



CONSERVATORS' PUBLIC MEETING
to be held on
Monday 9 December 2024 at 4.30pm
in the Information Centre, Ranger's Office,
Manor Cottage, London SW19 5NR

AGENDA

PART A(1) PUBLIC

- 12.24.1 Confirmation of Attendance and Apologies for Absence**
- 12.24.2 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests Respect of Items to be Considered in this Part of the Meeting**
- 12.24.3 WPCC Board Meetings**
- i. Resolutions of the Board Meeting 14 October 2024 **Page 1**
 - ii. Minutes of the Part A(1) Board Meeting of 14 October 2024 **Page 2**
- 12.24.4 Matters Arising **Page 8****
- 12.24.5 Board and Committee Matters **Page 12****
- i. Board/Committee Meeting Dates
 - ii. Environmental and Sustainability Committee – approval of:
 - a. Appointment of Chairman
 - b. Terms of Reference **Page 13**
- 12.24.6 Chief Executive's Report **Page 14****
- 12.24.7 Conservation Update **Page 20****
- 12.24.8 Fundraising Update **Page 31****
- 12.24.9 Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Report **Verbal****
- 12.24.10 WPCC Forum/Group Meetings**
- To note the draft minutes of the Wildlife and Conservation Forum meeting held on 6 November 2024 **Page 32**
- 12.24.11 Public Questions on Matters Considered in Part A(1) of this Meeting**
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**CONSERVATORS' CONFIDENTIAL MEETING
to be held on Monday 9 December 2024 at 4.30pm
in the Information Centre, Ranger's Office,
Manor Cottage, London SW19 5NR**

AGENDA

PART A(2) CONFIDENTIAL

In accordance with the Resolution from the Board meeting held on 12 July 2021, this part of the meeting is considered confidential and therefore closed to members of the public.

12.24.12 Declarations

- i. Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests in Respect of Items to be Considered in this Part of the Meeting
- ii. Updates to the previously submitted Declarations of Interest Form

12.24.13 WPCB Board Minutes

- i. Minutes of the Confidential Board meeting held on 14 October 2024 for approval
- ii. Minutes of the Annual Open Meeting 2024 for approval

12.24.14 Matters Arising

12.24.15 Licensing

12.24.16 Finance and Investment Committee

- i. To receive the minutes of the FIC held on 28 October 2024
- ii. Management Report and Accounts September 2024
- iii. Management Report and Accounts October 2024
- iv. Licences and Leases
- v. Staffing Proposal

12.24.17 Environment and Sustainability Committee

12.24.18 Constitution Committee Update

12.24.19 Audit and Risk Committee

- i. To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2024
- ii. Top Ten Risks

12.24.20 Friends Committee

To receive the minutes of the Friends Committee on 31 October 2024 and any confidential update.

12.24.21 Chief Executive's Report – Confidential

12.24.22 Fundraising Update

12.24.23 Items for Inclusion in a Media Release by the Board

12.24.24 Items for Future Consideration



Wimbledon and Putney Commons

Resolution agreed at the Board Meeting held on Monday 14 October 2024

Part A1 Public

There were no Resolutions taken in tis part of the meeting.

Part A2 Confidential

10.24.18 Dedications and Memorials Policy

Resolution

The Board resolved to approve the new Dedications and Memorial Policy (subject to the removal of a repeat clause (2 and 4) and the inclusion of the fees as agreed by FIC.

10.24.22 Financial

Resolution

The Board of Conservators formally resolved to update WPCC's bank mandate to include the Chief Finance Officer as an authorised signatory following the retirement of the Deputy Clerk & Ranger, and to update WPCC's Financial Regulations And Delegations to allow payments to be made by the CEO or a Conservator and the Chief Finance Officer.

Present

Conservators: Mauro Mattiuzzo (MM)
Oliver Bennett (OB)
Mr David Brown (DB)
Sue Bucknall (SB)
Michael Johnston (MJ)
Mr William Liu (WL)
Peter Shortt (PS)

Officers: Colin Cooper, Chief Executive (CE)
Philip Warner, Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Angela Evans-Hill, EA to Chief Executive and Communications Officer
Lynnie Farrant, Fundraising Manager
Peter Haldane, Conservation and Engagement Officer (C&EO)

Apologies: Paula Graystone, Deputy Clerk and Ranger

**Public Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting held on
Monday 14 October 2024 at 4.30pm at the Information Centre, Manor Cottage,
London SW19 5NR**

Conservators: Mauro Mattiuzzo (MM)
Oliver Bennett (OB)
David Brown
Sue Bucknall (SB)
Michael Johnston (MJ)
William Liu (WL)
Peter Shortt (PS)

Officers: Colin Cooper, Chief Executive (CE)
Angela Evans-Hill, EA to Chief Executive and Communications Officer
Lynnie Farrant, Fundraising Manager
Peter Haldane, Conservation and Engagement Officer (C&EO)
Philip Warner, Management Accountant

Members of the public: One member of the public attended.

PART A(1) PUBLIC

10.24.1 Confirmation of Attendance and Apologies for Absence

Paula Graystone, Deputy Clerk & Ranger

10.24.2 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests Respect of Items to be Considered in this Part of the Meeting

None

10.23.3 WPCB Board Meetings

i. Resolutions of the Board Meeting 22 July 2024

The Resolutions of the meeting held on 22 July 2024 were approved.

ii. Minutes of the Part A(1) Board Meeting of 22 July 2024

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2024 were approved.

10.24.4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising on this part of the Agenda

10.23.5 Board and Committee Matters

There are no Board and Committee Matters for this part of the Agenda

10.24.6 Chief Executive's Report

The Board received and noted the Chief Executive's report.

The following items were raised:

Keepers – The Keepers were now up to full strength with the latest recruit starting on 30 September 2024. His background was also in the Household Cavalry. There was currently a backlog of annual leave which Keepers were catching up with.

There had been issues over the summer with illegal incursions in nearby open spaces which had led to the locking of three of the Commons four car parks. The Keepers spent a lot of time monitoring the situation in Ham and Kingston. The most recent incursion was at the Charrington Bowl in Tolworth but the group had since moved on and there had been no further reports. WPCCC was part of a network of local authorities mailing list which was able to give local intelligence. Although the current soft ground of the Commons was not attractive to such incursions, the REMPF car park remained a high risk area.

