

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

Chief Executive: Simon Lee



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **June 2018 Board Update**

#### **PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COMMONS**

At its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018, the Board of Conservators, having reviewed the Strategy and Business Plan, agreed three strategic priorities that will both address immediate issues and help towards securing the long term future of the Commons.

- **Long-term Masterplan** - The Commons are fortunate to be funded by a dedicated special levy which pays for the day-to-day maintenance. However, this does not provide sufficient resources for sustainable long term investment in our buildings such as the Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields pavilion and other infrastructure, including footpaths, shared-use pedestrian and cycle routes and the horse rides.

With the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commons in 2021, work will commence on the preparation of a long-term Masterplan, setting out a clear vision for the enhancement of the Commons and enabling us to investigate funding strategies to raise the additional finances to invest in the Commons. We want to support the development of a Wimbledon and Putney Commons Friends Group and to work in partnership with other organisations and user groups to obtain external grant funding. Part of that work will involve a survey to develop a better understanding of the demographics and numbers of visitors to the Commons.

- **Access Framework** – The founding legislation that established Wimbledon and Putney Commons in 1871 was clear in establishing the intention for the Commons to be used for the purposes of recreation and exercise. In meeting this objective, we therefore have a duty to ensure that the facilities that permit such access including footpaths, horse rides and cycle paths are properly maintained and accessible. Of equal importance however is our duty to properly manage competing and often conflicting demands for use of this great resource. There are increasing requests to use the Commons from a wide range of user groups and whilst the growing participation is welcome, accommodating the requests for access is an increasing challenge. To ensure that decisions relating to access requests are taken in a more systematic manner, we are developing an access decision making framework to ensure that the impact of the increasing demands are considered in line with our duties under both our founding 1871 Act and charity legislation.
- **Land Management** - The recently developed Commons Strategy identified a need to prepare a land management plan so that we have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to retain and enhance the fragile and varied habitats across the Commons. This includes opportunities to increase the diversity and structure of our woodlands and develop and protect the rare and important heathland habitats for wildlife.

Whilst local experts who understand the Commons ecology are volunteering to help develop the Plan, the views of the visitors who use the Commons will also play an important part in its development and a consultation exercise to understand these views will commence in July 2018.

## **GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

- The [Resolutions](#) of the meeting of the Board of Conservators held on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018 have been posted on the Wimbledon and Putney Commons website.
- At the 18<sup>th</sup> June meeting, the Board also agreed the Terms of Reference of the [Finance and Investment Committee](#) and the [Constitution Working Group](#) and these have also been published on the Wimbledon and Putney Commons website.
- The Board also agreed as part of its wider transparency agenda to publish information for a number of measures including the type and number of incidents dealt with, complaints/compliments, donations and volunteer hours. These are included in the resolutions. (see the link above)

## **COMPLAINT AND ENQUIRY PROCEDURE**

Staff on the Commons pride themselves with the way they handle a large number, and a wide variety, of queries and issues raised by visitors on a daily basis. Occasionally a matter may not reach a satisfactory conclusion and in order to ensure a formal complaint is dealt with appropriately and impartially, the Conservators have agreed a revised and updated Complaint and Enquiry procedure. This has been drafted in accordance principles set out by the Charity Commission. This will shortly go live on the Conservators' website.

## **TRIENNIAL ELECTION - Complaint Update**

In the May 2018 media update we advised that the Charity Commission had informed us of complaints received in relation to the conduct of Conservators and officers during the Charity's recent election. The Commission has confirmed that they are investigating the matter as part of the Statutory Inquiry.

At its meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018, the Board agreed that in the longer term there was a need to consider updating the Election Bye-laws but in the short term, and in time for the 2021 election, there will be a codification of the rules for candidates and internal procedures, such as the responsibilities and authority of the Returning Officer, the conduct of incumbent Conservators and rules for staff.

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

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)