

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MITCHAM COMMON CONSERVATORS
(A Statutory Corporation constituted by the Metropolitan Commons
(Mitcham) Supplemental Act 1891)
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4th December 2019 AT 6.30PM

Present:

Mr R. Bailey (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. N. Draper (Chairman)
Mr. J. Cheetham
Mr. M. Groves
Cllr. J. Henry
Cllr. A. Pelling
Cllr. C. Williams

In Attendance:

Mr. M. Boyle – Manager of Mitcham Common
Mr. P. Moorhouse - Warden
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. Degradis
Ms A. Dines
Ms. A. Fairweather
Cllr. N. Garratt
Cllr. S. King

1. Appointment of Conservators

London Borough of Croydon: Councillor A. Pelling replacing Councillor C. Fraser. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The appointment of Cllr. A. Pelling was confirmed, and Cllr. Pelling was welcomed to the Board.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms Dines, Ms Fairweather, Cllr King and Cllr Makin.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

4. Minutes (enclosed) of the last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th September 2019 were agreed as a true account and were duly signed by the Chairman and passed to the Manager.

5. Matters Arising

P4. In response to the Friends' request that the accuracy of the **information boards** on the Common should be checked, the Manager confirmed that they had been checked. It was true to say that there were now 3 or 4 paths detailed on the boards which were no longer maintained. No complaints have been received.

Countryside Stewardship: The Manager confirmed that the application for Countryside Stewardship funding had been successful, but unfortunately the Golf Course had not been recognised within this due to a technical issue; because the funding cannot be allocated to an area which is primarily for sporting purposes, the Golf course could not be included. There is no appeal process.

6. Investments: Portfolio Valuation (enclosed for Members)- Report from Mr. R. Auld

No recommendations from Mr Auld for any portfolio changes at this time.

Cllr Pelling asked a question about whether or not consideration has been given to ethical investments and in particular whether Conservators were still minded to support investments in fossil fuel companies. The Chairman and Manager explained that there had been discussions 2/3 years previously and a small subgroup had been formed to look at this issue. The Chairman said that he would support the reinstatement of a sub group to look again at the issues of ethical investments, in consultation with the Conservators' adviser Richard Auld.

It was agreed that the subgroup membership will be : Richard Bailey, John Cheetham, Andrew Pelling, with Nick Draper in an ex officio role. Mr Bailey agreed to co-ordinate discussions and questions, to be shared with Richard Auld in advance of the next meeting.

The Chair said that he would also wish to open up the issues of the climate emergency to any other areas of consideration which Conservators and Friends felt relevant at any time.

RESOLVED: Richard Bailey to co-ordinate discussions with the ethical investments sub group and Richard Auld. Chairman to contact Richard Auld and invite him to attend the next meeting when there will be questions and discussion on the issue of ethical investments.

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

It was noted that Expenditure was in line with expectations.

Under Income the Manager highlighted that the final payments under Environmental Stewardship (which ended in February 2019) had been fully paid up and the final figure had been higher than anticipated.

Some income under Facility Fees had been received from filming on the Common for three days for some scenes for a drama due to be shown on BBC 2 on 16th December, called Responsible Child.

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

Mr Kirby reported that that there had not been any meetings since May, but the Friends continued to be active and were communicating via email and online.

A Winter edition of The Magpie has recently been produced and this includes a tribute to Janet Morris. The Magpie will be available online and has also been printed which members felt was important to ensure that people without access to a computer are able to read the publication.

The Friends have agreed to fund a memorial bench for Janet Morris and were in the process of consulting on and agreeing the wording to go on the bench plaque.

A litter pick was due to take place on Saturday 7th December, and the area on Commonsides East has been selected in liaison with the Manager. Volunteers will be wearing the high vis vests with the Friends' logo.

A Christmas Magpie social event has been arranged and will be taking place on Thursday 5th December. The Mayor has been invited to attend. Friends were grateful to John Beaumont for arranging this social gathering.

John Beaumont then spoke and requested that the Chairman submits the article about Janet Morris, published in The Magpie, to the My Merton publication. The Chairman explained that the submission of the article would need to be agreed and made by the Friends as a group, and not a single member. The Chairman therefore recommended that this issue is taken back to the Friends for them to consider whether or not they wished to submit the article. It would not be appropriate for the Conservators to make the submission on their behalf. The Chairman also explained that there is a long lead in time/deadline for submissions for this publication and there is always competition for space.

9. Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust

Mr Cheetham reported that the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust had not met since 9th January 2019. The next meeting is scheduled for 8th January 2020. Mr Cheetham said that he was very concerned about the demise of the organisation at the current time and felt strongly that at the present time trustees were not doing their duty because they were not meeting. It was recognised that since the Chief Executive left there has been no co-ordination or leadership.

Conservators agreed that they would not wish to see the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust being disbanded and they wished to give their strong support to it being revitalised to carry out an important role in representing the interests of the Wandle Valley.

RESOLVED: Chairman and Manager to liaise and write a letter of support for the continuance of the Wandle Valley Regional Trust.

10. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 11 March 2020

11. Any Other Business

None



11/03/20