WPCCC had received several reports about a lady who frequents Nurses Walk off Parkside near the Village. She either sits surrounded by bags, or is walking up and down the path, moving her bags as she goes. Staff have spoken to the Merton Rough Sleeper team and they do not believe she is homeless as she is always clean and tidy. Staff have approached her to see if we can help but this does seem to cause her some distress and results in her raising her voice and backing away. The Merton team have experienced similar behaviour. The Merton team have spoken to the police as she was seen urinating in the road and they had hoped the police could take her in so that she could be given some help. This has not yet happened so she is still in the area and having moved from the horseride (where she was spooking the horses) and from the War Memorial area (where she was upsetting local residents) she is now tucked away in a small area of woodland just off Parkside.

To bring the horses up to a full complement, Keepers have been looking at a military working horse called Galway. She is an ex Royal Horse Artillery officers charger. 16 years old and perfectly sound. Keepers have been able to negotiate her purchase for a very reasonable price.

Maintenance - The Maintenance Team had been busy with their regular maintenance work, including tree safety. Quite a few Silver Birches in particular had failed – with the probable cause being last year's flooding. Work had continued around Roehampton Church School on Putney Heath with clearance of trees that are impacting the building.

The team continued to supply the Ashburton Estates' Community Gardeners in Roehampton with our waste manure and composted woodchip to help with their community gardening projects opposite Putney Heath Rd.

REMPF – The football and rugby seasons were now underway. A Vertidrainer had been purchased which would help improve pitch condition.

There has unfortunately been some vandalism damage to the club house veranda – they kicked down the handrails and uprights - which the team has repaired. There was also damage to the doors of the public toilets and new CCTV cameras have now been installed at the rear of the building.

Community Engagement and Events

Open Day

Despite the thunderstorms and torrential rain that occurred in the early hours of the morning, the weather on the Open Day dawned sunny and dry and fortunately stayed that way all day. The day was a huge success in respect of PR for the Commons with some lovely feedback from visitors. There has been an initial full team de-brief with some suggestions for next year, and the smaller organising team would be considering these in more details in due course.

2. PLC walk

The Chief Executive, along with the Conservation and Engagement Officer and the Maintenance Manager met a group of residents to talk about work and future arrangements for staffing at Putney Lower Common. Nine people joined the walk. The current proposals would likely result on more staff hours spent on PLC than previously. A local Stakeholder Group was being set up which would meet with the CE twice a year.

The CE and Chairman had reached out to the Putney Society and had offered attendance at their meetings if that would be helpful for them. SB advised that she and the CE had met with two members of the Putney Society to discuss how the two organisations might work together to further enhance community engagement locally.

10.24.7 Conservation Update

The Board received and noted the Conservation and Engagement Officer's Report. The following points were noted:

Heathland Management – over the last three months, 17 groups of volunteers had been involved in scrub-bashing on the heath. All the sessions were followed up by the Commons' Maintenance Team to ensure that small tree stumps were made safe and all cut materials on open sites were chipped. The Conservation team have also carried out additional tree thinning work on three heathland sites.

Grassland Management – The cut and collect work on nine areas of the Commons had been carried out by a contractor. The Maintenance team had also carried out cut and collect work on 14 smaller sites where access for the contractor was too difficult, along with 7 areas of rough along the fairways on the golf course.

Putney Lower Common – Most of the work at PLC had been general management work such as watering the orchard, cleaning out bird boxes, mowing and treatment of Japanese Knotweed.

The two wildlife cameras set up near the compound had identified 17 different species, including hedgehogs. One would shortly be moved to an area on Wimbledon Common.

Nesting Boxes - During October, 31 bird nesting boxes had been inspected and cleaned - 27 of the nests had been occupied during the year (one nest box was occupied by a family of wood mice) and four showed no sign of nest building.

During October and November 2024, an additional 55 bird nesting boxes were being installed around various locations on the Commons. The reason behind the dramatic increase in the number is partly to increase the number of much needed breeding and roosting space for cavity-nesting species but also to provide nature-based solutions for the control of Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) rather than spraying. There have been several studies carried out in the UK and Europe that have shown the impact that natural and native predators have on controlling OPM. Great tits (and to a slightly lesser degree, Blue tits) have been noted to predate OPM at all life stages, with Great tit chicks consuming up to 800 caterpillars per fortnight. Blue tits tend to only predate on the first two larval stages.

London in Bloom 2024 – both Wimbledon Common and Putney Lower Common were presented with a Gold Award at this year's London in Bloom awards, with Wimbledon Common winning the London Common/Open Space of the year 2024. The Board congratulated the team. The wins would be publicised on the noticeboards and social media.

Meetings/Engagement – Highlighted were attendance at the National Heathland Conference in September in Dorset. The conference including subjects such as re-wilding, urban heath challenges, condition monitoring and a visit to Purbeck Heaths (NNR).

Meeting with Sam Facey from the London Water Vole Recovery Programme. The aim of this meeting was to view the two sections of the Beverley Brook and evaluate whether these sites would be suitable for a future water vole release programme. If the sites are not currently at the stage where a release programme would be viable, advice will be provided about how this situation could be changed in the future.

Meeting with Jamie Simpson (October) Black poplar trees for PLC – Jamie Simpson is an arboriculturist specialising in the management of veteran trees and leads the Black Poplar Species Action Plan, part of the Richmond BAP. In October 2024, Jamie visited Putney Lower Common with PH to look at potential locations where Black poplar trees, propagated from a nursery within Barnes Common, could be planted on Putney Lower Common.

DB asked about funding from the Environment Agency as many other areas of the Beverley Brook had received funding. In addition, Cannizaro Park had received funding from Merton Council to help with flooding issues. MJ asked if any funding would be forthcoming to help with habitat creation for voles. The CE advised that two local releases had been funded by crowdfunding and this could be looked at for the Commons. PH commented that grants could come through the Beverley Brook Partnership so being part of that group would alert WPCC to any opportunities. MJ also asked whether the success in the London in Bloom competition could help in unlocking funding.

OB commented that some of the projects mentioned are contained in the Land Management Plan so all are captured within that document. The next step would be to work out the mechanisms for delivering the LMP and the challenges that involved. The Chairman suggested a Board workshop in February 2025 to brainstorm the LMP. This was agreed. The EA to CE would arrange a date.

ACTION: EA to CE

A new noticeboard outside the Dog & Fox in the Village was available for WPCC to put posters up. The Board had been funded by the Wimbledon Village Business Association and the EA to the CE would make contact with them to arrange for posters to be added.

ACTION: EA to CE

10.24.8 Fundraising Update

The Board received and noted the Fundraising Manager's Report.

An impromptu campaign was set up to mark World Ranger's Day on 31 July 2024. Supporters were contacted via direct mail, supplemented by posters on the Commons and social media. Over the one-week campaign more than £3,000 was raised, which will be used to purchase woodland management equipment.

