

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MITCHAM COMMON CONSERVATORS
(A Statutory Corporation constituted by the Metropolitan Commons
(Mitcham) Supplemental Act 1891)
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12th June 2019 AT 6.30PM

Present:

Mr R. Bailey (Vice Chairman)
Mr. J. Cheetham
Ms. A. Dines
Cllr. N. Draper (Chairman) - present until item 9
Mr. M. Groves
Cllr. R. Makin
Cllr. C. Williams

In Attendance:

Mr. M. Boyle – Manager of Mitcham Common
Mr. P. Moorhouse - Warden
Mr. R. Auld - Investment Fund Manager (present until item 9)
Mr. D. Napier - Leisure & Culture Greenspaces Manager, Merton
Mr J. Kirby - Friends of Mitcham Common (present for Part 1)
Ms. L. Parry – Minute taker

Absent:

Cllr. N. Degrad
Ms. A. Fairweather
Cllr. C. Fraser
Cllr. N. Garratt
Cllr. J. Henry
Cllr. S. King

1. Appointment of Conservators

The Manager opened the meeting and confirmed the following appointments of Conservators:

London Borough of Croydon: Councillors N. Degrad, C. Fraser, S. King and Mr. J. Cheetham appointed until May 2020

London Borough of Merton: Councillors N. Draper, J. Henry, R. Makin and Mr. M. Groves appointed until May 2020

London Borough of Sutton: Councillors C. Williams, N. Garratt, Ms A. Dines and Mr R. Bailey already appointed until July 2019.

Corporation of the City of London: Ms A. Fairweather already appointed until May 2021.

2. **Appointment of Chairman**

The Manager asked for nominations for the position of Chairman for the forthcoming year. There was one nomination for Cllr N. Draper which was formally seconded. Cllr Draper was then appointed with unanimous agreement and thanks for taking on the role again.

Cllr Draper apologised that he had to leave the meeting early due to a conflicting commitment at 7:00pm.

3. **Appointment of Vice Chairman**

Cllr Draper called for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year. There was one nomination for Mr Bailey which was formally seconded. Mr Bailey was then appointed with unanimous agreement and thanks for taking on the role again.

4. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. C. Fraser, Cllr. J. Henry, and Cllr. S. King.

5. **Declarations of Interest**

Conservators were asked if they had any conflicts of interest and none were declared.

6. **Minutes of the last Meeting Held on 13th March 2019**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate account and were duly signed and dated by the Chairman.

7. **Matters Arising**

The Chairman took the meeting through the minutes page by page to identify any matters arising:

Page 2: Croydon Road Pedestrian Phase: The Manager reported that the licence for this work was yet to be drafted, but assuming it is completed in a timely

manner, the work on the Croydon Road Pedestrian Phase is scheduled to start on 22nd July and will last 6 - 8 weeks. The junction of Windmill and Croydon Roads will be closed to traffic and re-routed via Commonside East.

The contractors Conways have requested use of part of the overspill car park for a compound whilst undertaking the works. Conservators formally agreed to this request with the condition that Conways agree to in-kind work as directed by the Manager.

RESOLVED: Manager to inform Conways that they can use the overspill car park for the duration of the works for a compound but will provide in-kind work as payment for the use of the car park.

Page 3: Planning Application 339a/b Commonside East: Discussion of this item was taken In Committee.

Page 5: Seven Islands Pond: Following consultation with the Friends, there was agreement that the destocking of the ponds should be cancelled. The Manager asked Conservators to be aware that the water levels had been very low, although the recent heavy rain may have alleviated the conditions to some extent.

8. Investments – Portfolio Valuation (enclosed for Members)- Report from Mr. R. Auld

Conservators were in receipt of a current portfolio valuation report and a letter outlining recommendations. Richard Auld explained that his transaction recommendations were based on the current markets and to ensure that the risk profile is low.

He recommended:

- 1) Reduce the holding in Unilever by £10,000 and hold the proceeds in cash.
- 2) Purchase a new holding with Burford Capital with an investment of £20,000
- 3) Sell the current holding in Edinburgh Investment Trust and hold the proceeds in cash.
- 4) With proceeds of the sale of Edinburgh Investment Trust purchase a holding with Mid Wynd International Trust.

RESOLVED: Conservators approved the recommendations unanimously.

At the conclusion to discussion the Chairman thanked Richard Auld for his advice and his attendance at the meeting which was very much appreciated, and at this point both the Chairman and Richard Auld left the meeting.

