

Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators (WPCC)
Manor Cottage
Wimbledon Common London SW19 5NR
Chief Executive: Simon Lee



MEDIA RELEASE

September 2018 Board Update

At its Board Meeting on the 18th September 2018, the Board considered the following items.

Access Decision Framework

In response to increasing demand to use Wimbledon and Putney Lower Commons for semi-organised activities, the Board of Conservators approved in principle the WPCC Access Decision Framework to allow requests for access to the Commons to be considered in a comprehensive, consistent and structured manner. The framework will assess applications on the basis of compatibility with the constitutional and charitable purposes of recreation and exercise, potential interference with other users, potential damage and other relevant considerations. If necessary, arrangements setting out the conditions of use will be agreed in a written contract, which would also provide WPCC with the right to terminate on reasonable notice if there were breaches of the agreed terms.

Review of Outdoor Learning

The use of the Common by outdoor learning groups was considered. Although the Commons have been used by some groups for several years, there has been a substantial growth in the popularity of this outdoor activity for young children. The Board agreed that outdoor learning is compatible with the Conservators overriding duties and its charitable purposes however use needed to be assessed in terms of the geographic demand. It was agreed that where groups were authorised to use the Commons, the activity must be regulated through a licence arrangement.

Clarification of Guidelines for the Triennial Election Procedures

Clarification of guidelines and procedures for the Conservators triennial elections were considered under four sections:

- Part A – Returning Officer Role, Responsibilities and Duties
- Part B – Role of the Scrutineer
- Part C – Guidance for Candidates
- Part D – Guidance for Incumbent Conservators and Officials of WPCC

Following discussion, these guidelines and procedures were approved, subject to review of a final draft. The Board agreed to leave the present policy regarding election expenditure unchanged and to not introduce a limit on expenditure for candidates standing in the triennial elections and to review this position if it is considered necessary in the future.

Visitor Surveys

In an effort to better understand the perceptions, interests and demographics (including place of residence) of visitors to the Commons, WPCC launched a visitor survey over the

summer with volunteers undertaking face to face surveys at various locations around the Commons.

In addition, two on-line surveys have been launched on the charity's website, a short five minute survey and a slightly longer version. Visit our [website](#) to complete a questionnaire.

Traveller Incursion

The Chief Executive updated the Board on the traveller incursion at the Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields on the evening of the 10th September 2018. Utilising the services of a professional enforcement agency, a Writ of Possession was obtained from the High Court on the 12th September 2018 and the illegal trespassers vacated the playing fields at 6.00pm that same day. The legal and enforcements costs to the charity were in excess £18,000. The Board agreed to seek an injunction against further incursions for the entire Commons. This is in line with the actions of several local authorities in the south west London who have had to deal with the increasing number of incursions.

Information Request

A request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 was received from a levy-payer in respect of the forced sale of Mill House. The enfranchisement of Mill House was a complex matter which began in 1934 and was finally determined 12 years ago by the presiding Board of Conservators in August 2006.

WPCC is not considered a public authority for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Conservators' view was that the information requested did not fall within the definition of "environmental information" as defined under Regulation 2(1) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

In the spirit of openness and transparency that the Conservators embrace, WPCC has prepared a detailed [chronology](#) of the events from 1934 when the lease was extended to 2006 when the forced sale of the property took place.

Governance

A WPCC General Investment Policy prepared by the Finance and Investment Committee was approved, forming the basis of a request to two charity investment management firms to submit tenders to manage WPCC's investments.

The WPCC Risk Register which had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee was approved.

The [Resolutions](#) of the meeting of the Board of Conservators held on the 18th September 2018 have been posted on the Wimbledon and Putney Commons website.

ENDS

NOTES for Editors - Wimbledon and Putney Commons is a charity managed by the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators (WPCC). 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.

Contact: Simon Lee, Chief Executive

Issued 01.10.2018

Tel: 020 8788 7655, E-mail: rangersoffice@wpcc.org.uk website: www.wpcc.org.uk