

**Public Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting held on  
Monday 10 October 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 (OB)  
Mrs Sue Bucknall (SB)  
Mr David Hince (DH)  
Mr Peter Hirsch (PDH)  
Mr Michael Johnston (MJ)  
Mr Peter Shortt(PS)  
Mr Nigel Ware (NW)

**Officers:** Mr Steve Bound, Chief Executive (CE)  
Maggie May, Fundraising Manager (FM)  
Peter Haldane, Conservation and Engagement Officer (C&EO)  
Angela Evans-Hill, EA to Chief Executive/Communications  
Officer (EA to CE/CO)

**Members of the public:** Two members of the public attended.

ITEM		ACTIONS
	<p>The Chairman welcomed the new Ministry of Defence appointed Conservator, Mr Peter Shortt. Mr Shortt took up his appointment on 1 September 2022.</p> <p>The Chairman also welcomed two members of the public to the meeting.</p>	
10.22.1	<p><b>Confirmation of Attendance and Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Paula Graystone, Deputy Clerk and Ranger.</p>	
10.22.2	<p><b>Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests in Respect of Items to be Considered in this Part of the Meeting</b></p> <p>The Chairman declared she was a member of the Thames Hare and Hounds.</p> <p>It was agreed that this did not preclude her from participating in any part of the meeting.</p>	
10.22.3	<p><b>WPCC Board Meetings</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the Part A(1) Board Meeting of 11 July 2022 were approved. There were no resolutions taken at this meeting.</p>	
10.22.4	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p>	

	There were no matters arising.	
<b>10.22.5</b>	<p><b>WPCC Forum/Group Meetings</b></p> <p>i. Wildlife and Conservation Forum meeting held on 26 July 2022</p> <p>The Board received and noted the draft notes of the Wildlife and Conservation Forum meeting held on 26 July 2022.</p>	
<b>10.22.6</b>	<p><b>Conservation Update</b></p> <p>The Board received and noted the Conservation and Engagement Officer's (C&amp;EO) Conservation Update.</p> <p>The Chairman congratulated the C&amp;EO and the team for the achievement of Gold Awards for both Putney Lower Common and Wimbledon Common in the 2022 London in Bloom awards, and also for Wimbledon Common winning the Common of the Year award. She commented that despite the fact that this was not (by any means) the first time that WPCC had received these awards, it did not diminish the important of these prestigious distinctions.</p> <p>The C&amp;EO thanked the Chairman and commented that the competition was marked on many different levels including welfare of users, maintenance and sustainability, conservation and community involvement. The award was very much a testament to the ongoing commitment of all those who help to look after the Commons.</p> <p>He reported on the following:</p> <p><b>Grassland Management</b> – There were three areas of the Commons managed as meadow where the grass is cut and then collected. In 2022 this had been increased by another five areas, two on Putney Lower Common, Putney Heath Fairground Site, Wilberforce Field (opposite the Study) and an area opposite West Place. The bulk of the work was carried out by contractors, with some of the smaller areas managed by staff.</p> <p><b>Heathland</b> – Volunteers had been working throughout the year to remove scrub from the heathland and recent focus had been along Centre Path and Green Ride, Hookhamslade Pond, and the main Putney Heath near Ladies Mile.</p> <p>Work would start shortly on heather cutting in areas where the heather has become leggy and is degenerating.</p> <p><b>Invasive Species</b> – Over the past few months, work along the Commons' two sections of the Beverley Brook on Wimbledon Common and Putney Lower Common has included volunteer litter picking events, Himalayan balsam removal and the treatment of Japanese knotweed.</p>	

