

MITCHAM COMMON CONSERVATORS

A meeting of the Conservators was held at the **Mill House Ecology Centre Windmill Road Mitcham** on **Wednesday 12 December 2007** when there were present:

Mr P Harper (Chairman)
Councillor R Bailey
Councillor A Caldara
Councillor J Driver
Councillor T Godfrey (Vice Chairman)
Councillor T Harris
Ms D Hyatt
Councillor J Leach
Councillor B Mansfield
Councillor I Munn

In attendance

Mr A Banfield – Clerk
Mr M Boyle - Warden
Mr P Moorhouse – Assistant Warden
Mr M Smith - London Borough of Merton

1. Apologies for absence

Received from Dr D Coleman and Mr M Welbank.

2. Minutes.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12 September 2007 were approved and signed by the Chairman, subject to a) minor typographical amendments and b) the addition of Councillor J Leach's name to the list of Conservators present at the Annual Inspection of the Common on 9 September 2007

3. Matters arising

(3.1) Litter Picking. Councillor Mansfield requested information on the current situation. The Warden reported that discussions with Officers at the London Borough of Merton have taken place. Regular liaison meetings to discuss this issue are planned for the New Year. In the meantime the situation remained the same. Councillor Munn was of the view the standard of street cleansing had deteriorated in the whole Borough.

(3.2) Motor Bikes. The Warden updated the Board on the progress in the provision of Motorbikes for the Police. He reported that although the Police Officers had now attended the training course, there was a delay in obtaining the motorbikes. He expected the Motorbikes will be available in March 2008, and patrols will take place after that date.

(10) Merton's Local Development Framework. Councillor Munn reported that Government Office for London, and the Greater London Authority has made severe criticisms of the Merton LDF. This may delay implementation by up to 18 months, with the document having to be reworded and reconstructed.

(11). Open Day. Councillor Mansfield asked about the rationale for repeating the Open Day in view of limited success of the 2007 event. The Clerk explained that proposal was to hold second Open Day in 2008, with better publicity, and to see if an Open Day could be worthwhile. In the event that the second attempt to hold an Open Day failed it was suggested that idea be abandoned.

(13). Photographer. The Warden reported that the Photographer had been informed of the decision of the Board. She wanted to take picture of all of the Conservators at suitable opportunity, perhaps at the Spring Inspection. Most of the pictures for the book will be taken in the summer of 2008.

(14). Spring Inspection. Councillor Bailey requested that more notice be given of these events, as Conservators' diaries get very full. It was agreed that Spring Inspection would be held on Sunday 18 May 2008. The Clerk will also circulate list of dates for the 2008/2009 Board Meeting for information and agreement at the March 2008 meeting of the Board

RESOLVED. The Clerk will circulate a provisional list of dates of meetings for the 2008/2009-year for decision at the next Board Meeting.

4. **Report of Director of Environment and Regeneration**

(1). Travellers. Report for Information. Councillor Munn was of the view that this group of travellers had cynically exploited the system, and Merton Officers were a little bit slow in dealing with the matter. The Warden updated the Board on the current situation, in that group had left area and current whereabouts are unknown. After debate it was agreed that Chairman will write on behalf of the Board to the local MP, with a request that she take the matter up with the relevant Home Office Minister

RESOLVED. The Chairman will write on behalf of Board to Siobhain Mc Donagh MP, with a request that she raise the problem of travellers and their movements with the appropriate Home Office Minister.

(2). Bidder Memorial. Received a report on making the railings around the Memorial safe. The Conservators requested details of the proposal, which should be safe, and aesthetically pleasing. The Warden explained that the proposal was to "cap" off the fence, removing spikes.

RESOLVED. The fencing around the Bidder Memorial will be altered to be aesthetically pleasing and safe.

(3) Management Plan. The Quarterly Work Programme update submitted for information as per previous decision.

5. **Report of Clerk**

(1). Mill Green. Received report on completion of reinstatement works by Southern Gas.

