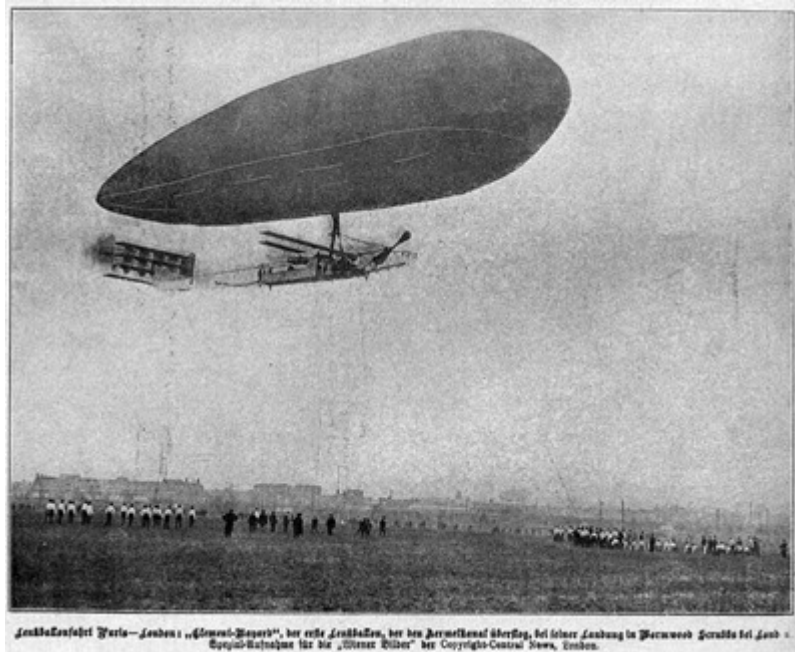


Friends of Wormwood Scrubs

Newsletter No. 7 September 2020



Here is the 2020 Autumn issue of the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs (FOWWS) newsletter. In these newsletters, the FOWWS Committee keeps you up to date on the latest developments regarding Wormwood Scrubs Common. The year 2020 is proving to be a testing time for all of us. In many ways, the Scrubs has come into its own, demonstrating the importance of retaining wild open spaces where people can safely escape urban confines for a short time, and enjoy fresh air and Nature at its best. The Scrubs has always found use in difficult times for the nation. During World War I, airships were housed and tested on the site now occupied by the Linford Christie Stadium (see above). It was used as a shooting range during World War II and for growing vegetables in response to the 'Dig for Victory' campaign. In the light of increasing climate-change fears, the Scrubs' role as a 'green lung' for the Capital is perhaps the most important yet.

The Editor

Contents

Scrubs use and misuse	page 2
<i>Anti-social behaviour</i>	
<i>Signage and regulation</i>	
<i>Professional dog-walkers</i>	
<i>New paths</i>	
LUC Masterplan and ecological protection	page 3
Pony Centre funding	page 4
LCS and sports facilities	page 4
<i>Linford Christie Stadium</i>	
<i>Kensington Dragons</i>	
<i>Queens Park Rangers</i>	
OPDC news	page 5
<i>North Kensington Gate</i>	
HS2 and Crossrail	page 6
Membership and communications	page 6
<i>Tony Curzon Price</i>	
<i>We need your skills</i>	
Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust news	page 7
<i>WSCT Strategic Report</i>	
<i>Kensington Aldridge Academy</i>	
Future <i>Zoom</i> meetings	page 8
<i>A Special General Meeting by Zoom</i>	
Useful contacts	page 9
About the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs	page 10

Scrubs use and misuse

During the summer months, the Scrubs was visited more than normal, which was good. Many people used the main paths for exercise. Sunbathing and picnics were also in evidence – though not always in the most appropriate

locations (members prefer to see the Nature reserve component kept as pristine as possible, especially in areas where birds might nest, and the grassy paths kept solely as walkways rather than as picnic areas). Some users did not know that cycling, whether or not motorised, is not allowed on the Scrubs (there is a designated cycle path along the border by Prison and Hospital). Inevitably, litter became a problem, some of it discarded PPE equipment.