A specialist contractor has been appointed to begin the Queensmere restoration and rewilding project in the New Year, with completion scheduled for Spring 2025. Rewild London had requested a site before the work began as part of their project monitoring. This would take place on 23 October 2024.

A Queensmere Restoration Appeal is being launched with press articles, emails to Friends and supporters and information on website to raise the remaining funds that are required. An article in Time & Leisure would launch the Appeal in November.

Requests for benches at Queensmere are currently being processed. Six suitable spots had been identified and being offered to those on the waiting list. Other discussions are ongoing regarding sponsorship of the viewing platform, dog posts etc.

Jack Rowland and Peter Haldane had identified suitable new locations for benches, particularly on Putney Lower Common and Rushmere, and these options are currently being matched to those on the waiting list.

The FM was thanked for her work on the memorial benches.

10.24.9 Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Report

SB gave a verbal update.

SB thanked the core organising group for their hard work in organising events.

Several events had taken place over summer, including a visit to the Houses of Parliament and the new Wimbledon MP joined the group. A small fee of £10 per person had been charged.

The Friends had provided two walks as part of the Roehampton Community Weeks, including a walk showcasing the history of the Alton Estate. A second walk took in the grand houses of Roehampton.

The Friends had been instrumental in providing some 30 volunteers for the Open Day. The EA to the CE expressed her thanks to all those who had helped.

A Friends' Bird walk had been held on 14 September.

On Friday 20 September an afternoon tea was held to mark the Friends 5th Anniversary at the London Scottish Golf Club. The event invited non-Friends to give them a taste of the Commons and what Friends membership involved. A fundraising auction was held and the final income was in the region of £1,000. Several new members signed up after the event.

On 19 October, a further fundraising event for Queensmere was being held in Christ Church Hall, West Wimbledon. An evening of "Magic and Illusion", a talk with supper and drinks. Jeroboam in Wimbledon Village had kindly provided the drinks for the event.

There were currently 621 memberships, which equated to just over 1,005 members. A Direct Debit system was being introduced. EA to the CE advised that the Beta Test page had now been produce and she would send this to the Committee for testing.

Some further walks were being arranged before Christmas.

Income raised over the five years totalled over £200,000. The Board congratulated the Friends on this success.

10.24.10 WPCC Forum/Group Meetings

The Board noted the minutes of the Wildlife and Conservation Forum meeting held on 16 July 2024.

10.24.11 Public Questions on Matters Considered in Part A(1) of this Meeting

There were no questions.

(Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators Meeting	9 December 2024	12.24.4
Subject: Matters Arising from the Public Board meeting of 8 April 2024		Private
Report of: Chief Executive of Wimbledon and Putney Commons		For Information
Matters Arising		
Matters arising from the meeting held on 3 June 2024 that are not covered on the Agenda.		

LMP Workshop

OB commented that some of the projects mentioned are contained in the Land Management Plan so all are captured within that document. The next step would be to work out the mechanisms for delivering the LMP and the challenges that involved. The Chairman suggested a Board workshop in February 2025 to brainstorm the LMP. This was agreed. The EA to CE would arrange a date.

ACTION: EA to CE – Ongoing

Village Noticeboard

A new noticeboard outside the Dog & Fox in the Village was available for WPCC to put posters up. The Board had been funded by the Wimbledon Village Business Association and the EA to the CE would make contact with them to arrange for posters to be added.

ACTION: Fundraising Manager/EA to CE – The FM has talked to the WVBA about this and signs will be going up shortly.

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Board of Conservators	9 December 2024	12.24.5
Subject: Meeting Dates		Public
Report of: EA to Chief Executive		For Decision/Information
<p>Recommendation</p> <p>The Board are asked to confirm the changes to meetings relating to the 2024/25 Audit and Annual Open Meeting, and to consider a request to amend the date of the December 2025 Board meeting.</p>		

i. Meeting Dates relating to Annual Open Meeting

Following the change of date of the Annual Open Meeting to 18 June 2025, the following meetings have also been updated:

13 May 2025, 10am – the FIC scheduled for that day will now be a joint ARC/FIC meeting. It is suggested that this is followed by the scheduled FIC meeting.

20 May 2025 - The Joint ARC/FIC meeting that was scheduled for 20 May will now just be ARC.

27 May 2025, 4.30pm - Board meeting. The Board meeting scheduled for Monday 2 June will need to be brought forward to Tuesday 27 May 2025 (the Monday is a Bank Holiday).

18 June 2025 – 7.30 for 8pm Annual Open Meeting

Board Meeting – December 2025

The Board are asked to consider a request to move the December 2025 Board meeting from 8 December to 15 December to accommodate leave that has been booked by AEH. As she returns to the office on Tuesday 2 December, it would allow more time for Board paper preparation.

ii. Environment and Sustainability Committee

The Environment and Sustainability Committee held it's inaugural meeting on Monday 2 December 2025. The Board are asked to approve:

- a. The Appointment of Conservator, Oliver Bennett as Chairman of the Committee
- b. The draft Terms of Reference (Appendix 1)

WPCC Environment and Sustainability Committee

PURPOSE

The Environment and Sustainability Committee (ESC) reviews the charity adherence to its environmental statutory duties and responsibilities, as well as delivery of strategies and plans, holding departments and teams to account, and reporting and referring decisions to the Board of Conservators as appropriate.

RESPONSIBILITIES

On behalf of the Board of Conservators, it is the responsibility of the ESC independently to:

- initially review our environmental and biodiversity obligations/duties to ensure we fully understand where we have duties and need to comply
- establish a framework to review compliance with said statutory duties
- monitor the delivery of the Land Management Plan
- ensure policies and procedures and compliance systems for environmental management/sustainability are in place and are reviewed for their efficiency and effectiveness
- make recommendations to the Board of Conservators in all matters in relation to the environment, sustainability and land management
- receive monitoring information and minutes from the Wildlife and Conservation Forum
- receive monitoring information about environmental performance
- prepare and publish an annual environment/sustainability report
- report to the Board of Conservators on all matters where decisions are required unless, exceptionally, authority has been delegated to the ESC by the Board of Conservators in respect of a particular matter

RESPONSIBILITIES

The ESC has responsibility for the planning and policies related to the environment and sustainability.

MEMBERSHIP

- Not fewer than two Conservators appointed by the Board of Conservators
- Chief Executive
- Conservation and Engagement Officer
- Maintenance Manager
- EA to CE and Communications Officer (lead on the staff sustainability group)
- The Chair of the Board may nominate alternative Board delegates if one or two of the members of EC cannot attend a meeting.
- The members of the ESC may ask any or all of those who normally attend but who are not members to withdraw from the discussion of particular matters to facilitate open and frank discussion.
- Appointments to the ESC will be for a period aligning with WPCC's Board term of office cycle.