9. **Administration and Management Report**

Mr R. Bailey took over the Chairmanship of the meeting at this point.

The Manager explained that the Administration and Management Report was largely for information.

Under 1.2.3 Commonsides East highway verge, the Manager explained that at the Inspection members had noted that in places the verge on the Common was being eroded by vehicle encroachment and recommended that Merton's Highway Team should be contacted, with a request that consideration be given to raising the highway kerb. The Manager sought Conservators formal agreement for this action, which was duly given .

RESOLVED: Manager to contact Merton Highway Team re request for raising of highway kerb. Update at the next meeting.

With regard to the Spring Inspection, the Vice Chair asked Conservators to note that the attendance at the bi annual inspections had been going down, and he urged everyone to try and prioritise these inspections in their diaries. It is very important that Conservators have a good understanding of the management requirements of the Common and the current priorities and on-going work etc. It was noted that the next inspection will be on Sunday 22nd September at 10.30am .

2. **Countryside Stewardship:** The application for Countryside Stewardship was submitted to the Rural Payments Agency in May. The Manager said that he was not sure when he would receive a response but hoped to do so over the summer. He had received notification that the assessment of the grassland has been approved as a reasonable report.

10. **Income and Expenditure (Until end of May 2019)**

There were no particular areas to highlight one month into the new financial year. The Manager did ask Conservators to note that the favourable variance of £1,700 in Investment Income was likely to even out as the year proceeded.

11. **Friends of Mitcham Common** -To report on recent activities and to raise any relevant matters

Mr Kirby explained that an AGM had been held recently and he was pleased to report that a full Committee had been established, with appointment of a new Treasurer, Chair, Secretary and Membership Secretary, with other ad hoc appointments bringing a total committee membership of 10. Mr Kirby was appointed as Secretary. Cllr Whelton, a former Conservator, has been elected as Chair.

There was agreement within the Friends that it was important to have this structure in place and the Committee will be aiming to meet on the first Thursday of each

month with a view to undertaking business and the opportunity for people to get to know each other. The Committee included people with skills in social media, printing and administration.

It was noted that Martin Boyle had attended the meeting of the AGM and requested that the Friends provide a letter of support for the Acid Grassland project and that they give consideration to making a financial donation. Mr Kirby said that this request had been received positively.

Mr Kirby said that Friends were very committed to working closely with the Conservators in the united cause of providing active support for the good of the Common.

With regard to future litter picks it was agreed that it would be helpful if the Friends liaise with Martin Boyle if they are intending to undertake litter picks on the Common, as he will be able to advise on the areas of highest priority.

A query was raised about Wingate Crescent/land exchange. The Manager explained that Wingate Crescent is not owned as part of the Common and therefore has nothing to do with Conservators, and has never been the subject of a land exchange.

At the conclusion to this item the Vice Chairman thanked Mr Kirby and Friends for their support.

12. Wandle Valley Regional Park

Mr J. Cheetham said that there was nothing to report at the current meeting as the next Wandle Valley Regional Park meeting would be taking place in another 10 days time.

13. Appointment to Education Trust

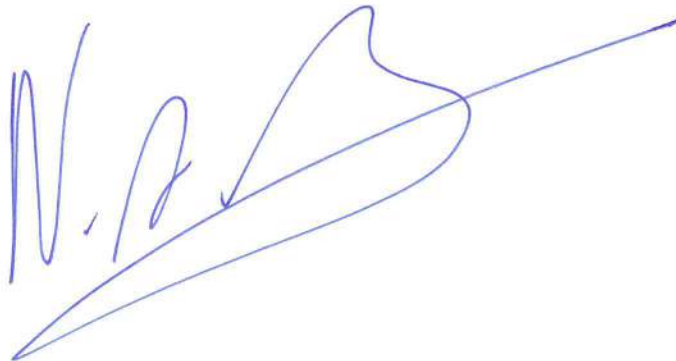
Following the death of Cllr Maggie Mansell there was a vacancy on the Education Trust. It was not essential that this position was filled but Conservators had the option to appoint one more member to become a Trustee alongside Cllr Draper, Mr. M. Groves and Mr J. Cheetham. No one present at the meeting wished to put themselves forward for this role.

14. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 25th September 2019. Annual Inspection 22nd September 2019 10.30am

15. Any Other Business

None

The meeting was closed at 7.10pm and members of the public left.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'N. B.' followed by a large, stylized flourish that extends diagonally upwards and to the right.