- *Anti-social behaviour*

The worst infringements were the attempts to set up social musical events on the Scrubs, with some people stupidly lighting fires close to woodland. Fortunately, local residents and FOWWS members were able to alert the police in time to halt serious damage and noise nuisance. However, there were large amounts of litter left behind. This problem may not completely go away, so we are providing contact details for the police and community representatives at the end of the newsletter.

- *Signage and regulation*

What became clear is that new Scrubs users didn't always know how to use the Scrubs. The FOWWS Committee will be pushing for far better signage all around the Scrubs, stating rules about cycling, barbecues, litter disposal, suitable picnic spots, responsible dog-walking *etc.*

In parallel, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) and the Committee are scrutinising the regulatory background – the current by-laws and what are called Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) – with the aim of updating and clarifying the rules. (LBHF already has PSPOs in place regarding dogs and alcohol consumption, but they do not appear to apply to Wormwood Scrubs Common. The Council ran a public consultation on these PSPOs between July and September, and it is now closed.)

- *Professional dog-walkers*

From 1 October 2020, professional dog-walkers will require a licence to operate in LBHF parks and open spaces including the Scrubs. There are notices at most entrances to the Scrubs to tell professional dog-walkers to apply for their licences at parks@lbhf.gov.uk

- *New paths*

Members noted that during lockdown, new, mown paths appeared across the wilderness area (apparently put in by the Council as 'desire lines'), and that the main path going west/east in the centre of the wilderness area had been widened to double its usual size. On the whole, most FOWWS members feel

that the expansion of walking area is totally unnecessary and adversely affects flora and fauna, in particular nesting birds.

LUC Masterplan and ecological protection

Last year, Land Use Consultancy (LUC) was appointed to develop a Masterplan intended to improve and enhance biodiversity on the Scrubs (see the Spring newsletter). There was a public consultation at the beginning of the year. The design plan and the Consultation Document were discussed at the last meeting of the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust (WSCT). FOWWS asked for a sub-group to be formed to review and revise the Plan before it is adopted. This sub-group will probably meet shortly ahead of the next WSCT meeting. FOWWS Committee members, Stephen Waley-Cohen and Smita Davé, are members of this sub-group.

There is now a draft version of the Conservation Management Plan, which includes details of the history of the Scrubs, all the objects currently existing on the Scrubs, and an inventory of wildlife including trees and plants. It also contains excellent maps of the Scrubs. FOWWS was given the opportunity to comment informally on the CMP. If you did not get a chance to download the very large document and would like to look at it, you can email me (Nina Hall), and I can transfer you a copy. We look forward to seeing the final document.

The Committee continues to liaise with other groups dedicated to protecting green spaces, including GoParksLondon (FOWWS has a page on its website and members can post photos), London Friends of Green Spaces Network, Fields in Trust, as well the Borough's Parks Commission.

Pony Centre funding

In May, Richard Burke, the partner of one of our members, raised more than £3000 for the Pony Centre on the Scrubs by running a half marathon round the Common. The Centre organises riding for disabled children and those with special needs, and is much valued by all. Like the rest of the Scrubs, it remains under threat from inappropriate development. You can support the Centre via its website: <https://wormwoodscrubsponycentre.org> and donate by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.justgiving.com/wormwoodscrubsponycentre>

LCS and sports facilities

- *Linford Christie Stadium*

There has been no further concrete news regarding the future of the Linford Christie Stadium (LCS), which forms an important part of Scrubs community facilities. Its potential development as a massive commercial entertainment

venue is vigorously opposed by FOWWS and local residents. Details regarding the proposal and the recent LCS consultation are described in previous newsletters.