MEETINGS

- There will be at least three ESC meetings each year usually held three weeks before a scheduled Board of Conservators meeting.
- The May meeting will consider the annual environment report.

- Meetings are normally 2 hours in length.
- Meetings are scheduled by the Secretary in consultation with the Chair.
- Supplementary meetings may be convened with the agreement of the Chair.

PROCESS FOR SELECTING CHAIR

- The Chair of the ESC will be appointed by the Board of Conservators on an annual basis as recommended annually by the May meeting of ESC. It is expected that the Chair will be the DEFRA Appointed Conservator.
- The Chair must be a Conservator.
- In the absence of the Chair the remaining Conservators present shall elect one of their number to chair the meeting.

CO-OPTEEES

- External, independent co-opted with relevant skills, expertise and experience may be appointed by the Board of Conservators.
- Other members of staff as appropriate may attend meetings with prior agreement of the Chair.

RULES FOR DECISION MAKING

- Recommendations to the Board of Conservators or decisions, where appropriate, will be made on the basis of a majority of the votes of the ESC members present whom are Conservators and in the case of an equal division of votes the Chair shall have a second/casting vote.
- A quorum shall consist of two members of the ESC each of whom is a Conservator.
- Co-optees and attending staff have no voting rights.
- Any member who is not present or who leaves a meeting prior to its conclusion shall be taken to be a non-participating member for the purpose of a decision taken after the time of departure.
- The Committee may take draft decisions by correspondence, subject to all members responding. Such decisions may only be acted upon once recorded and minuted at the subsequent meeting.

SECRETARIAT

- A lead to organise the meetings, help draft the agenda and support the ESC Chair will be appointed by the Chief Executive in liaison with the Chair of the ESC.
- A minute taker will be appointed by the Chief Executive in liaison partnership with the Chair of the ESC to accurately record discussions and recommendations.

REPORTING

- Minutes will be taken at each meeting by the secretariat and stored on the charity's electronic file storage system.
- The Chair of the ESC will report the ESC's decisions and actions to the next Board meeting with the minutes submitted as part of the board papers.
- Annual environmental and land management report will be considered each May. This will include:
 - what the ESC has achieved in the last 12 months
 - what the ESC hopes to achieve in the next 12 months
 - what the ESC plans to do differently to increase its effectiveness; and
 - what changes, if any, are needed to the ESC Terms of Reference to be approved by the Board of Conservators.

UPDATES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Upon formation of the ESC, after six months, then the terms of reference should be reviewed annually by the ESC and reported to the Board for review and agreement.

DATE GROUP LAST AGREED THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Date

NEXT REVIEW DUE BY

Next review date: February 2025

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Board of Conservators	14 October 2024	12.24.6
Subject: Chief Executive's Public Report		Public
Report of: Chief Executive of Wimbledon and Putney Commons		For Decision and Information
<h1>SUMMARY</h1>		
Draft Recommendation:		
That the Board receive and note the report.		

Keepers' Update

The new Keepers are fitting in well and dealing with incidents first hand.

The team of horses is also now up to full strength, with the arrival of ex-Military working horse, Galway, from Melton Mowbray on Wednesday 20th November. This is the first mare that we have had on the team for at least 30 years. She has just turned 16 and is an Irish Draught cross. She is currently on light duties to get her fit for longer patrols.



Incidents dealt with by the Keepers have included:

- An elderly lady fell over near the Ravine Pond. Working with the Maintenance team, we were able to get an ambulance to the scene and the lady successfully treated.
- Dealt with a man whose Boxer dog attacked the line marking robot at REMPF. The dog was on a retractable lead at the time. A visit was arranged by the Wandsworth Dog Warden and in their view, the owners were responsible dog owners, however, they were advised to keep the dog away from playing fields staff and equipment in the future.
- The issue with the XL Bully dog owner continues. He was visited by the Police and this resulted in him walking the dog with a muzzle on. The Senior Keeper spoke to the owner again following a report that the dog was unmuzzled on the Common. He was very apologetic and assured me it would be muzzled at all times whilst on the Common. This has slipped on at least two occasions so I have contacted the SNT to let them know. Keepers continue to monitor and any staff are reporting to 101 in every instance of him walking the dog without a muzzle.
- We have received several complaints about a lady who spends her days sat on the Common near the War Memorial on Parkside with a lot of bags. Keepers have tried to speak to her but she becomes very abusive. The Merton Rough Sleeper Navigator has been trying to work with her but as it distresses her so much, he has been keeping a distance. He has succeeded in getting the necessary people in place to assess her which resulted in her being sectioned at the end of November and she was picked up in an exercise involving police and an ambulance. We are not sure of the outcome as she was seen just a day later walking back to Parkside and her usual spot.
- A second rough sleeper, an elderly gentleman who spent his days on Rushmere but was sleeping in Cannizaro Park, has also been helped by the Merton team and is now in accommodation.
- Following a report of a man behaving strangely in Curling Pond, Keepers attended to find him very drunk and soaking wet having cycled straight into the pond on an electric bike. They saw him safely on his way.
- Two older teenagers were stopped riding their electric bikes on the golf course - one of them had been wheel spinning on fairways.
- A visitor was stopped on two occasions flying a drone, the first occasion we had reports that he was flying the drone over groups of children and women. He became very abusive when stopped. On the second occasion he was followed off the Commons at the Playing Fields where he was picked up in a car by an older relative, who then drove the vehicle threateningly at staff. The police attended and have dealt with the matter, "suggesting" to both men that they were banned from visiting the Commons.

We provided Mounted Keepers to the War Memorials for Remembrance Sunday.

A Conflict Management course for all available staff was held on 19th and 20th November. Those attending found it very useful

Two Keeper's attended St Mary's church for the funeral of the late Mrs Penni Harvey-Piper.



Maintenance Update

The Maintenance Team have been busy with both regular tasks and project work. Below is a selection of what they have been doing

General Maintenance Works

- Various amenity mowing work around PLC paths and the strimming around benches across the site.
- Trimming back of vegetation encroachment along entire length of Roehampton Lane and trim back branches, including using the tractor blower to remove soil and leaf mulch spoil on pavements.
- Trimming back and use of tractor verge mower to reduce vegetation encroachment around Putney Heath's roadsides, bus stops and busy crossing points.
- Cut back sapling trees and bushes and use tractor verge mower to reduce vegetation encroachment around area known as Ross Court, to aid pedestrian and vehicle access.
- Maintenance of the wheelchair access route around nature trail, including repairing the bridge, widening the pathways, and carrying tree safety work along the route.