	<p>Tree of Heaven at Putney Lower Common had been cut back along the Cemetery Wall and the stumps will also be removed. Two trees remained but these should be removed by the end of the year.</p> <p>OB asked why the remaining 6 hectares of grassland were not being managed as meadow. The CE&amp;O commented that this was mainly due to the cost.</p> <p>SB asked how many volunteers the CE&amp;O currently had. He commented that it was around 100 at the moment. Many of the younger litter-pickers were doing the work for their Duke of Edinburgh awards and, over recent years, there had been over 170 doing this.</p> <p>In response to a question from MJ, he commented that it was thought that the air ambulance landing on the Plain had disturbed the Skylarks enough to stop them nesting. He confirmed that volunteers under 16 were required to be supervised by a parent or guardian.</p>	
<p><b>10.22.7</b></p>	<p><b>Land Management Plan</b></p> <p>The CE&amp;O gave a verbal update on the progress of the Land Management Plan.</p> <p>The Board had previously seen the Introductory Section to the Land Management Plan which included an introduction to the Commons, landscape, biological information - flora and fauna etc.</p> <p>Since then he had been mainly working on the 15 main objectives including the main habitat areas of heathland, grassland, rivers and ponds, bogs, golf course etc.</p> <p>His aim was for the Land Management Plan to be accessible to anyone and therefore each section included an introduction to the specific area, significance of the site, historical context, cultural and aesthetic context and an ecological description. The current condition of the site was also included as well as the current management actions and an outline of the management programme for the future as well as monitoring.</p> <p>Whilst there was a lot of historical information immediately available for the Commons, a lot of research was required for some areas, such as Putney Lower Common.</p> <p>NW asked when the draft plan would be available. It was scheduled to come to the December Board meeting but the CE&amp;O advised that it was unlikely that the first draft would be available before Spring 2023. It was agreed that what was prepared would go to the Wildlife and Conservation Forum at their 15 November 2022 meeting and would then come to the Board in December 2022.</p> <p>Management Walks – The CE commented that it had been hoped to organise a series of walks to allow the CE&amp;O to explain the objectives for each of the habitats to help the Board have a better understanding</p>	<p>CE&amp;O</p>

	<p>of the Plan. It was hoped to reschedule the postponed September walk in the next few weeks and this would also hopefully include the members of the Wildlife and Conservation Forum.</p> <p>OB mentioned that the Wildlife and Conservation Forum was holding a walk on Thursday 13 October 2022 around the Common's ponds and Conservators were welcome to attend. The walk would help demonstrate the amount of work required to produce the Land Management Plan. He also commented that the completed Land Management Plan would not be a definitive document and could include recommendations for work to be better able to assess a site's condition.</p>	<p>AE-H organise walk</p>
<p>10.22.8</p>	<p><b>Chief Executive's Report – Non-Confidential Items</b></p> <p>The Board received and noted the Chief Executive's public report.</p> <p><b>Masterplan and Levy Consultation</b></p> <p>The CE reported that Resources for Change began the Phase 1 Consultation on both the Masterplan and the levy on 23 September 2022. The consultation would consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four days of face-to-face interviews with users of the Commons, obtaining their views on the Masterplan and the levy. Two of these had already been held.</li> <li>• An online survey, using Survey Monkey.</li> <li>• A public meeting, to be held on 1 November 2022, to discuss the Masterplan and the levy with members of the local community (which will be attended by Resources for Change).</li> </ul> <p>The CE reported that the Masterplan had been discussed at the recent Stakeholder Forum meeting. The members of the Forum were very supportive of the Masterplan and the proposals for future works. They were also supportive of the proposed changes to the levy, although questioned if, given the current financial climate, it was the right thing to do. It was suggested that if the increase was expressed as an actual sum of money rather than a percentage increase, it would give a better perspective.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that it was hoped to have the report summarising the feedback from the consultation, produced by Resources for Change, before Christmas 2022.</p> <p><b>Bridges</b></p> <p>MM reported that two bridges across the Beverley Brook had been restored. The first, at the Richardson Evens Memorial Playing Fields had been replaced with a wider and stronger bridge. The funds for this had been raised by the Thames Hare and Hounds. The Conservators were grateful to all the donors who had made the work possible. A grand opening and thank you event for supporters was planned for Saturday 3 December (details TBC) to which the donors and Conservators were invited.</p>	