The WSCT has awarded a contract to deliver an Outline Business Case by this Autumn, which it says will help it make a decision on how it wants to proceed to enable improvements to the LCS and the sports facilities. Various organisations and stake-holders have been consulted. Interestingly, as a result of the LCS proposals made by LBHF, the Charitable Trust has had to scrutinise more closely its exact role in such decision-making (see details below on page 7).

- *Kensington Dragons*

Kensington Dragons Football Club (KDFC), a community club that pays to use the LCS, recently drew up and presented plans to the Council for refurbishing and making interim improvements to the sports pitch areas. At an Extraordinary Meeting (virtual) in July 2020, the WSCT said it supported the plans, which were to deliver a hybrid football pitch (while not limiting any future redevelopment), and it proposed including consultants to review the business case and report this Autumn.

- *Queens Park Rangers*

Queens Park Rangers Football Club, which had put in a proposal to build a new football stadium on the LCS site, has changed its focus to concentrate on its new training facility. Some years ago, QPR set its sights on acquiring Warren Farm in Southall, Ealing as its new training ground. This is Metropolitan Open Land (like the Scrubs) and highly valued by the surrounding community. After an eight-year-long tortuous battle between the local community and Ealing Council, which had given permission for the Warren Farm site to be developed by QPR, the club withdrew its proposal and decided instead to buy Heston Sports Ground near Heathrow from Imperial College. FOWWS and the local community can take heart from the fact that persistent local opposition paid off!

OPDC news

The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation, which is the planning authority for the area north of the Scrubs, also had to modify its ambitious plans after it failed to acquire the large Cargiant site. While the OPDC is still trying to complete its Draft Local Plan for the area, it is still not clear how it will now meet its agreed commitment to build 3500 houses north of the Scrubs. The OPDC has said it will shift its development focus to the 'western' side of the Scrubs, but no further information is available. At the moment, there is a high-rise development called Oaklands, being built by QPR and the

Genesis Housing Association on the north-west side (which is not much liked by locals). A triangular site next to the HS2 station is shown as a green area on HS2 maps; we have no information as to the fate of that area. We will monitor developments.

- *North Kensington Gate*

In the meantime, on the north-eastern side of the Scrubs, amendments are being made to a planning application by City and Docklands for another unattractive high-rise development – North Kensington Gate (www.northkensingtongate.com). The changes are to increase the height of the buildings in an already over-dense development. FOWWS has put in an objection to the application (as have two local Neighbourhood Forums), which can be seen on our website.

- OPDC now has a new Director of Planning, Emma Williamson, who started in August.

HS2 and Crossrail

Work on the HS2 station site continues, with clearance and preparation for construction. Planning consent was officially given by OPDC in May. As part of the HS2 works, the Stamford Brook sewer is being re-routed through the northern section of the Scrubs. Some of the Scrubs land will also be cleared for HS2 construction works. A specialist surveyor and legal advice are being sought by the Trust to ensure proper compensation and later reinstatement of land and ecology. In particular, large trees will have to be removed, so should be replaced afterwards. The Committee has asked that signs are put up to explain the activities to the public.

- The Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) is supposed to start running in the first half of 2022. It will pass through Old Oak but with no interchange until the HS2 station is built.

Membership and communications

The Committee is trying to broaden its communications. Thanks to Sarah Johnson, we now have a much-improved website, as well as Facebook and Twitter feeds. Members are encouraged to send in photos for the website.

We are also increasing our communications with other relevant organisations and media. The local Nextdoor social platform has proved a useful way of extending our messages to the wider community, and we were delighted to receive such strong support from Nextdoor contributors on making best use of the Scrubs during recent months. We would encourage all members to spread the word as much as possible about protecting this unique resource,

and invite as many interested people as possible to become FOWWS members.

- *Tony Curzon Price*

We are sad that one of our longest-serving members, Tony Curzon Price, is stepping down from the Committee. Tony served as Treasurer for many years and has played a significant role in our various campaigns to protect the Scrubs. He will continue to be interested in everything Scrubs-related, and to be available to us when we need his advice.