- Other works include renovating paths, repairing various potholes on both the internal tracks and rides as well as the tarmac access roads and car parks.
- Three new memorial benches were installed across the Rushmere site.
- Installation of various restrictive access wooden bollards and no parking signage.
- Regrading of sandy ring horse school (WVS funded) by contractors.
- General and regular ditch and drainage maintenance across the site, including re-positioning of telegraph pole runoffs along the Queensmere slopes.

Tree Safety/Habitat Management

- The largest of the team's projects recently, has been the tree felling and safety works around the Queensmere pond, as part of the restoration works that will take place over the winter.
- With a contractor removing the holly from one side of the woodland slope, and the large Alders from one side of the bank, the maintenance team were tasked with felling the bank side trees on the other three sides of the pond, as well as tree thinning works within the woodland compartments, various tree safety works, including crown reductions to reduce leaf fall and shading on the pond, and creating more light and air flow over the water, by felling and coppicing less mature specimens.
- Other ongoing habitat restoration works include the clearance of nonnatives and birch trees within a heathland compartment between Jubilee and Inner Park Rides, which in conjunction with the conservation team and their volunteers, we aim to return to heathland, whilst exposing the many beautiful mature English oaks and creating a number of standing deadwood habitats in the process.
- Another project is the continuation of works between the Hope Grant fairway and Camp Rd, with work carried out in opening up dense dark holly woodland to uncover prime acid grassland habitats, along with some mature native specimen trees, which not only benefits the Commons from a habitat restoration angle, but the users of the busy Camp Rd have seen an increase in natural light along this section which aids security and improves conditions on the continually damp footpaths and road ways in this area.
- Other smaller scale heathland restoration works have been carried out, with many sessions have been allocated to the chipping of volunteer produced sapling piles and the stump cutting management of these areas.
- Timber from all these ongoing habitat restoration projects is to be used to help support the Queensmere leaky dam creations and water runoff redirection plans, as being used later in the year as curbing material for stopping roadside vehicle encroachment and damage at areas such as Camp Rd and Southside Common.
- Tree safety works continues to be a priority for the team with various areas of the Common being inspected throughout the year, with the recommendations for work being factored into our work programs.
- Storm Bert with its very strong and prolonged winds caused little damage to any of our larger sized tree population, with only one significant failure to a large tree near The Causeway, with the winds mainly bring down and causing damage to only smaller birch and standing dead wood across the more open woodland edges of our site.

- Invasive species management continues to be carried out with two large Ailanthus trees removed by contactors at PLC, with work still needed to be carried out to tackle the suckers that spread from them, with Japanese knotweed also being treated later in the season.
- Two large bare ground scraps were created along the edges of two golf fairways, as part of continued efforts to restoration and promote heather regeneration. These areas have since had heather seed and green hay spread over them, which was cut and collected by the team by mowing the mature heather at other locations on the Commons. These areas will eventually be fenced off, and we hope will be as successful as our previous attempts have been.

Other Tasks

- On going bench survey works, producing a database of condition surveys of current benches as well as potential locations of new or replacement bench positions.
- Assisting the environmental and sustainability working group on auditing current policies and working towards implementing new ideas within the maintenance department around recycling and sustainable practices.
- Regular litter picking duties on the Commons, as well as general waste bin and dog bin emptying at PLC as well as twice weekly litter picking efforts around the whole of that site, which double as a chance to patrol and report back any other issues that may have occurred.
- Ongoing maintenance works to the Windmill structure and museum, including working with contractors around repairs and compliance issues.
- Stump grinder daily maintenance and Lantra accredited profession use training was delivered to staff on our newly purchased tracked machine.
- Staff have worked with the Property Maintenance Officer to help with various ongoing renovation works to Crossroads Cottage.
- War memorials around the Commons were cleaned, mown, and blown before Remembrance Day event in which staff attended.
- WPC staff from all the departments undertook conflict resolution training.
- LOLER inspections were carried out on the team's rope, rigging, and climbing kits and harnesses, with regular servicing and maintenance carried out to chainsaws and other two stroke equipment.
- John Mc continues to carryout maintenance, servicing, and repairs to the wide ranging and extensive fleet of machines and equipment used by all of the departments, with tasks undertaken including various puncture repairs, woodchipper drive issues, tractor ignition faults, tractor leaf blower belts, service and modifications to the new stump grinder, along with regular ATV servicing and repairs as an insight into his worklist for just this month.
- The team continue to look to help other partner sites including Cannizaro Park and the Ashburton Community Gardens incentive, by supply them with our waste produces that they can reuse, including resurfacing a main path network with our freshly processed woodchip from the heathland projects and forming community allotment spaces across the housing estate with our composted manure and woodchippings.

Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields Update

The team at the Playing Fields have been busy with their usual tasks ensuring the pitches are playable for the schools and the weekend football ad rugby, including mowing and marking

out. Thomas Schools have been playing football over 12 pitches and also held their annual cross-country event over 5 days. They have also hosted a Run Through ½ Marathon and 10K run with approximately 800 runners.

Conservators will recall discussions about purchasing a Vertidrain – a piece of equipment to help with drainage on the pitches. The Head Groundsman found a suitable reconditioned machine and was able to agree a good fee for it and was also able to negotiate free delivery, a new set of tynes and a new PTO shaft included in the price.

The Head Groundsman has also been busy filling gaps in the weekend football schedule and has signed up an additional five weekend teams.

Regular maintenance continues and alongside litter picking, the team have dealt with a mystery leak in Thames Hare and Hounds reception room which is causing damage to the ceiling. A saturated area was removed to prevent the damage spreading. The leak only appears to happen when they have their own boiler running. The situation is being monitored. The chambers have also required pumping on several occasions following the substantial rain that came with Storm Bert, 3000 litres each time.

Community Engagement and Events

Southside

We are working with a local resident to understand the boundary of the Commons along Southside and to get new log butts in place to stop erosion of the edge of the Commons and to stop any possible inadvertent encroachment by the Council through resurfacing.

Barnes Common AGM

The Chief Executive attended the recent Barnes Common AGM on 21 November 2024. Their Conservation Manager gave an interesting talk on saprophytic species (organisms that feed on dead or decaying organic matter, breaking it down and recycling nutrients back into the ecosystem) and tree age diversity in South West London. It is important to maintain links with our immediate neighbour and the CE would like to work more closely with them and other landowners/managers in the future.

