

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MITCHAM COMMON CONSERVATORS
(A Statutory Corporation constituted by the Metropolitan Commons
(Mitcham) Supplemental Act 1891)
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13th March 2019 AT 6.30PM

Present:

Mr R. Bailey (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. N. Degrads
Ms. A. Dines
Cllr. N. Draper (Chairman)
Mr. M. Groves
Cllr. S. King
Cllr. A. Mundy
Cllr. R. Makin

In Attendance:

Mr. M. Boyle – Manager of Mitcham Common
Mr. P. Moorhouse - Warden
Ms. M. Nunzet - Friends of Mitcham Common (present for Part 1)
Ms. L. Parry – Minute taker

Absent:

Mr. J. Cheetham
Ms. A. Fairweather
Cllr. C. Fraser
Cllr. N. Garratt
Cllr. C. Williams

1. Appointment of Conservators

London Borough of Croydon: Councillor N. Degrads and Councillor C. Fraser replacing Councillor M. Mansell and Councillor J. Campbell.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. There was a minute's silence in memory of Cllr Maggie Mansell and in acknowledgement of her work and dedication to Mitcham Conservators.

The new appointments were announced and introductions were made. Cllr Degrads was warmly welcomed and she explained that she is a councillor for Crystal Palace ward and has a particular interest in green spaces.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Fraser, Mr Cheetham, Ms Fairweather, Cllr Williams and Mr D Napier.

3. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman asked if anyone had any known conflicts of interest in the current agenda and none were declared.

4. Minutes of the last Meeting held on 5th December 2018

The Chairman took the meeting through the previous minutes page by page for accuracy and they were agreed with no amendments and subsequently signed and dated by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising

- **Croydon Road Shared Path:** There was still an on-going problem with parking. The local councillors are aware and have been in discussion with Merton services.
- **De-stocking of the ponds:** Discussed under item 8
- **Redhouse Road:** The Manager reported that there had been an incursion by travellers the previous month and a large fly tip had resulted. The installation of the bund had prevented the fly tipping extending to the Common, so Conservators were not liable for clearance costs. The Manager asked Conservators to note that the site has been sold and is empty with no planning applications submitted. The new owners are very positive about security and will be improving arrangements on the road to prevent further incursions in the future.
- **Acid Grassland:** The Manager reported that he was currently sourcing quotes and a grant application to Virador will be made later this year.
- **High Court Injunction Order:** The Chairman asked Conservators to note that Merton was being represented in Court today with a view to obtaining a 3 year injunction order against persons unknown occupying land and/or depositing waste on land' **It was subsequently confirmed that the Judge at the Royal Courts of Justice on 13th March granted a further injunction to protect the council's property plus Mitcham Common from unauthorised occupation for three years.*
- **Croydon Road Pedestrian Phase:** The Manager reported that Merton had agreed in principle but to date a licence agreement had not been produced.
- **Golf Club:** The Manager had met with the Golf Club and discussed the issue of the waste water. He has not contacted environmental health as yet but is willing to do so if the Golf Club feels that the issue is a continuing problem.

6. Administration and Management Report

Planning Application 339a/b Commonside East: The Manager reported that work for the construction of the bund will take place soon.

Forthcoming Events: Wild in the City have not yet signed the licence agreement though they have expressed their intention to do so. The Manager said that he would keep Conservators informed.

London Search and Rescue Team training: Conservators' agreement was sought for running training events on the Common during 2019. Conservators agreed to this unanimously and expressed their support, recommending that there should be a press release about this valuable training on the Common.

RESOLVED: Manager to inform London Search and Rescue that Conservators have approved training events on the Common and recommended that the press is informed when the training takes place.

Website: Conservators noted that the website had been refreshed and agreed that there should be a page which provides information about the possibility of some areas of the Common being used for commercial purposes.

RESOLVED: Manager to ensure that the website is further updated to include a page which provides information about the opportunities which the Common offers for commercial events.

7. Income and Expenditure (Until end of February 2019)

The Manager explained that as a whole the report showed that where there had been any elements of overspend these were balanced by underspend.

Under Income, Conservators were asked to note that £7,000 should have been received from the Rural Payment Agency but payments are late.

Q: Is there assurance that the payment will be received, and is there contingency to cover this gap at the present time?

