

Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators  
Manor Cottage  
Wimbledon Common  
London SW19 5NR

Chief Executive: Simon Lee



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators**

#### **July 2017 Update**

#### **Matters Arising from Board Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

##### ***Statutory Inquiry***

On the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 the Charity Commission advised individual Conservators (Trustees) that they had made an Order under section 76(3)(g) of the Charities Act 2011 to appoint an Interim Manager.

Since his appointment the Interim Manager has met on a one to one basis with the current Trustees, the Chief Executive and a number of previous Trustees of the Charity. It is anticipated that the Interim Manager will prepare his preliminary report for the Charity Commission sometime during August 2017. It will be for the Charity Commission to then determine how the Charity should proceed.

The Board continues to provide full cooperation to the Statutory Inquiry and to the Interim Manager.

##### ***Other Governance Issues***

At its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> July the Board agreed the date for the 2018 triennial election be set for Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Appointed Conservator Mr Michael Rappolt was nominated as the Returning Officer to work with scrutineers, Electoral Reform Services.

The Board also agreed the establishment of an Appointments Panel to progress the vacancy for the Home Office Appointed Conservator arising in early January 2018. Advertisements for this vacancy will be published in early September. The Board agreed that it needs to fill this position with someone with legal knowledge, ideally within the Charity sector, fund-raising and/or community engagement experience. Any expressions of interest should be directed towards the Ranger's Office.

##### ***Voluntary Donation Scheme – Windmill Car Park***

Some 92 responses to the consultation on the introduction of a voluntary payment scheme for parking in the Windmill Car Park were received.

57% of those who responded were levy-payers. 56% are willing to contribute and 41% believe that the voluntary charge is a good idea. People were also encouraged to provide additional comments. Commuters were seen as the biggest problems and 34% of respondents made reference to this issue. 28% of respondents believe that WPCC should introduce a compulsory charge based on length of stay or during certain time periods.

The Conservators at their recent meeting agreed that the scheme should be introduced at the Windmill Car Park on an initial one year trial basis. It is anticipated that the scheme will go live in late September 2017.

## **Inner Windmill Road Fundraising**

Looking after pathways and access routes is a vital part of the work of the Board and it is a major task to keep everything in good repair.

In June 2017 the Charity launched a fund-raising appeal to restore Inner Windmill Road. This is the main route through the Common for all our visitors - walkers, joggers, cyclists, wheelchair users and those with pushchairs - and this continued heavy use means it now urgently requires restoration.

In order to carry out restoration of this track, the Charity needs to raise in the region of £55,000 and we are appealing to people who use and love the Commons, to help us fund this major project. Each metre costs £45 to rebuild and with your help we can make a real difference to the accessibility of the Commons.

To date through generous donations, the Charity has raised over £18,000 that is dedicated towards our target.

More details about how to donate to the Access For All Appeal are on our website:

[www.wpcc.org.uk/how-to-donate/access-for-all](http://www.wpcc.org.uk/how-to-donate/access-for-all)

## **Recent Events**

On the weekend of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June 2017 the Commons' held its fourth BioBlitz event. This year's event included a small mammal trapping survey, moth trapping, a bat walk, a bird walk, the Quekett Microscopical Club, two guided nature walks and an interactive bee talk.

The events provided a number of highlights for those involved, overall 166 different species were recorded during the weekend's events. This included 3 species of bats, twenty six species of birds, a common shrew, a weasel and a wood mouse. The BioBlitz plant survey of the habitats found along the route followed on the guided nature walks yielded 84 plant species including small colonies of Bee Orchid and Southern Marsh Orchid. Vetches were particularly evident this year in marked contrast to 2016 when the cool and rainy early summer had promoted unusually tall grass growth which suppressed the abundance of some other flowering plants.

At least 40 people attended each of the various walks and talks, providing an excellent way of engaging with visitors of all ages and increasing awareness and understanding of the rich biodiversity and the importance of the different habitats found on the Commons.

On the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017, 39 people attended a walk over Putney Heath led by senior managers. As well as learning about some of the work activities necessary to retain the Commons' heathlands and woodlands, the group also visited Seven Post Pond to see how invasive species can influence the ecosystem of aquatic habitats. The Conservation and Engagement Officer promoted an opportunity for volunteers to join him in clearing invasive weed from the pond. Anyone interested please contact the Ranger's Office.

## **Listed Memorial**

The Commons has a number of memorial stones, including War Memorials in Wimbledon Village, Roehampton and the Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields. One of the lesser known is the King's Royal Rifle Corps War Memorial located on the edge of the Wimbledon Common Golf Course off the Gravelly Rides (Grid Ref. TQ 227 718). The stone was erected to commemorate men of the King's Royal Rifle Corps who passed through the Wimbledon Common transit camp during the First World War.

The Conservators have received confirmation from Historic England that this memorial has been added to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The memorial is now listed at Grade II.

ENDS

NOTES for Editors - Wimbledon and Putney Commons is a charity managed by the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators. It was established under the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act of 1871. The Commons comprise some 1,140 acres across Wimbledon Common, Putney Heath and Putney Lower Common.

The Conservators (Trustees) were formally notified by the Charity Commission on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016 that it had opened a Statutory Inquiry. See [www.gov.uk/government/news/new-charity-investigation-Wimbledon-and-Putney-Commons-conservators](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-charity-investigation-Wimbledon-and-Putney-Commons-conservators) for further details.

Contact: Simon Lee, Chief Executive

Tel: 020 8788 7655, E-mail: [rangersoffice@wpcc.org.uk](mailto:rangersoffice@wpcc.org.uk) website: [www.wpcc.org.uk](http://www.wpcc.org.uk)