Putney Society Talk

Several staff attended an interesting talk organised by the Putney on “Measuring Biodiversity and assessing the impact of habitat restoration”. The talk focused mainly on the benefits of eDNA testing to monitor species. Whilst this is some distance from being able to be used in regular monitoring, it is something that would be of huge benefit to the Commons, particularly in our aquatic habitats. It has been used as part of the Queensmere Project,

Carols at the Windmill

This year’s Carols at the Windmill is being held on 14 December – 4pm to 6pm. Music is provided by the Wandle Concert Band. The event is organised in conjunction with the Windmill Trustees. They take care of the refreshments and the Friends and volunteers are helping with fundraising and welcoming visitors.

Pumpkin Hunt

The Annual Children's Pumpkin Hunt was once again a huge success with over 600 children and their associated families taking part. Many thanks to the Conservators and Friends for their help on the day. The event made a cash surplus of approximately £750.

Wimbledon Village Christmas Event

The Friends attended the Wimbledon Village Christmas Day on 1 December. A full report will be provided in the Friends' update.

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Board of Conservators	9 December 2024	12.24.7
Subject: Conservation Update		Public
Report of: Conservation and Engagement Officer		For Information

Summary

The Board are asked to note this report which provides a summary of Conservation activity during October and November 2024.

Heathland Management

Over the past two months, heathland management on the Commons has included the following activities:

- Volunteer groups (x 4) scrub bashing on the heathland. Areas have included heathland adjacent to Centre Path, Roehampton Ride and Inner Park Ride.



Putney Heath volunteer scrub bashing sites: 14 October to 9 December 2024



Wimbledon Common volunteer scrub bashing sites: 14 October to 9 December 2024

- All volunteer scrub bashing sessions were followed up by the Commons' Maintenance Team to ensure that small tree stumps were made safe and all cut materials on site were chipped. Where possible, the volume of chipping required has been reduced by using cut sapling to create dead hedges. This has been carried out near Centre Path and Inner Park Ride.
- In addition to the scrub bashing work that has been carried out by the Commons volunteers, the Conservation Team have continued carrying out tree thinning work on two areas of heathland. These sites have included heathland near Tibbet's Meadow and heathland located near Kingsmere.



Heathland areas where medium size trees have been thinned by the Commons' Conservation Department.



Tree thinning next to Kingsmere heathland

Following the guidance of the WPCC Land Management Plan, the largest piece of heathland work that has been carried out on the Commons over the past two months has involved the removal of large silver birch and Turkey oak from an area of heathland that is located between Inner Park Ride and Jubilee Path. While this piece of work initially involved the help of volunteers, the latest phase of this task has required the input of the WPCC Maintenance Team. Although tree cover has been significantly reduced on this area of heathland, semi-mature native oak trees will remain on-site, but additional Turkey oak will be clear and used for other projects on the Commons over the next few months.

Wimbledon Common Golf Course

Over the past two months, there have been two projects carried out by volunteers and the WPCC Maintenance Team around the edge of the Wimbledon Common Golf Course. This work has included the creation of two small areas of bare ground (LSGC no. 8: Birches Fairway & LSGC no 10: Caesar's Camp Fairway) and tree clearance between LSGC no. 1 Fairway (Hope Grant) and Camp Road.

Bare ground creation: Two small areas of bare ground have been created along the edge of the Wimbledon Common Golf Course to help with the restoration of heather and other heathland/acid grassland species. Both areas were chosen as small remnants of heather were located on each site but without protection, these would soon be lost. Following the creation of both areas of bare ground, mature heather was cut and collected on The Plain and spread across each site. As soon as time allows, both sites will be protected with temporary fencing.



Bare Ground creation along the edge of Caesars Camp Fairway

Tree work between Hope Grant Fairway and Camp Road: This work was carried out as part of a larger project to improve sightlines and increase public safety along one section of Camp Road. In terms of the security and tree safety aspect of this task, mainly holly has been cut back but several false acacia trees have also been removed. According to the GB non-native species secretariat, negative impacts from this species include shading out native sun-loving species and damage to pavements and other structures through growth of suckers. Branches readily break off due to their tendency to rot and can be a health and safety risk. If left unmanaged, false acacia can also fix nitrogen so may produce irreversible impacts when it invades nutrient poor habitats such as sandy grasslands, calcareous grasslands etc.

To help facilitate this ongoing project, the Commons' mid-week volunteer group spent one session cutting back young birch and holly, demonstrating that a small programme of work could greatly assist in the protection of acid grassland along this area of the Commons.



Area between the Hope Grant Fairway and Camp Road

(photographed 18 November 2024)

Woodland Management

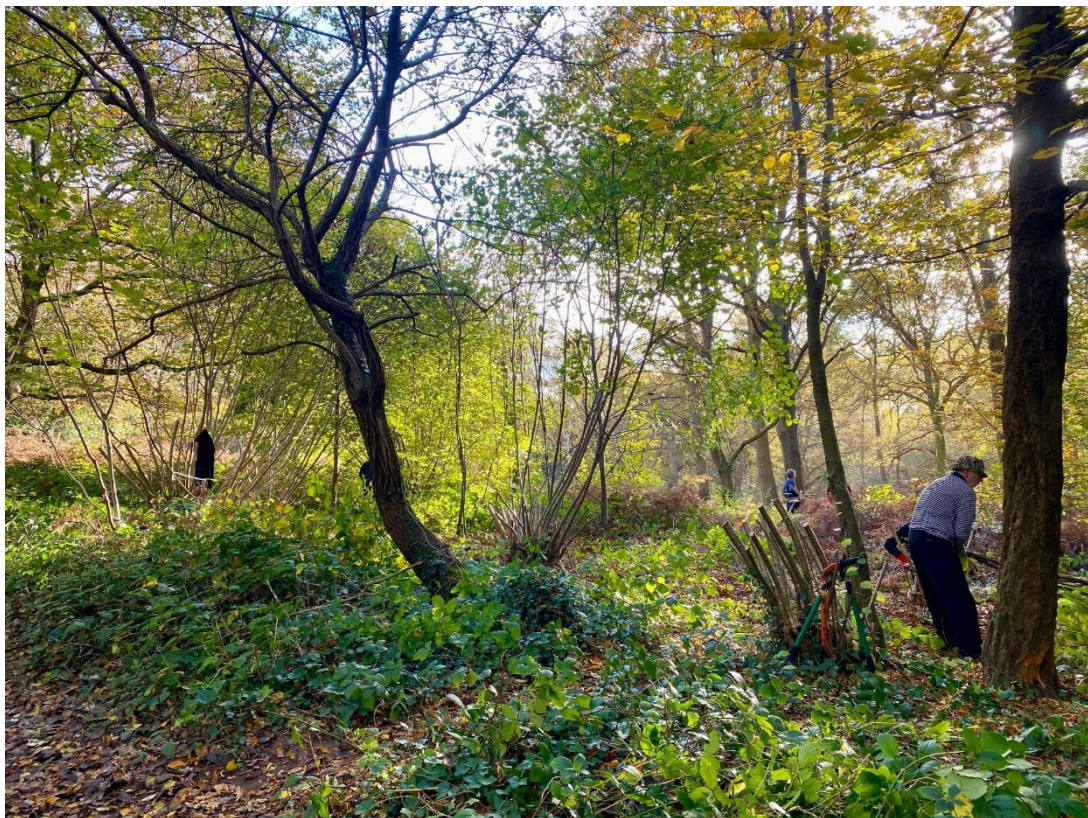
Hazel Coppicing:

Hazel coppicing was carried out by the Commons' mid-week volunteers along the edge of Robin Hood Ride during November 2024.

