

**Public Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting held on  
Monday 14 February 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)

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

**Members of the public:** No members of the public attended

ITEM		ACTIONS
02.22.1	<p><b>Confirmation of Attendance and Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from</p> <p>Mr David Hince (DH) Mr Peter Hirsch (PDH) Mr Peter Haldane (C&amp;EO) Ms Paula Graystone, Deputy Clerk &amp; Ranger (DCR)</p>	
02.22.2	<p><b>Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests in Respect of Items to be Considered in this Part of the Meeting</b></p> <p>MR declared he was involved in fundraising for another charity.</p> <p>The Board agreed that there was no reason for him not to participate in any discussion.</p>	
02.22.4	<p><b>WPCC Board Meetings</b></p> <p><b>i. Resolutions of the Part A(1) Board Meeting of 13 December 2021</b></p> <p>The Resolutions of the Part A(1) Board meeting held on Monday 13 December 2021 were approved.</p> <p><b>ii. The Minutes of the Part A(1) Board Meeting of 13 December 2021</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the Part A(1) Board meeting held on Monday 13 December 2021 were approved.</p>	

<p><b>02.22.5</b></p>	<p><b>WPCC Forum/Group Meetings</b></p> <p>i. Draft Minutes of the Wildlife and Conservation meeting held on 11 January 2022</p> <p>The Board received and noted the draft notes of the Wildlife and Conservation Forum held on 11 January 2022.</p> <p>The Chairman wished to record the Board's appreciation to all the Forum members who had volunteered to assist with the drafting of the Land Management Plan. NW asked why the valley mires project might be of concern to visitors? OB responded that if the project were to go ahead, some substantial scrub and ditch clearance and some path diversions would be required so it would be important to ensure that the public were kept informed.</p> <p>The Chairman noted that she had understood that the Forestry Commission (FC) had recently visited the area of the proposed valley mires project and, although supportive, had suggested a number of conditions. It was confirmed that these concerns were that the Environment Agency (EA) should be consulted regarding any water course being blocked, a preference to see mature oak and hornbeam areas left out of the work and a gradual programme of work that would be monitored during the first and third years of operation.</p> <p>SB explained that some of the oldest trees on the Common were on the border of the mire and this would be discussed in more detail with The FC and Natural England prior to any work starting. OB felt that this would not fundamentally affect the project.</p> <p>ii. Approval of the General Open Meeting Minutes of 29 November 2021</p> <p>The Board approved the minutes from the General Open Meeting held on 29 November 2021. These would now be published on the WPCC website.</p>	
<p><b>02.22.6</b></p>	<p><b>Committee Terms of Reference</b></p> <p><b>i. Stakeholder Group</b></p> <p>The Board noted the changes to the Terms of Reference for the Stakeholder Group (SG). These minor changes to membership numbers and length of service were agreed. In addition, it was agreed to clarify that the Residents' Associations must sit within the Levy area, to include examples of bodies that could represent the interests of disabled visitors, and that the Terms of Reference should be reviewed every three years.</p> <p>There was a further discussion on educational representatives and it was suggested that perhaps a representative of the Forest Schools should attend. However, it was agreed that as a licence holder it would not be appropriate for them to attend. Some further thought would be given to this.</p>	<p>AEH to amend Terms of Reference to reflect agreed changes.</p>