(3). Honours Boards. Received report on proposal to place two Boards on the wall of the Meeting Room. One Board will be for Chairmen and one Board for Honorary

Conservators. Discussion on the use of titles and post-nominal letters. After discussion it was agreed to go ahead with placing the Boards in the Meeting room. For both Boards only titles will be used, and no post-nominal letters. However before finally making up lists the Clerk will circulate the Honorary Conservators with the Board's decision on post nominal letters. A suitable occasion to "unveil" the Boards needs to be arranged. The Clerk will discuss with the Chairman. A budget of £1000.00 was suggested for the purchase of the Boards and the addition of the names and titles on the Boards.

RESOLVED. Two Honours Boards, one with a list of previous Chairmen and the second with a list of Honorary Conservators, on them, will be purchased. A suitable date for the unveiling of the Boards will be arrange by the Clerk in consultation with Chairman

(4). 23-30 Goat Road. Updated details on the Planning Application for these premises were noted.

(5) Island of Common Land in Goat Road (opposite the Goat Public House). Report received on a TfL proposal to install textured containment kerbs. This was noted.

(7). Pollution Incident along the River Wandle. Report noted. It was reported that Thames Water would be making available £500,000.00 for remedial measures following the contamination of the River. Some of this money, thought to be £200,000 could be given to the Wandle Trust. A further report will be brought to the Board when the situation is clearer.

RESOLVED. The Officers will further report to the Board in due course on the use, and distribution, of the Thames Water monies

(8). Land Registry. Received a report from the Clerk that Board recommending the Board proceed with the registration of Mitcham Common with the Land Registry. The Conservators' Solicitors will conduct the exercise on behalf of the Board with assistance of the Officers. The costs of the registration are based upon income. It is therefore expected, given our low income, that these costs will not exceed £1,000.00.

RESOLVED. The Clerk in consultation with Conservators' Solicitor proceeds with registration of Mitcham Common in the Land Registry.

6. Budget

A Statement of Income and Expenditure to the end of November 2007 was submitted.

7. Investments.

Details of the Board's Investment portfolio previously circulated to Conservators by the Board's Investment Advisor were noted

8. Accounts 2006/2007.

Received the draft Financial Statements for the Mitcham Common Conservators for Financial Year ending 31 March 2007. After discussion the draft Financial Statements were approved. The Board authorised the Chairman, with the Clerk, to discuss with the Board's

Accountants the format of parts of the Financial Statements but this proposal was not to delay the processing of the Statements.

RESOLVED. The draft Financial Statements for Mitchan Common Conservators for the year ending 31 March 2007 be approve.

9. Proposed Traffic Signals at Croydon Road/Carshalton Road

Received a further report on the proposal to remove the Roundabout at junction of Carshalton Road and Croydon Roads. Members commented as listed herewith:

Councillor Leach was of the view that if all three sets of traffic signals in the area were linked he could support proposal.

The Chairman, Mr Paul Harper, was still concerned about the proposals, which did not in his opinion improve access on the route to Croydon via Cricket Green. Some traffic tail back to Carshalton would still continue.

Councillor Munn stated that the proposed work is in his Ward. The current junction is incapable taking the level of traffic. TfL are also bringing forward improvements to Bus Lanes in are and Cricket Green will be altered as result. He was of the view that this work will be an improvement and should be supported.

Ms Hyatt was of the view that the proposed alterations to the junction are big changes but she is not convinced of the usefulness on them

Councillor Godfrey commented that he had looked at proposal. He is not convinced that they are in the best interest of the Common. He is happy to reconsider if TfL come back with further proposals.

Councillor Godfrey proposed that the present scheme for the traffic lights at the junction of Croydon Road and Carshalton Roads be not supported. Councillor Leach seconded this motion.

On being put to the vote nine Conservators vote for the motion, with none against Councillor Munn abstained

RESOLVED. The current proposal for the removal of the Roundabout at the junction of Carshalton Road and Croydon Road and its replacement by Traffic Lights is not supported.

