They would also be cleaning off as much oil as possible along the length of the Brook.

Storm Eunice - Damage from Storm Eunice had caused some damage to trees but mainly in the more heavily wooded areas. One tree had come down on the A219 which was cleared quickly by staff.

	<p>The tree had been on the list to be felled. Follow up clearance was still on-going.</p> <p>MR asked if insurers had been notified. They hadn't as there were no potential claims and even if there were, insurers would only pay out if there was negligence on the part of WPCC. A claim for a branch falling on a car had not been settled by insurers as they considered the tree safety policy was good and there was no negligence involved. Following discussion, it was agreed that insurers would be informed.</p> <p>SB suggested given that with climate change, storms were predicted to become more prevalent and was a matter that should be looked at.</p> <p>The CE confirmed that, where possible, the felled wood was left in place to provide habitat.</p> <p>Fundraising – MM reported on three fundraising matters.</p> <p>1. Community</p> <p>Wimbledon Village Stables held their annual Fundraising Ball in aid of the Commons in March, raising over £10,000 for the Horseride Appeal.</p> <p>A meeting had been held with the Hand in Hand pub and they had chosen the Commons as their charity of the year and would be holding two or three fundraising events over the course of the year.</p> <p>2. PLC Bridge Appeal</p> <p>MM was pleased to report that the Bridge Appeal had now reached its £15,000 target and the restoration work could now go ahead. Over 70 local residents had made donations.</p> <p>3. Beverley Brook Oil Spill</p> <p>MM reported that, in reaction to the incident, around £3,000 had been donated to assist in any clear-up/long term costs for maintaining the Brook.</p> <p>The Conservators wished to record their appreciation to MM and their thanks to everyone who had donated towards the Commons.</p> <p>MR asked if the donations had been marked as restricted in the accounts. SB confirmed that the money had been restricted to the projects they had been donated for. For the Bridge appeal, it had been noted on the publicity that any monies raised over and above the amount needed would be put into general funds.</p>	
<p>04.22.10</p>	<p>Update on the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons</p> <p>SB reported that the 150th year celebrations were now underway. The Afternoon Tea at the AELTC have been very successful and SB expressed her thanks to the AELTC for donating the room, and also to</p>	

	<p>Conservators and staff for all their help and support. With the participation event and the auction, some £2,500 had been raised.</p> <p>The postponed Games Day was now scheduled for Sunday 22 May 2022. There would be activities for guests to watch and participate. Publicity for the event would be starting soon.</p> <p>On Thursday 2 June 2022, an event was planned to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Processions would make their way from the War Memorials on the Commons to the Windmill where there would be a candlelit celebration with music and the Windmill would be lit up to represent a beacon.</p> <p>The Reception at the House of Commons would now take place on 21 July 2022. This was a ticketed event with Friends able to buy priority tickets.</p> <p>The Art Competition was proving to be very successful with over 800 entries received to-date. Local businesses had been providing prizes for each month. It was hoped to hold an exhibition later in the year.</p> <p>Current membership was at 544 and the offer of help with volunteering would be very welcome.</p> <p>MJ commented that a celebration of the ecology and nature of the Commons was missing from the anniversary events and wondered if there was any way of celebrating this at the Weekend of Nature. SB agreed this would be possible, but that there were some events at the Games Day - such as the Treasure Hunt and Wellness Trail - that took in the Commons ecology. DH suggested that the mapping work being carried out could be part of this, highlighting how the Commons had changed over the last 150 years.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked SB and noted that having so many events together was not ideal given the additional pressure on everyone.</p>	
<p>04.22.11</p>	<p>Public Questions on Matters Considered in Part A(1) of this Meeting</p> <p>The member of the public present commented that the water was not flowing at Caesar's Well and appeared to have been blocked where it ran into the nearby stream. The CE would look into it and get it unblocked.</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 17.30pm.</p>	



Signed by the Chairman
Diane Neils Mills