	<p>It was noted that there was now a cycling representative, which was an important development as cycling had never been formally represented in the SG.</p> <p>In accordance with the Terms of Reference, it was confirmed that Conservators would attend by invitation of the members of the SG if it was felt that there was a relevant item to be discussed. This was only a forum for discussion, not decision.</p> <p><b>ii. Constitution Committee</b></p> <p>The Chairman explained that there had been a number of amendments to the Terms of Reference given the change of status from a Working Group to a Committee.</p> <p>The Committee was now chaired by a Conservator and the role of the external supporters was very clear in that they supported the Committee but had no voting rights and although they had formal legal qualifications, they were not providing “formal” advice, but assistance based on their knowledge of the law. The quorum and voting rights were clearly set out and, following a discussion at the last Committee meeting, it was agreed to include the preamble to the 1871 Act as it helped to reassure that any changes to the Act proposed by the Committee had to be consistent with the preamble and that the preamble was immutable.</p> <p>Following discussion it was agreed that the restriction regarding length of service should apply only to members, and not co-opted supporters.</p> <p>OB raised the point of the use of gendered language and whether the use of the term “Chairman” was appropriate as it was not inclusive. It was noted that the Board discussed this in April 2018 and the view was that the 1871 Act used the term Chairman with reference to the Board. It was however agreed that it would be at the discretion of each Committee/Chair but the Board should be aware of this issue and it should be considered when the Communications Policy was being developed.</p>	<p>AEH to clarify that the length of service applies only to members not supporters of the committee</p>
<p><b>02.22.7</b></p>	<p><b>Conservation Update</b></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>The CE reported that the bare ground creation work began in 2018 in order to try and re-establish heather on the edge of the golf course. This had worked well, rabbits notwithstanding, and the heather was regenerating. Natural England was keen on the work and so three more scrapes had been created and spread with seed from heather in other areas of the Commons. The areas would be temporarily fenced to keep the rabbits off. This work should start in March 2022 once the woodland clearance had been completed.</p>	

The Holly clearance along Robin Hood Ride had been a significant piece of work carried out by a contractor. This work was paid for by a grant through the Woodland Countyside Stewardship Scheme for woodland improvement. Although the agreement on what work should be carried out was vague, the Forestry Commission had been keen to see holly clearance and ride management. A total of 18 hectares of holly were being cleared over three years (starting in 2022) and just over six hectares had been done this year. The reason for the work was to open up the woodland to allow in more light so that a natural woodland understorey could develop and provide better biodiversity. The added benefit, which many people commented on when the work was carried out previously, was that it made the area much safer for lone walkers.

The ride management had been carried out by the Commons' Maintenance Team. Roughly 80% of the ecological value of a woodland is at its edge so the better managed this area is the better habitat it provides. The work will also allow the paths/rides to dry out and make them better for visitors. The Forestry Commission had visited the site and were delighted with the work and public feedback had generally been positive. A lot of information had been made available to visitors both at the site and on the website and social media.

MR commented that there was no mention that the work was paid for by the Forestry Commission. It was agreed that anything put out to the public should mention that the work was being carried out with the financial support of the Forestry Commission.

MJ asked what impact the use of chemicals by the golf clubs might have. SB confirmed that the clubs had been asked this question and they had confirmed that they did not use herbicides. They used organic fertilisers on the greens and the tees. The work carried out on the course would be clarified within the Land Management Plan.

MJ also asked about the fencing that would be put around the bare ground scrapes and would it be off a height sufficient to stop people and dogs accessing the areas. SB commented that it would be high enough to deter dogs but low enough for golfers to be able to step over to retrieve golf balls.

MJ asked what would be done to stop trampling of the newly cleared woodland areas. It was hoped that people would keep to the paths but this would be monitored and dead hedging put in place if necessary.

SB asked what type of fencing was being used in general. For example, the roping around the windmill area to allow the regrowth had been insufficient and often ignored. She was particularly concerned about the Plain and the ground-nesting bird area. SB commented that roping off did work in the main but there would be something more robust around the ponds, such as chestnut paling. MJ asked why the Skylark area on the Plain was not fenced. SB advised that this would be too big a job even to put up temporary fencing. OB asked whether time and resource should be spent on putting up signs on the Plain this year. SB suggested this be discussed as part of the Land

