**THE FRIENDS OF THE SCRUBS**

Registered Charity Number 1187120

**TRUSTEES’ ANNUAL REPORT**

**10 May 2022**

**Abbreviations used in this Report**

“The Friends” the Friends of the Scrubs

“HS2” High Speed Rail Network 2

“LCS” Linford Christie Stadium

“LBHF” London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, also “the Council”

“OPDC” Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation

“WSCT” Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust

**The Trustees**

Elected AGM 20 April 2021

Stephen Waley-Cohen , Chairman (SW-C)

Smita Dave, Treasurer

Carmel McLoughlin, Secretary

Miriam Shea (MS)

Sarah Johnson

Faye Thomas

Ben Novak

Jack Perschke

Emma Ranson

**Meetings**

The Trustees have met several times during the year to deal with a variety of issues and the Minutes of those meetings are available on the Friends’ website [www.friendsofthescrubs](http://www.friendsofthescrubs) and are mostly summarised in this Report. With physical meetings not allowed for most of the year, the majority of our meetings were ‘virtual’ via Zoom. In addition to multiple submissions to HS2 and LBHF, and participating in all WSCT meetings whether in person or remotely by our two co-opted trustees SW-C and MS, the Trustees have had multiple contacts with Councillors and Officers on behalf of FOWWS to help ensure the proper management and protection of the Scrubs.

**WSCT Committee**

The WSCT exists to ensure that this much valued area of open space is used for the exercise and recreation of Londoners. The affairs of the Trust are managed by the WSCT Committee currently chaired by Councillor Alexandra Sanderson. There are 5 members of the WSCT Committee – 3 voting members and 2 non-voting members, SW-C and MS, who are both trustees of the Friends charity. One or both of our representatives have attended all meetings. We also provide summaries of the meetings of the WSCT on our website.

**Grounds Maintenance (GM)**

A new contract for GM at Wormwood Scrubs commenced on 1st February 2022 offering considerable improvements and increased sensitivity to ecological management. It is a specific contract for the Scrubs and Id Verde are the successful contractor. A new post of Environment and Biodiversity Manager had been created. Kate McVay started work in mid-February and had been actively engaging with stakeholders and volunteers on ecological improvements to improve biodiversity at Wormwood Scrubs and act as Ambassador for the GM Contract. A couple of meetings took place between several Trustees of the Friends and representatives of Id Verde to discuss the work programme and how to achieve the best for the Scrubs through the GM contract. Sandy loam continued to be spread along several well-trodden routes as a trial to mitigate for the wet conditions on the Scrubs. A two-metre path was also being maintained along the hoarding as an alternative route.

**HS2 and Sewer Diversion**

Most members are aware that the works for the sewer diversion authorised by the HS2 Act along the north of the Scrubs is underway with the route to the construction site directly from Old Oak Common Lane. Hoardings with viewing panels of the Works have recently been erected along the boundary of the works site on the Scrubs, with art from the local school organised by the Friends’ trustees displayed on the hoarding. Construction works for the UTX site and the sewer diversion are now underway. The Trustees of the Friends have worked closely with the Assistant Director of Environment Stephen Hollingworth and the Chair of WSCT committee Councillor Alex Sanderson in holding HS2 to account for their conduct of the sewer works, with timely reminders to HS2 if they seem to be acting unreasonably, as happened with the recent incident of the over lighting of the works site at night-time. It took a little time to get HS2 to act but they did thanks to local Trustees Faye, Ben, Jack and others getting in contact with them.  It was noted that HS2 had now served notice of compulsory purchase from 18th March on an area of Wormwood Scrubs open space, comprising an area of 14.04 square metres, adjacent to Old Oak Common Lane (OOCL) to accommodate the realignment of OOCL and footpath.

**Hedging and Hedge Laying**

Following on from the in-filling to the hedges to the east and the south which took place last Spring authorised by LBHF and carried out by a team of volunteers led by Emma Ranson, this year LBHF secured funding from HS2, to contract Groundwork to lead hedge laying by volunteers on the Scrubs. The Friends of the Scrubs again led by Emma organised volunteers for 6 sessions with approximately 12 volunteers at each in Jan and Feb and have done an excellent job. Due to the bird nesting season this work had now stopped and can recommence in the Autumn. Signs and roping have gone up in the meadow as a means of protecting any ground nesting birds, possibly meadow pipits, which though not rare birds are nowhere else so close to central London.

Friends will recall that we raised with Mr Seb Dunnett of LBHF in Spring of last year during a well-attended Zoom call with Friends, the issue of the central grassland (meadow) not being within the Scrubs LNR and later the Trustees made a formal request for LBHF to pursue this. The response at the time was that this was being actively looked at. Id Verde are assisting us with this, and, through Kate McVay, have been given access to the materials which the Friends prepared and previously provided to support the case for designation.