Coppicing is a traditional woodland management technique that involves cutting a tree to its base where new shoots will be produced during the following growing seasons. Originally used to produce a regular source of wood for a wide range of products, today, we continue to coppice mainly hazel of the Commons to help improve the biodiversity and health of the woodland.

Managed on a rotation cycle, hazel on this site will likely be re-coppiced every 5-8 years. During this period, the changing height and density of the coppiced hazel will provide food sources for butterflies and other insects.

All cut material from this activity have been incorporated into a dead hedge which is located approximately 10 metres away from the edge of the ride. Dead hedges are created using small dead branches and coppiced shoots in many areas of the Commons where they provide food and shelter for a wide range of species.



Hazel coppicing along Robin Hood Ride, November 2024

Holly thinning

The latest phase of holly thinning on the Commons has been carried out close to the edge of Queensmere and in woodland adjacent to Jerrys Hill.

This work was carried out by an external contractor and will help to achieve several important objectives:

- Holly thinning has provided a more open woodland that is of benefit to the regeneration of trees and associated woodland flora and fauna.
- Holly thinning has made the woodland more accessible for visitors to the Commons.
- Holly thinning has enhanced the surrounding view of Queensmere.
- Holly thinning has improved our ability to survey and carry out tree safety work. This has been especially true around the edge of Queensmere where the WPC Maintenance Team have subsequently carried out tree safety work to several large hazardous trees.



Jerry's Hill – woodland pre-thinning.

Queensmere Restoration – Tree work

Phase 1 of the Queensmere restoration project, which has involved tree work around the edge of the pond was started in November 2024.

According to the Queensmere Restoration Report that was produced for WPCCC in January 2024, the reduction of overhanging branches and the coppicing of trees in the immediate area of the pond was considered to be a high priority management task in the overall restoration of this pond.

The tree work that has recently been carried out around Queensmere should achieve the following aims:

- A reduction in the volume of leaf and organic material that falls into the pond and negatively impacts the water quality.
- Increased air flow to the pond which will lead to increased wave action and aeration.
- Increased levels of light reaching the edge of the pond which will provide the energy to power the regeneration of the fauna and flora around the margins of the pond.
- Improved safety around Queensmere.



Queensmere (21.11.24)

Water Vole Recovery

From the meetings and public engagement events that have been supervised or attended by members of the Conservation Team over the past two months, the most noteworthy of these has been the London Water Vole Recovery Programme (LWVRP) Practitioners Meeting held on 30 October 2024.

The LWVRP was formed by the Zoological Society of London, People's Trust for Endangered Species, London Wildlife Trust and Greenspace information for Greater London in 2023 and WPCG have attended regular meetings during 2023 and 2024.

The aim of this group is to restore thriving water vole populations across London.

Water voles are the largest species of vole in Britain but over the past 80 years, they have undergone one of the most serious declines of any wild mammal in Britain. While habitat loss and fragmentation has been responsible for losses, the main cause of their decline has been through predation by non-native American mink.

Originally brought to the UK for fur-farming in 1929, by 1956 escaped mink and deliberate releases resulted in this species breeding in the wild. Mass illegal releases of mink into the wild by animal rights activists during the 1990's exacerbated the problem further resulting in mink becoming widespread across the UK.

Mink are semi-aquatic mammals which predate on a variety of native wildlife and unless actively controlled threaten the extinction of water vole in the UK.



American mink preying a grey heron (photograph sourced LWVRP PowerPoint presentation 2024)

Mink control in the UK

To restore a thriving water vole population in the UK, the first phase of the LWVRP project has been to establish where water voles remain and come up with a plan for mink eradication in Greater London, working with Waterlife Recovery Trust and their successful mink eradication programme in East Anglia.

As part of the eradication process, the key objective has been to get a network of mink rafts (traps) across the country so that mink cannot move from an area that is being trapped into one that isn't, breed there and expand outwards again.

The most recent information concerning the East Anglian mink trapping programme is that mink have now been eradicated in Norfolk and Suffolk.

As noted by Rob Martin who has been organising the trapping of mink within the Greater London area, "the likelihood of actually catching a mink in London in any given trap is pretty low". This said, the latest news is that approximately 29 mink have been removed so far from both North and South London and work will continue to eradicate mink in other areas of London in the coming years. At the current time, there is one mink raft (with trap) in a very secluded location along the Beverley Brook on Wimbledon Common. So far, there have been no mink caught on the Commons.

Potential locations for Water Vole Release:

During August 2024, the LWVRP began a search for London sites that may be suitable to restore resilient water vole colonies.

Asking LWVRP partners to provide a list of potential water vole recovery sites, on 23 September 2024, PH provided Sam Facey (Estuaries project Officer, ZSL) with a guided tour of the sections of the Beverley Brook which pass through Wimbledon Common and Putney Lower Common.

In selecting potential water vole recovery sites in Greater London, each area was measured under the following habitat assessment criteria.

- Stakeholder engagement
- Mink control
- Water vole status
- Habitat quality
- Connectivity
- Land designation

From a total of 14 sites that were visited by members of the LWVRP, the top six sites considered to have the greatest potential for water vole recovery are:

1. Crane Park Island
2. Chambermeads
3. Wimbledon Common

4. Watermeads NR/Morden Hall – Wandle
5. Wandle (upper)

The latest update from the LWVRP is that they will aim for a first release in 2026 and then subsequent annual release thereafter as appropriate.

According to Sam Facey, “I think Wimbledon Common has some great potential, especially if it can be linked to habitat improvement work in Richmond Park. I think Putney Lower Common would struggle to hold a viable population, though it would be great to be proved wrong if they could migrate further upstream of the Beverley Brook. In terms of specific habitat management, I think the key is increasing the amount of bankside and in-channel vegetation. This could be done through reducing shade and specific planting.