	<p>Management Plans discussion. It was noted that this also affected other ground nesting birds, not just Skylarks.</p>	
<b>02.22.8</b>	<p><b>Land Management Plan (LMP)</b></p> <p>The CE reported that a Land Management Plan Steering Group meeting had been held the previous week. Good progress was being made in drafting the plan.</p> <p>The first part of the Plan, which involved gathering all the information about the Commons had 41 sections and 38 of these were currently either completed or being worked on.</p> <p>With regards to the objectives section, the heathland and Valley Mires sections had been completed. Some work would be needed to keep the Plan focused on headlines to make it more understandable to staff and the general public. It had also been agreed that maps would be included to show where work will be carried out.</p> <p>It was hoped that a draft of the first chapter would come to the Board in April 2022. However much of the remaining work on this section was in the hands of volunteers and PH would be following up with them.</p> <p>OB commented that a discussion was still needed with Natural England in respect of the objectives for the heathland and grassland and this may delay the process.</p> <p>The CE confirmed that the mapping comparison work (1871 to current day) carried out by MRG Studios would be included. SB asked how the maps might be available to the Conservators to view. The CE confirmed that they weren't in an easily accessible form at the moment and this was something that would be looked into.</p> <p>The CE reported that the meeting had also discussed the major habitat restoration project that was included in the business plan. It was suggested that whilst the LMP was developed it was difficult to assess the priorities so it may be better to postpone the major project for a year and choose a smaller project this year. This would be discussed further in April.</p>	
<b>02.22.9</b>	<p><b>Chief Executive's Report – non-confidential items</b></p> <p>The Board received and noted the Chief Executive's report.</p> <p><b>Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)</b> - The current CSS agreement expires at the end of 2022 and would be replaced by Environmental Land Management contracts. Natural England would be administering the scheme but they didn't yet fully understand how it would work so they are proposing that the CSS should roll over for another five years, subject to amendment once they understand how</p>	

	<p>the new scheme will work. It was positive news that they were still keen to support the Commons' heathland and woodland work.</p>	
	<p>MR left the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>02.22.10</b></p>	<p><b>Update on the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons</b></p> <p>SB updated the meeting on the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons.</p> <p>She began by welcoming Maggie May, the new Fundraising Manager.</p> <p>WPCC was now half way through the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year and other than the Art on the Commons project, very little else had been able to go ahead.</p> <p>The Afternoon Tea at the AELTC was scheduled for 26 February 2022 and SB was pleased to report that all tickets had been sold. The sale of tickets would cover most of the costs and it was hoped to raise funds through the auction and the Heads and Tails game.</p> <p>Planning for the postponed Celebration Games Day on 22 May 2022 would begin very shortly. Any help that could be offered would be gratefully received.</p> <p>There had been some discussions around holding a Platinum Jubilee event on 2 June 2022. Initial thoughts were that it would be similar to a previous remembrance event in November 2018 (to mark the centenary of the end of WWI) with processions from Roehampton, REMPf and Wimbledon Village. These would congregate for an event at the Windmill which would follow the national beacon programme, including illuminating the Windmill. There were some issues around staff availability to help. Some thought had been given to hosting a Jubilee picnic, but it was agreed not to proceed with this.</p> <p>The House of Commons Reception event would take place on 21 July 2022.</p> <p>The Art on the Commons competition would end in July 2022 and it was hoped to hold some form of exhibition which might also be a fundraising opportunity. MJ suggested holding the exhibition at the Wimbledon Village Club. This would be looked into. Around 100 of the entries would be included in a display at the AELTC Afternoon Tea.</p> <p>OB suggested linking the Weekend of Nature to fundraising. MM thought that this was more about education/engagement than fundraising but certainly fundraising messages would be at the event.</p>	
<p><b>02.22.11</b></p>	<p><b>Meeting and Events Calendar – Updated</b></p> <p>The Board noted the updated calendar of meetings and events.</p>	

<b>02.22.12</b>	<b>Public Questions on Matters Considered in Part A(1) of this Meeting</b> As there were no members of the public in attendance, there were no questions.	
	The meeting closed at 17.45pm.	



Signed by the Chairman  
Diane Neil Mills