**Wormwood Scrubs Ecological Masterplan**

This is the plan for the immediate future of the Scrubs and is funded by HS2 under their agreement with LBHF. The Trustees are disappointed that there has been little progress with the work which had been identified as necessary during previous consultations. The WSCT have recently appointed another firm of consultants to reach more diverse respondents as to their requirements of the Scrubs and the reasons for their lack of use of the Scrubs. This consultation is ongoing as this is written.

**Linford Christie Stadium**

Friends will recall that last year the LBHF were pushing for development of the stadium and expected to be able to go out to tender by March 2021. The process has been delayed, largely because of council officers’ preoccupation with HS2 and other issues, and perhaps because of changing priorities within LBHF. A proposal for the development of a lido on part of LCS has been mooted by the West London Lido Group, which has received some significant level of public support and there is information on our website and a link where you can comment on the proposal. Meanwhile the use of LCS by community groups is continuing, including Thames Valley Harriers, Kensington Dragons and London Sports. . Your trustees remain committed to vigorous opposition to large scale development of a stadium, and are supportive of other community use options including a lido.

**OPDC Local Plan**

This long-running saga is not yet over. The first draft local plan was published for consultation in February 2016, followed by revised drafts in June 2017 and 2018. We commented in detail on all three. The examination in public (“EIP”) held by the planning inspector who has to approve the plan before it can be adopted began in April 2019 and another session was in July 2019. With the loss of the Car Giant site north east of the Scrubs for development, the EIP remained adjourned, pending the submission by OPDC of “Major Modifications” (and Minor Modifications). In February 2021 the OPDC published their “Post Submission Modified Draft Local Plan” (“PSMDLP”). The EIP resumed online on the 11 and 12 January 2022 and the planning inspector issued his report on the 1st April 2022 as this report was being written. The Report “concludes that the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation Local Plan (the OPDC LP) provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the development area, provided that a number of main modifications [MMs] are made to it. The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (the OPDC) has specifically requested that I recommend any MMs necessary to enable the Plan to be adopted.” Thus the OPDC LP is still awaited whilst these MMs are now incorporated. **What however emerges from the modifications (and as a consequence of the loss of Car Giant) is that the proposed bridge to the Scrubs from the north which would probably have joined the Scrubs north of Chats Paddock is no longer proposed as part of the existing plan. The PSMDLP still clings to the idea of such a bridge, calling it a “potential walking and cycling route”. Just as important, there is now no proposal for entry to the Scrubs from Old Oak Station (the major HS2 terminus). The reason for this is the existence of the IEP (Intercity Express Programme) depot (the long shed above the northern boundary of the Scrubs) the lease of which will not expire until after the life of the local plan (about 17 years from now). Again, the plan seeks to keep this alive by saying “”Old Oak Common Station should not preclude a connection to Wormwood Scrubs”.**

**Activity Days**

To coincide with COP 26 in November 2021 the Trustees organised a number of events on Sunday 7th November including: a Bird Walk led by Barbara Crowther and Paul Thomas; an Environmental Talk and Walk led by Tilly Collins; an Art Competition for Junior users of the Scrubs, and Bulb Planting led by Emma Ranson. A fun day was had by all who attended.

**On Sunday 22nd May 2022 the Trustees are planning an Activity Day**, including an Early Morning Bird Walk; a Butterfly Workshop; and other activities. We hope to ensure that visitors to the Scrubs are fully aware of the joys of the Scrubs and how they can become involved in maintaining the ‘more wild than tamed’ aspect through membership of the Friends and also the forum which allows Friends to share ideas and information on the Scrubs.

**Finances**

We do not make a charge to become a Friend. To date we have needed minimal funds to maintain our objective of protection of the Scrubs. This may change if challenges arise especially in connection with inappropriate proposals by LBHF re LCS. We would then need to raise campaign funds and to this end a Just Giving page has been set up: <https://www.justgiving.com/friendsofthescrubs> where donations are welcome towards our routine modes running costs.

The Friends is registered as a charity with HMRC which will allow tax on donations to be claimed back through gift aid. We received a significant gift during the year, which gives us a starting point for any major spending requirements.

The Charity has funds of £9809.27 as of 5th April 2022. Total outgoings for the year are £3,426 which include regular expenses such as  web hosting and printing costs for fliers etc.

Donations raised through JustGiving amounted to £795 which additionally raised £133.18 in gift aid. The Friends are grateful for all the donations.

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| Opening Bank Balance | £1,234 |
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| Total Receipts | £12,002 |
|  |  |
| Total Outgoings | £3,426 |
|  |  |
| Closing Bank Balance | £9,809 |

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees’ report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity’s trustees

Signature

Name

Secretary/Chair

Date