

Item 3.

THE FRIENDS OF THE SCRUBS

Registered Charity Number 1187120

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

4 May 2023

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 10 May 2022)

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.uk and are mostly summarised in this Report. 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. The financial position of WSCT is quite healthy, due to the continuing income from the Kensington Aldridge Academy facilities on site, and the significantly lower maintenance and management contract cost. The Friends (SWC) have suggested that WSCT's reserves, alongside those for LBHF as a whole, should be properly invested in safe ways to earn the higher interest now available without risk-taking. This was supported by the WSCT at their recent meeting and Finance Officers will report back.

HS2 Works

The relocation of the Stamford Brook Sewer works were completed by HS2 in Summer and Autumn of 2022 and the land is being reinstated with trees being replaced, hoarding removed and fencing reinstated where removed. Hand back of the land is due to take place imminently at the time of writing this report. The UTX site will remain with HS2 until completion of the Old Oak Common Station. HS2 have also recently discussed with LBHF their intention to carry out a number of monitoring activities along the whole of the northern section of the Scrubs for their planning of platforms, etc at the Station. The Friends have requested that LBHF clarifies the necessity for these activities and have welcomed LBHF being fully involved as to what HS2 are doing.

Site Entrances & Braybrook Street Playground

The three hard track entrances (Braybrook Street near the Playground and near Wulfstan Street, and Scrubs Lane) are now complete and within budget. Your Trustees have made suggestions for planting adjacent to them. They were built below budget, which provides for some continuing maintenance funding. There have also been improvements to the playground and it was recently ceremonially opened. Further ideas for funding from the HS2 Community Fund being discussed include the desirability of some low-key wooden fencing of the playground, with planting, to keep it free of dogs.

Grounds Maintenance (GM)

The contract for GM at Wormwood Scrubs commenced on 1st February 2022. It is a specific contract for the Scrubs and Id Verde are the contractor. As part of the Id Verde team, Kate McVay is the Ecology Manager. She has been actively engaging with stakeholders and volunteers on ecological improvements over the last year to increase biodiversity at Wormwood Scrubs. Several Trustees of the Friends and representatives of Id Verde have met during the last year to discuss the work programme and how to achieve the best for the Scrubs through the GM contract. Kate has organised and led a group of volunteers on further hedgelaying along the southern boundary of the meadow to protect ground nesting birds and other

wildlife. She has also encouraged and directed volunteers in other activities including the planting of trees and whips in the northern woodland.

LNR designation of the Meadow

Friends will recall that we raised with the then Ecology Officer at LBHF in Spring 2021 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. We are pleased to report that there has been progress on this. Again Kate has been involved, with officers from LBHF including the new Ecology Officer, Simone Turner and Vicki Abel who is funded by HS2, in helping to prepare the necessary documentation for submission to Natural England. The designation of the meadow as LNR should assist with the protection of the meadow at sensitive times.

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 final version was presented and approved at the most recent meeting of the WSCT in March. This will now – finally – start to move forwards. It includes funds for a ten-year management plan which will also cover existing woodland and meadow land areas. The Friends presented a number of suggestions for improvements which were largely accepted (including better locations of swales and gaps between them; fewer clumps of trees and an emphasis on individual trees; fewer new trees around the central copse; moving the orchard from the north-west corner to nearer Braybrook Street; using the wet area within Martins Bell's wood to create a wetland). The main suggestion which was not accepted was moving the pond from the open area north of the prison, which will require a borehole and considerable management if it is to avoid becoming a semi-derelict unusable eyesore and placing it in the northwest corner, traditionally a wet area, probably because of the existence of one or two of London's hidden underground streams.

Secret Cinema

Friends will recall Secret Cinema applied for permission to use the Scrubs this coming Summer, but the proposal is now on hold until at least 2024 to allow for proper wildlife surveys and other considerations.

