

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MITCHAM COMMON
CONSERVATORS
(A Statutory Corporation constituted by the Metropolitan
Commons
(Mitcham) Supplemental Act 1891)
HELD on WEDNESDAY 10th June 2026 at 6.00pm**

Present:

Mr. J. Cheetham
Cllr. R. Daoud
Cllr. M. Johnson
Mr. N. Jones
Cllr. D. Tchil, Vice Chair
Cllr M. Whelton, Chair
Cllr M. Willis

In Attendance:

Mr. M. Boyle – Manager of Mitcham Common
Mr. P. Moorhouse - Warden of Mitcham Common
Mr. R. Auld – Investments Manager (present for items 1 – 8)
Mr. W. Brice – Chair of the Friends of Mitcham Common
Ms. L. Parry - Minute Taker

Absent:

Cllr R. Clifton
Cllr. G Manly
Cllr. S. Roche
Cllr. Foster
Mr. A. Kaufmann

1. Appointment of Conservators

London Borough of Croydon: Councillors Rym Daoud, Mark Johnson, Scott Roche and Mr John Cheetham appointed until May 2027.

London Borough of Merton: Councillors Gill Manly, Martin Whelton and Matthew Willis appointed until May 2027

London Borough of Sutton: Councillors Richard Clifton, Tom Foster, Dave Tchil and Mr Norman Jones already appointed until July 2026.

The appointments of Conservators as listed were noted.

Cllr Whelton also updated Conservators that Cllr D. Johnston will be re-joining the Board following an administrative error.

2. Appointment of Chair

A nomination for the appointment of Cllr Martin Whelton was received and seconded. No other nominations were received.

There was unanimous agreement in support of Martin Whelton's appointment as Chair which was formally confirmed, with thanks to Martin for serving for a further term of office as Chair.

3. Appointment of Vice Chair

A nomination for the appointment of Cllr Dave Tchil was received and seconded. No other nominations were received.

There was unanimous agreement in support of Dave Tchil's appointment as Vice Chair which was formally confirmed, with thanks to Dave for serving for a further term of office as Vice Chair.

4. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Foster, Cllr Clifton, Cllr Manly and Mr Kaufmann

5. Declarations of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

6. Minutes of the last Meeting Held on 18th March 2026

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

7. Matters Arising

Management Plan: 2026 Work Programme Virtual Orienteering (Explore Outdoors). Friends and The Manager had reviewed and agreed the locations of QR plaques on the Common. These will be installed over the next few weeks and the project will go live in early July 2026. Initially the QR codes will direct users to a series of orienteering trails on the Common, but over time the codes will support more detailed information about the Common. As soon as the project goes live a press release will announce the news.

Q: Will there still be information included on Information Boards as well as the digital information, bearing in mind that not everyone has technology or is able to access information via technical devices?

A: There are no plans to remove any of the existing boards. It will be up to Conservators in the future to decide if/how much information they wish to include on information panels versus information which can be accessed via an app/use of QR codes

7. Investment: Portfolio Valuation (enclosed for Members)- Report from Mr Richard Auld

Conservators were in receipt of the Portfolio current valuation. Mr Auld reported that the portfolio was in good health with capital growth and income generation. Mr Auld reminded Conservators that the focus was to ensure that the portfolio was holding shares and stocks which were at minimum risk, whilst raising a good level of income.

Mr Auld said that the Conservators had **£39,400 available for re-investment which he recommended is used to add to stocks in UK Treasury**. This was agreed unanimously.

During discussion the Chair highlighted the importance of the portfolio to enable support and maintenance of the Common in perpetuity. The income generated was in the region of £80,000 per annum. The Chair paid tribute to Cllr Vincent Talbot who had been a previous Chair and who in 1978 had taken the decision to licence landscaping works on the Common and wisely invest the proceeds in an investment portfolio. The Conservators were also very grateful to Richard Auld for his expertise in managing the portfolio on behalf of Conservators.

RESOLVED: Mr Auld to go ahead and re-invest £39,400 in additional stocks with UK Treasury.

9 Appointment to Finance Sub-Group

The Manager explained that the purpose of the Finance Sub-Group is to meet between meetings if there are any important financial/investment decisions which need to be taken in advance of the next meeting. The Chair and Vice Chair are members, representing Merton and Sutton, and there is currently a vacancy for a representative from Croydon. Cllr Daoud confirmed that she would be happy to join the group.

RESOLVED: Cllr Daoud to be a third member of the Finance Sub Group

10. Administration and Management Report

Roadside Litter and Fly-tipping: The manager reported that the Working party will continue to meet and is grateful to representatives from the Friends for their participation. The Manager's priorities will focus on 1) resolving the current unacceptable situation of no street cleaning of Windmill Rd or Cedars Ave public footpaths by Merton 2) Better control of domestic waste from properties on Commonside East from Abbots Rd to Pollards Hill Estate. Local resident(s) using Mill House skip to fly-tip.