A: Yes, it is fully expected that the payment will be received eventually. Ultimately the maintenance of the Common is set according to the amount of funding the Conservators expect to receive.

At the conclusion to this item the Chairman expressed Conservators' thanks to Martin Boyle for his financial management.

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

Melanie Nunzet provided Conservators with an update from the Friends:

- The Friends had been pleased to welcome two new members who were taking an active role with administration and production of the Magpie
- The Annual General Meeting will take place on 9th May 2019

- Two meetings for production of the Magpie had taken place and there had been a good attendance with people of different ages.
- The Big Lunch is planned for 2nd June 2019
- Friends will have a stall at the Mitcham Carnival
- The plaque on the bench will be placed this week.

A number of questions were posed by Friends for the Conservators:

Q: Melanie led a walk the previous week and had identified that a path which was previously open near Beddington Lane was now impassable.

A: The Manager said that this had been a temporary path only whilst Beddington Lane had been closed.

Q: Friends would like to request that they are involved in the consultation process at an earlier stage for the new Management Plan.

A: The Chairman said that Friends would as always be consulted and asked for comment on the draft Management Plan, and their opinion was very much valued. Nevertheless it was important that there is understanding that Conservators are responsible and accountable for the strategy and scope of the Plan and it is as such right that Conservators are trusted for undertaking that work which is incumbent upon them for the office they hold

Q: Friends would like to know details of planning for commercial music events at the earliest opportunity so that they can feed in to the process.

A: The Chairman explained that every time a music festival event is planned there has to be negotiation first and this is a confidential business process. Conservators will be listening to determine whether approval for any proposed event is the right decision but will not be in a position to say in advance. Licence agreements will be drawn up as appropriate if an event is agreed.

Q: Could the Wandle vistas priority be highlighted in the Management Plan to include cutting back of trees?

A: The Chairman said that during the Spring Inspection on 12th May the Conservators will visit the relevant sites and report back to Friends after that time.

Q: A member of the Friends has raised a concern about cars driving along Commonside East encroaching on to the Common and has requested that a raised kerb is put in to prevent this from happening.

A: The Manager said that he was aware of the concerns and had responded to the person who had raised the issue. The option of putting in a raised kerb was not straight forward and would require discussion with Highways.

At this point the Manager and Chairman asked the meeting to consider the issue of destocking of the ponds. Conservators and Friends were reminded that at the last meeting a decision was taken to destock the ponds of fish. The Manager had subsequently contacted a commercial contractor,

and after a protracted period a licence had been issued for the destocking. However, the contractor has informed the Manager that the fish in the ponds have got parasitic infection and as such they cannot be transferred to another water body and would have to be destroyed. With this information, the Manager and Chairman asked Conservators and Friends if they were still in favour of destocking?

After discussion the consensus of opinion was that it would not be desirable to go ahead with destocking. It was noted that there is no harm to human health if the fish are consumed.

It was agreed that the Friends would be consulted and asked to report back to the Manager within the next week. On the assumption that the majority of Friends support the decision not to destock the ponds in the light of the new information, the Manager will then contact the contractor and withdraw the request for destocking.

RESOLVED: Following consultation with Friends the Manager and Chairman to liaise, with the likelihood that the destocking will be cancelled. Update at the next meeting.

9. Investments Portfolio

Investments Recommendation:

Conservators were in receipt of the Investments Portfolio report and a number of recommendations from Richard Auld, Investment manager. All recommendations, were formally approved by the Conservators as follows:

- To sell holdings in WPP
- To reduce the holding in Diageo by 300 shares
- To increase the holding in BT Group by utilising £5,000
- To increase the holding in Murray International utilising the balance of cash made from sale of shares.

RESOLVED: Manager to contact Richard Auld and authorise him to go ahead with the recommendations.

10. Annual Programme of Meetings 2019/2020 – Proposed dates:

Spring Inspection: Sunday 12th May 2019

June Board Meeting: Wednesday 12th June 2019

Annual Inspection: Sunday 22nd September 2019

September Board Meeting: Wednesday 25th September 2019

December Board Meeting: Wednesday 4th December 2019

March Board Meeting: Wednesday 11th March 2020

The above dates were formally approved.

11. Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust

No report for the current meeting.

10. Date of Next Meeting: Spring Inspection 12th May, Board meeting on 12th June 2019.

12. Any Other Business

None.

W. H. ✓
12/06/19.