Baseline Survey and Scrubs Watch

One of the initiatives encouraged by the Friends was to have a greater understanding of what is on the Scrubs including the flora and fauna, and this is now ongoing with the Baseline survey, led by Kate McVay, and FOWWS were recently commended by the WSCT for the Scrubs Watch scheme which provides Kate with sightings of flora and fauna, with locations. We were concerned that this should continue into the indefinite future, and we recently learned that the Masterplan funding would include it for its 10-year term.

LCS

Meanwhile the use of LCS by community groups is continuing, including Thames Valley Harriers, Kensington Dragons and London Sports. The planned works by Kensington Dragons on the pitches is due to start in the near future and is expected to take about 12 months. Discussions around improvements by TVH to their clubhouse to provide café and toilet facilities are continuing. Your trustees are supportive of other community use options including a lido.

The Friends have been working on ways to ensure a properly planned, comprehensive and unified approach to modernising the facilities provided within LCS to the benefit of all residents of LBHF and its neighbouring boroughs at a time when formal and informal leisure and sporting activities are of prime importance to well-being, particularly as new property developments continue to bring new residents on all sides of the Scrubs and with them, new pressures on the 'more wild than tamed' essence of the non LCS parts of the Scrubs. FOWWS suggest that the cost should be shared between WSCT, which has funds available as outlined above, and LBHF, for whom these facilities are a Borough-wide objective. At the recent meeting of the WSCT in March it was agreed that Officers should work with FOWWS to present a costed and timed plan to upgrade the relevant facilities and bring this to a Committee meeting later during 2023. FOWWS Trustees believe that this is the right way forward for LCS to fulfil LCS purposes, the objectives set out in the Wormwood Scrubs Act of Parliament, and to protect LCS, and the Scrubs, from any future inappropriate over-development.

PSPO Consultation

LBHF recently carried out a consultation on the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order on the Scrubs (and other parks in the Borough). This would primarily deal with the control of dogs and dog walking on the Scrubs. The consultation has finished and we are awaiting the results, and what PSPO (if any) will result.

OPDC Local Plan

Friends will recall that in our last Annual Report that the planning inspector had issued his report on the 1st April 2022 which "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." These MMs were incorporated and the LP was adopted on the 22nd June 2022. Just as a recap, what 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. 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 well into the life of the local plan (about 16 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

On Sunday 22nd May 2022 the Trustees held an Activity Day, including an Early Morning Bird Walk; a Butterfly Workshop; and other activities. Our aim is 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. To encourage greater numbers of Friends we also held a Recruitment Day last Summer and over a hundred new members joined the Friends! And on the 31st July 2022 our first ever Dog Show was held on the Scrubs and was a huge success! Local businesses got involved in sponsoring the event, and there was a great response from the local community with good entries for every category. We plan to repeat the event this year on Sunday 30th July.

Finances

We have continued to keep membership of the Friends free for all to join. All are welcome to participate in various activities such as bird watching, butterfly searches and in the maintenance of records of flora and fauna. Our constant aim is to promote a greater understanding of the Scrubs, its rich biodiversity and history to help maintain the precious wilderness and woods as well as sports pitches for all to enjoy. Donations raised are used for website hosting and ongoing printing costs of posters and notices to promote activities and events. The first dog show by Fowws in the summer of 2022 was a great success, we gained more members and some of the funds were raised at this event.

Donations were also made via Just Giving website set up in 2021:
<https://www.justgiving.com/friendsofthescrubs>.

The Friends is registered as a charity with HMRC allowing tax on donations to be claimed back through gift aid.

The Charity has funds of £9,594 as of 5th April 2023. Total outgoings for the year are £2,033.53 which included regular costs as well insurance for dog show and banners.

Donations raised amounted to £2,014.53, which included a generous amount from Waitrose as part of their community funds. Gift aid received via JustGiving was £19.00. The Friends are grateful for all the donations.

Opening Bank Balance	£9,809.27
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Total Receipts incl gift aid	£2,033.53
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Total Outgoings including £2,249.08
printing/website/posters etc

Closing Bank Balance £9,593.72

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature Name Secretary/Chair Date