- *We need your skills*

The Committee does a huge amount of work on behalf of the membership, often unrecorded. We should be grateful to hear from anyone who has particular knowledge or skill sets that could help us improve what we do. We could, for example, do with more help on the media side, especially social media. If any of you have skills in design and graphics to offer, for example, or have exceptionally good media and other relevant contacts, that would be most useful.

As always, do not hesitate to get in contact with any of the Committee members, if you have queries, useful information to impart or offers of help.

Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust news

The WSCT effectively owns, operates and maintains Wormwood Scrubs. As is spelt out in more detail further on in this Newsletter, LBHF, as sole Trustee of the WSCT, has done all this on behalf of WSCT. Until recently it has never been as clear – as it should have been – as to the WSCT’s relationship with the Council. As a result of the Council’s proposals to develop the Scrubs commercially (*ie*, the LCS), the Trust has recognised that interactions between the Trust and the Council need to be more transparent and precise so as to avoid conflicts of interest (the Trust is a Charity and subject to Charity Commission regulations). Although several recent meetings of the Trust had to be cancelled, there was a virtual meeting in June.

- *WSCT Strategic Report*

At this meeting, a Strategic Report was presented clarifying ownership, management and financial accounting details. It is particularly relevant to the status of the LCS. It is worth reading the report on the Trust website, but there are one or two points in the Report worth mentioning here:

- The Trust owns the Stadium and all land which makes up Wormwood Scrubs, and the Council is undertaking and managing recreational activities on the land on the behalf of the Charity.

- Primary in this is that the Trust is in fact the owner of the Linford Christie Stadium and the associated pitches, and that it is responsible for all income and expenditure associated with it. In addition, the governance arrangements need to be updated so that an appropriate scheme of delegation is in place. Furthermore, the Trust Committee should consider how it can make appropriate decisions in all areas where the Council as corporate body has a financial interest and at the same time effectively manage any conflicts of interest.
- Council's free use of the stadium must be justified by reference to the Charity's objects. The Trust should also consider who else might offer recreational facilities from the Scrubs or charging the Council a rent to use the Stadium. Future decisions in connection with arrangements with the Council must be clear and conflict of interests both managed and documented. Given the Council's financial interest in trying to minimise its expenditure and that it runs activities from the Stadium, conflicts of interest and loyalty need careful management in the Trust's decision-making process.
- The Council as Trustee has no express obligation to maintain the Scrubs as "open land" or to be bound by the responses to any consultation it may arrange. A stadium let to a professional sports club would have to be justified as a commercial letting in order to meet the costs of public recreation elsewhere on the Scrubs.
- Consent is required for redevelopment of the Scrubs more substantially from the Secretary of State (Ministry of Defence).

- *Kensington Aldridge Academy*

Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, The KAA has been using a site on the Scrubs to host extra 'decant' school buildings. The Trust has agreed a yearly licence since July 2017, and the DFE has requested another one-year licence starting this July. ODPC, as the local planning authority for the Scrubs, granted planning permission in July 2019 for up to three years.

Future *Zoom* meetings

We had intended to hold an AGM in April this year, but of course, it had to be postponed due to the lockdown. FOWWS is now a charity and bound by Charitable Commission rules, and because it was first registered as such in December 2019, we have until June 2021 to hold our first AGM. The Trustees would like to hold an AGM before then, but the terms of our current Constitution do not permit a virtual meeting. The Charity Commission has granted a concession, which expires on 30 September 2020, to enable charities to hold general meetings electronically, even if their written constitutions do not provide for it.