9. Wandle Valley Regional Park

Received a report on the continuing work to promote a Regional Park in the Wandle Valley. In the general discussions on the concept there was overall agreement that Mitcham Common should support the project and the Board should be involved closely in the work to progress the concept.

In order to place on formal basis that general support it was suggested the Chairman be delegated to sign a letter, or similar document, of support. In addition the Clerk was instructed to write on behalf of Conservators to three constituent local authorities indicating

the support of the Conservators for the establishment of a Regional Park. The Board will continue to be actively involved in both the planning and discussions on the Regional Park.

RESOLVED

- 9.1. The Board supports the concept and creation of a Regional Park in the Wandle Valley.**
- 9.2. The Board further authorises the Chairman to sign any document indicating the support of the Mitcham Common Conservators for the concept and creation of Regional Park in the Wandle Valley**
- 9.3. The Clerk writes to Chief Executives of the three constituent local authorities with details of the Board's decision.**

11. Mitcham Golf Club

Received a report on a recent meeting between representatives of the Mitcham Golf Club and the Conservators. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Warden and the Clerk represented the Board. The meeting was convened to discuss the existing licence between the Golf Club and Conservators. In addition the Golf Club were able to bring the Conservators up to date with new arrangement between the Golf Club and their new landlord for that part of the Golf Club not in ownership of Conservators. This latter area being the land on which the Club House sits and the Car Park. This being land formally owned by Rail Track.

The new landlord is negotiating a longer lease with the Golf Club. As a result the Club enquired if the Conservators would consider reviewing the timescales of the licence. The current 21-year licence expires in 2001, with final three-year period commencing in 2008.

Whilst Conservators must go ahead, by virtue of the conditions of the existing licence, the Clerk reported that the representatives of the Conservators at the meeting were sympathetic to the Club's proposal. They therefore recommend that, notwithstanding the need to continue with existing licence conditions, that delegated authority be given to the Chairman and Vice Chairman, with support of the Officers, to negotiate with the Golf Club on a possible new time scale for any licence. The Board in dealing with any possible change may require professional help in the agreement. Any proposed new licence would need to approved by the Board.

On separate matter the Golf Club has requested that the Conservators agree to the installation of a Chipping Green on part of Course. Detail was submitted to the Board. The Board agreed the request. This work will require the re-alignment of existing paths. Such work is to be subject to approval on site by the Warden.

RESOLVED.

- 11.1. The existing provisions of the current licence between Mitcham Golf Club and Mitcham Common Conservators in respect of the licence for 2008 to 2011 be implemented as per the conditions of the licence**

- 11.2 **Delegated authority is granted to the Chairman/ and Vice Chairman, with the support if necessary of an independent consultant, to negotiate a new agreement with the Golf Club. Any final agreement on a new licence etc is subject to final agreement by the Board.**
- 11.3. **Approval is granted for the construction of a Chipping Green on the Golf Course. The construction of this facility to be subject to approval on site by the Warden**
12. **One Year On.**

Received a report from the Clerk detailing his views on the Clerk's role after one year in office. Whilst routine work appears to be covered within the parameters of the role, there is need for minor administrative support.

However the problem as the Clerk reported it is how to look at wider issues. In particular there does not seem to be sufficient time at Board Meetings to debate issues of policy or strategy. These meetings tend to be full of business and allow little time for considering long-term issues such as finance, policy or strategy.

Although this would be another demand on the time of Conservators, the Clerk suggested that a seminar be held, perhaps on a weekend rather than a weekday evening to allow time for the Conservators to look at these issues in depth. If agreed the most suitable month would appear to be April.

After debate it was agreed that Clerk will circulate Conservators to obtain an indication of their views on a seminar and suitable dates and times

RESOLVED.

- 12.1 **The Clerk will circulate a questionnaire to Conservators to ascertain interest in a seminar and dates and times.**
- 12.2 **A sum of £1,000.00 is identified in this year's budget for additional administrative assistance to the Clerk.**
13. **Friends of Mitcham Common.** No report.
14. **Any Other Business.** None
15. **Date of Next Meeting.** Wednesday 12 March 2008