

RESPONSE TO WSCT RE MASTERPLAN

Dear Cllr Sanderson, Osama, and Vicky

We have written formally from FOWWS to OPDC about the Masterplan application, and our response is attached to this.

Separately, we have significant concerns about aspects of the Masterplan that do not form part of that application, and we set those out here:

Although there has been extensive consultation along the way to this final version of the Masterplan, this final version has not previously been consulted on, and this seems very unfortunate for such a major intervention on Metropolitan Open Land and a Common.

In our view, which we believe you all share, the Scrubs is unique among all of London's parks and green spaces in a dense urban environment, offering the chance to experience comparative wilderness within a small compact area. It needs a little better maintenance for people to enjoy open skies, long views, swathes of varied grassland, briars and brambles (within reason) and other biodiverse features which already exist.

The guiding principles in the Design & Access Statement claim to maintain this openness character and scrubby nature, but in practice they show many significant interventions which will achieve the opposite effect.

Hedge planting along very many paths in the meadow area, forming solid boundaries. If, unlike the recently created hedges, they have multiple pathways through them, this will somewhat negate their biodiversity benefit.

These hedges* achieve the undesirable effect of carving this open wild space into enclaves/enclosures which will change completely the nature of this part of the Scrubs that the proposals claim to protect, and is certainly not in keeping with the objectives of the Wormwood Scrubs Act, our governing document. It also increases the risks to walker safety, especially women walking alone; we need longer sight-lines, not more obstacles.

*the majority of Trustees agree with this, with one suggesting much shorter lengths of more carefully located new hedging to avoid blocking walkers, one suggesting new hedging should only be round the edge of the meadow area, one supporting all the new hedging.

Biodiversity features – log piles, hibernaculae – seem to be scattered like confetti, to the extent where they are highly intrusive compared with the more naturally occurring ones.

Signs – the size of some of these seems to have grown considerably, and we must remember that they are not the main attraction, but there to draw attention to the glories of the Scrubs.

Maintenance – we are very concerned to be assured that at least £1m will be retained in a management/maintenance fund, and that this is a definite plan. All that is planned will be wasted if not properly maintained until it is fully established and can be managed within the regular routine programme of maintenance.

Has the three-yearly cost of dredging, and the additional costs of removing litter from the pond and swales been calculated and allowed for?

Meadows and trees: We would welcome your definition of a meadow, and wish to insist on details of plants planned for these areas, to ensure they are both native UK species and in keeping with the nature of the Scrubs. Similarly for the new trees proposed.

Access: We would **not** welcome any restriction on the ability to walk through the northern/eastern periphery woodland, which is a unique attraction for many Scrubs users.

In this connection, we are concerned about the possibility of a heavy vehicle route from Scrubs Lane just south of the enclosure let to Power Networks, which would be highly intrusive in one of the more sensitive bat/bird areas of the Scrubs, apart from coming off what is now a very busy road.

There is a perfectly good route for even the largest vehicles (after some necessary widening which will intrude into a not very significant corner of Martin Bell's Wood) along the existing road entrance by Scrubs Lane car park to LCS.

With best wishes

Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen

Chairman, Friends of Wormwood Scrubs

Prepared by the Trustees of FOWWS with added support from FOWWS planning adviser Henry Peterson, and FOWWS honorary ecologist, Dr T. Collins.