- *A Special General Meeting to authorise Zoom meetings*

We have therefore given notice to have the electronic meeting on 29 September to change our Constitution to enable us to hold electronic meetings – including our AGM – in the future

THIS is important for the good governance of our charity and to enable everyone to take part in meetings in the future. PLEASE LOG ON TO THE ZOOM LINK below on Tuesday 29 September at 6.30 pm, AND please **VOTE FOR THE RESOLUTION so that, in future, WE CAN HOLD OUR AGM ELECTRONICALLY.**

AGM Zoom meeting

Time: 29 September 2020, 6.30 pm

Join Zoom meeting via:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84815665570?pwd=Z09UcENkVVbtUIZiSVB5MU5vZIRJZz09>

Meeting ID: 848 1566 5570

Useful contacts

Antisocial/security matters:

1. The Parks Police – they are the first point of contact if you see something criminal happening on the Scrubs.

020 8753 5999 (10am to 10pm) or e-mail: parkspolice@lbhf.gov.uk.

2. The Metropolitan Police – web page: met.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us (nearest station: Shepherd's Bush Police Station, 252 Uxbridge Road, W12 7JA)

3. Local Ward Officers – you can contact the local police officers for Old Oak and College Park: CollegePark.OldOak.SNT@met.police.uk

Omer Ahmad (Omer.Ahmad@met.police.uk), Eden Cocking

(Eden.Cocking@met.police.uk), Issiaka Traore (Issiaka.Traore@met.police.uk,

Debbie Field (Debbie.Field@met.police.uk).

General Scrubs issues

Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust

Councillor Alexandra Sanderson (Chair), email:

Alexandra.Sanderson@lbhf.gov.uk, 020 8753 2018

Councillor Helen Rowbottom, Helen.Rowbottom@lbhf.gov.uk, 020 8753 2018

Councillor Belinda Donovan, Belinda.Donovan@lbhf.gov.uk, 020 8753 3550

Councillor for Old Oak and College Park (covers the Scrubs)

Councillor Wesley Harcourt, email: Wesley.Harcourt@lbhf.gov.uk

Scrubs maintenance/damage issues

Richard Gill, LBHF Senior Parks Manager, Richard.Gill@lbhf.gov.

About the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs

All of you receiving this newsletter have signed up to be Friends of Wormwood Scrubs – an active lobbying and pressure group that aims to protect the unique nature of Wormwood Scrubs Common. You have appointed a Committee, which – as volunteers – does its best not only to track and influence any changes, activities or decisions concerning the Common and its environs, but also to monitor its maintenance.

The Friends of Wormwood Scrubs is a registered charity, No. 1187120.

Current committee members

Chair: Stephen Waley-Cohen (stephen@swc-office.co.uk)

Secretary: Carmel McLoughlin (carmelmcloughlin@icloud.com)

Treasurer: Smita Davé (eynham@gmail.com)

David Jeffreys (david_jeffreys2@hotmail.com)

Miriam Shea (miriamshea@btinternet.com)

Eleanor Botright (eleanorbotwright@yahoo.co.uk)

Website: Sarah Johnson (sarahcynthiajohnson@gmail.com)

Newsletter editor: Nina Hall (nina@ninahall.org)

Stewart Dalby, as President, also attends meetings (dalbygray@aol.com)

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) are the Trustees of the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust (WSCT) which owns and manages the Scrubs. Two committee members from the Friends sit on the Trust Committee as non-voting members, along with three Councillors supported by the relevant Council Officers. The Trust usually meets four times a year, and minutes and agendas can be found on the LBHF website. Meetings are open to members of the public, although some elements of the agenda may be closed to the public.

Wormwood Scrubs Common includes a large wilderness area – home to many animal species – and also sports and activity areas including the Linford Christie Stadium. It is under more threat than ever from development, so please encourage your friends and neighbours, who care about the environment and open access to London's green spaces, to join us and have a say in its future. Membership is free! We have an online-group whereby you can exchange views and information. The Committee attempts to keep you informed of relevant developments.

You can join via the FOWWS website: www.friendsofthescrubs.uk, where there are also links to Facebook and Twitter.

In the light of data protection regulations, we remind you that everyone receiving FOWWS emails has asked to do so. You can unsubscribe at any time by clicking on 'unsubscribe from this list' at the end of the email.