

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Mitcham Common Conservators**

**Held on Wednesday 6th December 2017 at 6.30pm**

**At the Mill House Ecology Centre, Windmill Road, Mitcham**

**Present:**

Mr R. Bailey

Mr. J. Cheetham

Dr. D. Coleman

Cllr. N. Draper (Vice Chairman)

Cllr. T. Godfrey (Chairman)

Mr. M. Groves

Cllr. S. King ( Present from 7.15pm for Part 2, the In Committee meeting)

Cllr. R. Makin

Cllr. I. Munn

Cllr. C. Williams

**In Attendance:**

Mr. M. Boyle – Manager of Mitcham Common

Mr P. Moorhouse - Warden of Mitcham Common

Mr D. Napier - Leisure & Culture Greenspaces Manager, Merton

Ms. M. Nunzet - Friends of Mitcham Common (Present for Part 1)

Ms. L. Parry – Minute taker

**Absent:**

Ms Anne Fairweather

Cllr M. Mansell

Ms. J. Russell

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**1. Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies for absence had been received from Anne Fairweather via John Cheetham.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Conservators were asked if they had any known pecuniary or other potential conflicts of interest in the current agenda and none were declared.

**3. Minutes of the last Meeting Held on 27th September 2017**

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

4. **Matters Arising**

**Page 2. Item 5.** The Manager reported that he had spoken to the solicitors concerning recouping payment for the damaged tree, and he was now in the process of writing a report which the solicitors will then use to pursue a claim.

**Page 4, Item 6.** The Manager reported re the Meadows Development that the fencing had been completed to a satisfactory standard and a bund had been put in. The owners had then asked the Manager if the trees on the edge of the development site could be pruned back. The Manager had explained that this was not the Conservators' responsibility as it should have been completed by the developers prior to work beginning as set out in the planning conditions. The Tree Preservation Officer had been consulted and the developers will now submit an application for them to be pruned on the understanding that they will pay the costs.

Q: What will be the effects on the trees?

A: The effects will be minimal

Q: Is there any issue with the tree roots affecting the new boundary wall?

A: No, the roots are fine.

5. **Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust –Ms Sue Morgan, CEO, WVRPT**

The Manager reported that Ms Morgan had contacted him during the afternoon to explain that regretablely she was unable to attend the meeting as planned due to a family emergency. Ms Morgan would be providing a report for Conservators outlining the points she would have spoken about had she been able to attend.

**RESOLVED: Manager to circulate the report from Ms Sue Morgan to Conservators when it is received.**

6. **Administration and Management Report**

The first two items of the report were for information and there were no questions arising. Nick Draper commented that the high level of responses to the consultation on the Public Space Protection Orders was a very good result.

Item 3: Correction; The advertising boards on the Common are in fact by the Ravensbury Arms and not by the former Goat Public House. The boards are advertising a winter event in Ashburton Park. Conservators were aware that Monty Hammond was planning to run a summer event on the fairsite.

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

Melanie Nunzet came to the table and gave the following report:

- The Friends had held a successful Annual Review attended by 37 people. During the event Friends sold cards and also heard from Martin Boyle about the issues with funding.
- There had been plans for a subgroup to meet and address issues relating to flytipping on the Common but this has not happened. Melanie said she was interested in raising the possibility with her colleagues of making some expenditure on CCTV from the Friends' reserves.
- Due to lack of volunteers at the current time no litter pick is planned.
- There will be no Christmas party due to lack of interest this year...
- The Friends wrote to Mitcham Council in response to the Air Quality Action Plan
- The Friends are aiming to publish the next issue of The Magpie just before Christmas.

On behalf of Conservators the Chairman thanked Melanie and the Friends for their continued support and feedback.

#### 8. **Income and Expenditure (Until end of November 2017 )**

The Manager took Conservators through the Income and Expenditure Report to explain some of the current variances:

**Transport:** The apparent overspend of £975 at this stage in the year will even out by the end of the year.

**Suppliers and Services:** Currently showing an underspend of £11,546, this will even out by the end of the year.

**Income:** Investment income currently shows a positive £16,217 variance. This is because the portfolio receives two main payments during the course of the year, but the spread will even out as the year progresses. However, there is an expectation that the final figure will be approximately £3,000 higher than the base estimate set at the beginning of the year.

**Environmental Stewardship:** The Rural Payment Agency's payment timetable has changed and consequently the 12 month period cover by the payments does not follow the April to March financial year. Therefore the variance of £3,082 currently showing on the schedule relates to the first part of 2018 financial year and will be carried forward. The Manager also explained that the current agreement expires in January 2019 and there is no automatic renewal. The Manager will be pursuing a re-application in the New Year but asked Conservators to bear in mind that there is a level of uncertainty about the future following the Brexit decision.

**Q:** For which aspects of Conservators' work does the Environmental Stewardship funding cover?

**A:** The Conservators currently receive £12,000 per annum for management of the meadows, the heathland and the acid grassland. It does not cover the woodland or the amenity area.

**Q:** Theoretically, if the Environmental Stewardship funding continues past 2019 would it be possible for the Conservators to receive more funding if greater areas of acid grassland were created?

**A:** The potential funding increase would not be significant. The monies received are £200 per hectare which is half the true cost of managing the land.

**Facility Licences:** When setting the budget estimate the Manager had to make a considered guess on likely income. In fact the Conservators have been able to bring in additional licence income which was not anticipated at the beginning of the year, namely £1,000 for filming on Fairsite, and £2,000 for the Meadows Development

Nick Draper commented that the financial income and expenditure report indicated very good stewardship. Going forwards he recommended the inclusion of narrative so that there is complete clarity about the way in which the finance is responsibly managed, the uncertainty over future funding and the possible consequences for stewardship of the Common.

**RESOLVED: Nick Draper to liaise with Martin Boyle to produce a narrative to be published alongside the end of year Income and Expenditure report.**

**9. Investments: Portfolio Valuation (enclosed for Members)**

There were no recommendations from Charles Stanley and Conservators formally noted the portfolio valuation as it stood at the current time which was healthy.

**10. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 7 March 2018**

The Chairman informed the meeting that the next meeting will be his last as he is stepping down from Croydon Council.

**11. Any Other Business**

None.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the public part of the meeting at 18.50pm.

