

North West Wimbledon Residents' Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 26th October 2023 in the New Concert Hall, King's College School.

1. Welcome and opening comments.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 41st AGM. He expressed his thanks to KCS for the venue and introduced the Committee members and guest speaker.

2. Colin Cooper, CEO Wimbledon and Putney Conservators.

Colin Cooper gave an excellent talk on his new role as CEO of the Wimbledon and Putney Conservators. He spoke about his lifelong passion for nature and his route into this position. He gave an insight into both the management and stretch of resources he faces and how he plans to deliver the task of looking after the Commons going forward. He urged members to respond to the Levy Consultation document and expressed his wish to bring a new emphasis of engagement with the public to his role. He urged people to sign up to the newsletters and follow the work of his team on social media platforms.

He discussed the issue of budgets and the backlog in work that needs to be completed and how his task to revise the masterplan for the Commons will be realised. His work will be based around engaging the Communities of Kingston, Wimbledon, Putney and Roehampton in order to ensure that the Commons can be enjoyed by everyone. He aims to develop the Friends of the Commons and is keen to explore apprenticeships to encourage the next generation of staff. He will ensure that resilience is built into the landscapes, create opportunities for natural flood management and ensure the Common is a safe place for everyone to access and enjoy.

Colin's talk was very well received and there is much excitement for his tenure given his background and knowledge of both the environment and procedural management of the role.

Following Colin's address the following points were discussed:

- More lobbying of residents to respond to the levy. It was felt that some residents need a better understanding of what the Commons do.
- Are metal detectors allowed on the Common? It was felt that this is unlikely, but more work is to be done on this as there is much history on the Common.
- Are there plans for the parakeets? Parakeets are here to stay and there is a possibility that artificial nesting boxes could lead to a better provision of nesting opportunities.
- Discussion around the disconnect between the actions of residents/golf clubs and the point of ecological corridors. The many trees that have been cut down and the use of fertilisers does have an impact on bio-diversity.
- Is the nature on the common surveyed? Yes, data is collected and surveyed but more will be done in this area.
- How can young people be inspired to use the Common? There are three Forest Schools operating on the Common. They have now been placed strategically to balance their effect on the grounds and agreed they were a huge benefit to young children. There is a Youth Group which Colin is also looking to expand.

3. Chairman's report.

The Chairman's report is attached to these minutes.

4. Treasurer's report and Approval of the Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2022.

Garth Watkins, Treasurer, presented the accounts and the Treasurer's report. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Garth proposed the accounts be approved and this was approved unanimously.

Garth thanked Nasir Mahmud for his oversight of the accounts and confirmed that he had agreed to continue his work on the accounts next year.

5. Election of NWWRA committee and officers:

- a) Stuart Ross, Chairman
- b) Garth Watkins, Treasurer
- c) Ralph Cake
- d) Nick Higgins
- e) Stewart Ferguson
- f) Stephen Woodnutt
- g) Sivadevi Balasingam
- h) Philippa Rivaldi, Secretary

The Chairman proposed that one motion be put forward to the meeting to re-elect the above members of the Committee. The committee was re-elected unanimously.

6. AOB

The Chairman opened up the meeting to questions and comments from the floor:

C. McCarthy raised the issue of the English Heritage conservation guidance and how best to move forward to obtain an updated guidance for the Drax estate. He suggested the setting up of a Community Forum to work on this and other environmental projects in that area. The Chairman agreed to have a follow up conversation on this matter.

R. Aston highlighted the fact that the beech hedges at the bottom of Copse Hill which are normally cut by LBM twice yearly have not been done this year.

The Blubell Fishponds Wood group was highlighted to ensure it remains visible and on the Council's agenda as it is important that the Friends of Fishpond Woods get some funding to continue their good work.

The meeting closed at 8.57pm.