Update on recent fly-tip off Brookmead Rd and action by Merton

Enforcement Team. CCTV seems to be a successful deterrent but doesn't often lead to prosecutions. In summary the Manager said that he concludes that at present fly-tipping is not too much of a problem, but residents dumping domestic rubbish and roadside litter is more of a problem.

RESOLVED: Update on progress with resolving lack of street cleaning on the public footpaths on Windmill Road and Cedars Avenue to be reported at the September meeting together with efforts to deter residents dumping domestic waste.

Kite Fighting on the Common: The Manager explained that kite fighting was becoming an increasing nuisance on the Common and recently 10 complaints have been received from local residents after kites have become entangled on their roofs. Some residents are suggesting taking out an injunction if the practice is not stopped. Large quantities of line have also regularly been found lying on the Common or entangled in trees and bushes. This represents a great risk to wildlife. Cyclists have also reported being snagged with line.

The Manager proposed the following actions:

- 1) To look to see if there is pertinent legislation which deals directly with this issue
- 2) To seek further advice/assistance from the Kite Society
- 3) To seek advice and enforcement from Kingdom which provides environmental protection services to Merton
- 4) To seek to ban kite fighting on Mitcham Common

RESOLVED: Manager to investigate further, in liaison with Safer Merton team and look towards implementing enforcement of a ban. Update on progress to be reported at the next meeting. Manager to respond to the complainants advising them of the action which is being taken.

Hindu Chariot Festival: Bank Holiday Monday event on the Fairsite.

11. Income and Expenditure (Until end of May 2026)

The Manager said that so early in the new financial year there was little to report. The only item of note was that transport costs, budgeted as £17,000, were £6,000 higher than the previous year. The issue of Transport Services SLA for this year has yet to be resolved and the Chair has written to the Director.

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

Mr Wade Brice came to the table and spoke to the written report which was included in the papers for tonight's meeting:

1. Our Open Day this year will be held on Saturday, 4th July 2026, from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Mill House Ecology Centre. We thank the Conservators for providing the space for this annual event and extend a warm invitation to all Board members to attend.
2. We posted on our Facebook page the news of the withdrawal of grant funding from Merton Council . We have provided an annotated screenshot of their reply, along with specific questions for the Board's consideration.
 - 1) We know of the levy for Wimbledon and Putney Common, but not of a levy for Mitcham Common.
 - 2) The gradual reduction over the last three years is not reflected in the minutes of Conservators meetings.
 - 3) We refer you to the Conservators Meeting Papers on the website, where August 2023 showed contributions from Merton Council as £24,104 and February
 - 4) Does the practical help refer to the Manager and Warden of the Common, or some other activity that we are not aware of.
 - 5) We ask that the Conservators formally clarify these points for the benefit of our members and the wider public.

The Chair clarified that the statement provided by Merton had been inaccurate. Both Cllr Whelton and Cllr Willis had contacted Merton about the inaccuracies, and eventually, shortly before today's meeting, Merton had taken down their statement and replaced it with an accurate statement.

The Chair said that he would be happy to clarify as far as possible the funding position as raised in the Friends' questions:

QUESTION 1: There are circa 15 Boards of Conservators in England, and as far as is known, only one can raise a levy for management – W&PCC. Residents living within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the boundary are charged £40 (Band D) rising to £80 per annum. All the other Boards rely on a proportion of their funding from the LA within the geographical boundary of which the land lies. The exception is now MCC which no longer receives any local authority funding. Examples: Banstead Downs receives circa £100k, Chislehurst Common receives circa £30k.

Merton: in the West (Wimbledon) residents are paying for upkeep of Common but in the East they don't. Merton probably doesn't charge W&PCC for collecting levy.

QUESTIONS 2&3: This was misleading information. MCC were first advised of the removal of the grant towards the end of the last financial year. There was no tapering down over a period of 3 years.

QUESTION 4: Refer to Item 11- The Expenditure report shows that Conservators pay £10k to Merton Council. This figure does not cover work on the ground but rather is a payment for back office functions: Payrolls, HR, IT, procurement, spending control, technical advice and out of hours services which MCC would otherwise have to buy-in. It also covers use of the Ecology Centre as a depot, office and venue for meetings. On balance £10k represents good value for money. But note that all costs associated with the direct maintenance of the Common are re-charged to MCC.

At the conclusion to discussion the Chair thanked the Friends for their continued support and work, and also thanked them for the kind invitation to all Conservators to the forthcoming Open Day on 4th July.

13. Appointment to Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust

Following the departure of Cllr Gould a new representative was required to sit on the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust Board. Cllr Willis said that he was happy to take on this role.

RESOLVED: Cllr Willis appointed as new representative of the Conservators on the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust

14. Date of Next Meetings

Annual Inspection: Sunday 13 September 2026

MCC Board meeting: Wednesday 23 September 2026

15. Any Other Business

A member of the Friends, John, donated a box of litter pickers for Conservators which were gratefully received.