	<p>The work to restore the bridge at Putney Lower Common was also completed in September and a formal opening was planned for Thursday 20 October 2022.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that the REMPF bridge in particular was an excellent example of collaborative working with local organisations and thanked MM for all her work.</p> <p><b>Installation of Car Park Donation Machine</b></p> <p>The CE reported that the new contactless card machine had now been installed in the Windmill Car Park and went live on 3 August 2022. Just over £1,100 had been donated to date, some three times more than might have been expected from the old coin machine.</p> <p><b>Other Fundraising Matters</b></p> <p>MM reported that an application had been made to Natural England's 'Nature for Climate: Peatland Grant Scheme' which provides funding to restore peatlands in England. WPCC had been awarded a grant of up to £48,832 to deliver a feasibility study for restoring Farm Bog and three other locations where peat had either been identified or historic maps suggested that the habitat was previously a bog.</p> <p>In response to a question, MM confirmed that the grant covered the full cost of the project.</p> <p>An application had been submitted to the South Western Railway Fund for grants for footpath improvements, particularly shared cycleways. The cost for works to five of the main paths was in the region of £120,000. The plan was to raise 80 percent of this cost via major grants, many of which request additional funds raised as 'matched funds'. The target for matched funds is 20 percent. This would be achieved by relaunching the Access for All appeal which had been so successful in raising funds for the restoration of the Inner Windmill Road. MM would start promoting this on her return from annual leave.</p> <p>In response to a question from OB, MM confirmed that all the funds raised from this appeal would be restricted to the five main paths that had been identified by Officers as being a priority for repair. OB commented that this section had not been covered in the Land Management Plan yet and there were some paths where consideration would need to be given to how they fitted in with their surrounding environment. The CE commented that the application to SWR had focused around the fund's theme and therefore prioritised shared use cycle paths. OB asked to be sent a list of the paths that were being prioritised.</p> <p><b>Events</b></p>	<p>CE&amp;O/FM</p>
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	<p><b>21 July 2022 - House of Commons Reception</b> – The final formal event of the 150th Anniversary celebrations was successfully held on 21 July 2022.</p> <p>OB commented that he had spoken to several attendees and they had never visited the Commons and he suggested perhaps ticket sales be more targeted for future events. The Chairman confirmed that Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons had been offered tickets ahead of the general public and the majority of tickets had been sold to Friends.</p> <p><b>11 September 2022 – Open Day</b> – The decision was taken to cancel the annual Commons Open Day following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The event would not be rescheduled for this year.</p> <p>Staff had considered whether the Open Day in 2023 could be combined with a celebration event for the King’s Coronation but this would depend on what date was set for that. The Conservators considered that it might be more appropriate to keep the two events separate.</p> <p><b>10 December 2022 - Carols at the Windmill</b> – The annual Carols at the Windmill event would take place at 4pm on Saturday 10 December 2022. This year the location would revert to the Windmill forecourt.</p>	
<p><b>10.22.9</b></p>	<p><b>Update on the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons</b></p> <p>SB gave a verbal report.</p> <p>She explained, for the benefit of PS, that the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons had been set up for the purpose of collective celebration and fundraising.</p> <p>All the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events had been completed: Afternoon Tea at the AELTC, Games Day and the Reception at the House of Commons. The Friends also assisted with the events to commemorate the Queen’s Jubilee and a Vigil following the death of the Queen.</p> <p>A lot of goodwill had been generated and also funds raised through memberships and donations, and the Friends had been able to contribute to both bridge projects as well as add to the general funds.</p> <p>The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Picture Competition had been very successful and a small event, to which all entrants had been invited, was held to display the 12 winning photos. The “People’s Choice” was also launched to allow the general public to choose an overall winner. This would be announced later in October. Over £230 was raised in donations on the evening, 10 of the 12 pictures had been sold raising some £400 and Wimbledon Homes had donated £500.</p> <p>A calendar had been produced from the winning images and was on sale in the Ranger’s Office for £6 or £10 for two.</p>	

	<p>Membership currently stood at 575 (equating to approximately 950 people) and events for 2023 were currently being planned.</p> <p>DH congratulated SB on introducing the local business, Cappagh, to the Commons; they had been generous with both physical and financial assistance.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked SB for all her efforts over the year.</p> <p>MM was asked to look into why some people had not received a confirmation e-mail when using the new tap to donate machine.</p>	
<b>10.22.10</b>	<p><b>General Open Meeting Agenda</b></p> <p>The Board noted the draft Agenda for the General Open Meeting on 1 November 2022 at the London Scottish Golf Club.</p> <p>The meeting would provide an opportunity for the Conservators to explain about the Masterplan and levy consultations and to encourage the public to take part in the online survey.</p> <p>Resources for Change would also be asked if they would wish to take the opportunity to carry out face to face surveys following the meeting.</p>	
<b>10.22.11</b>	<p><b>Meeting Calendar 2023</b></p> <p>The Board noted and approved the calendar of meeting dates for 2023 subject to a change to the September 2023 Finance and Investment Committee meeting.</p> <p>Electronic invitations would be sent out in due course.</p>	
<b>10.22.12</b>	<p><b>Public Questions on Matters Considered in Part A(1) of this Meeting</b></p> <p>There were no questions from the public.</p> <p>One of the Windmill Trustees was present and commented that the Windmill had now reopened and both visitor numbers and donations were back to pre-Covid levels.</p>	



Signed by the Chairman  
Diane Neil Mills