Wimbledon Common section of the Beverley Brook

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Board of Conservators	9 December 2024	12.24.8
Subject: Fundraising Update		Public
Report of: Fundraising Manager		For Information
Summary		
Fundraising activity from October to December 2024		

1. General Fundraising

Substantial donations received from private individuals.

2. Queensmere Project

Pre-pre work holly and tree-thinning has been completed. The specialist contractor is on site and the Queensmere restoration and rewilding project has begun. The contractor is scheduled to finish in circa six weeks.

The Queensmere Restoration Appeal has been launched with dedicated benches being offered at the Pond. We have received several expressions of interest and two bench sponsorships have already been confirmed.

The Big Give Christmas Challenge in aid of Queensmere was launched on December 3rd, with an online target of £3,600 which would be matched by generous pledges from WPCCC benefactors and Big Give Champion, The Reed Foundation, giving a total target of £7,200, which was achieved the same day!

3. Benches

New benches have been adopted and installed over the past two months, notably on Rushmere Green and Green Ride.

One of these is a 'happy to chat' bench located by the Pond, with the aim of encouraging conversation and combat loneliness. Dedicated to the late Mary Purcell Cosgrave, the bench has a special plaque inviting people to sit if they are happy for others to stop and say hello.

4. Friends

The Friends of WPCCC staged an 'Art of Illusion' fundraising event on October 19th in aid of Queensmere Pond, which raised more than £2,200.

Wildlife and Conservation Forum meeting dated 15 October 2024 - DRAFT

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Colin Cooper – Chief Executive (CC)
Andrew Davies – volunteer (AD)
Les Evans-Hill - volunteer (LEH)
Peter Haldane – Conservation & Engagement Officer (PH)
Nick Haswell – volunteer (NH)
Michael Johnston – Conservator (MJ)
Sarah Murton – Conservation Ranger (SM)
Simon Riley - volunteer (SR)

1. Apologies were received from Oliver Bennett (OB), Sue Bucknall (SB), Ros Taylor (RT), Andrew Harding (AH) & Henry Wilson (HW).
2. The minutes of the Forum meeting of 16 July 2024 were agreed
3. Action points from previous meeting.
 - a) **Queensmere restoration report. Action Point – PH to arrange for final report to be made available on the Volunteer Portal.** It was confirmed that an agreement was about to be signed with a contractor for stage 1 work, with the hope of a commencement day in November 2024. It is hoped that there may be some excess funds available after completion of stage 1. If this is the case it is proposed, with additional fundraising, to move to stage 2 which includes work on path restoration/water run-off/erosion issues to the east of Queensmere. **OUTSTANDING**
 - b) **Forum constitution. Action point - CC to circulate his thoughts on changing the make-up and constitution of this Forum.** CC briefed the Forum of his plans. CC hoped to circulate his plans shortly. **OUTSTANDING**
 - c) **Future Monitoring Reports. Action point – OB to discuss some ideas to improve the Monitoring Report for future years with SM/PH. OUTSTANDING**
 - d) **2023 Monitoring Report Press Release. Action Point – OB to discuss with AEH and CC.** This remains outstanding. At this stage the 2023 Monitoring Report has still not been published. **OUTSTANDING**

- e) **Open Day engagement from Forum. Action point – all.** CC thanked OB for his help in leading walks at this year's Open Day. CC felt that there was scope for more walks in the future – however he wondered whether these could be quite short – maybe 15-30 minutes. It was mentioned that next year's Open Day would be 14 September 2025, **although this is to be confirmed.**
- f) **Farm Bog flora - Action Point – to be discussed – all.** Policy needs to be developed (and included in LMP) regarding the various recently introduced/reintroduced plant species on Farm Bog. SR mentioned that he had asked AH to start to consider this issue so that it could be discussed at a future meeting. **OUTSTANDING**
4. Weekend of Nature debrief. A number of ideas were discussed including thoughts on expanding the event, although Commons' staff resource is potentially an issue. CC proposed that SR recirculate his email from the summer asking for ideas and comments to get the conversation going. **ACTION POINT - SR to circulate email again.**
5. Winter talk. A few ideas were mentioned including the topics Moths & Leaf Miners, Water Voles and the Beavers in Ealing. CC wondered whether there was scope for more than one talk a year as they were generally very well received. **ACTION POINT – CC/AEH date and topic for February talk to be decided.**
6. Fundraising update. Benches remain in demand, also the Commons are to be included in the Christmas Big Give. This will hopefully raise in excess of £20,000 including £10,000 of matched funding. The Commons have also been able to raise £3,000 as part of World Rangers Day. It was also noted that the Friends continue to raise significant funds through their various initiatives.
7. Conservation update. Forum members had no particular questions on PH's conservation report. PH did mention that he had been able to join the National Heathlands Conference in Dorset in September where ideas/concerns/threats etc were discussed with other heathland land managers. PH also mentioned Black Poplars, a tree now rare in Britain as there is scope for some to be planted at Putney Lower Common.
8. Recorder and monitoring updates. Recorders circulated their thoughts prior to the meeting. It was generally concluded that 2024 had, so far, been a very poor year generally and for invertebrates in particular. LEH mentioned that he was starting to take more interest in leaf mining moths and that he had found a species new to Surrey & SW London (VC 17) on the Commons. SR mentioned that he had been alarmed to note that there were no Banded Demoiselle damselflies on the Beverley Brook on a visit made in July in good weather. Normally these insects gather in quite large groups in sunny sections of the Brook. SR asked whether others had noticed this. LEH did mention that a Beverley Brook river fly surveys had shown poor results in the summer too and the group wondered whether there was a general issue

with water quality in the Brook. **ACTION POINT – WATER QUALITY OF BB TO BE CONSIDERED FURTHER. (There must be other groups who are monitoring especially downstream – are we linked in with them at all?)**

9. 2023 Monitoring Report status. As noted above this has still not been published.
10. Volunteer Portal. SR mentioned that a number of documents from 2023 and 2024 including minutes and agendas had still not been loaded onto the Volunteer Portal. CC said he hoped that more time would be found to get this updated.
11. Dates of next meeting and dates for 2025. It was agreed that there would be no further meetings in 2024. Regarding 2025 SR mentioned that meeting dates are usually tied into the calendar of the Conservator meetings etc. PH stated that proposed dates for the four Forum dates would be circulated shortly.
12. AOB – all covered above

Future Dates

Forum meetings

Dates for next year are not yet agreed

Other

Winter talk – date not yet agree

Projects/Ideas Listing

Purchase of bug traps for purpose of more extensive invertebrate surveys

Consideration of invasive non-native species, including mapping

Work to update and combine flora datasets

Surveys of saproxylic invertebrate fauna

Spring/Summer walks for Board

Monitoring/mapping of veteran trees

Peatlands project