

Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust Committee Minutes

Wednesday 11 February 2026

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Alex Sanderson (Chair), Bora Kwon, Dominic Stanton and Max Schmid

Co-opted members: Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen and Faye Thomas

Advisors to the Trust: Mark Raisbeck, Nicholas Falcone, Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager) Vicki Abel, Claire Willis and Amrita White (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) asked for an update on the closure of Old Oak Common Lane. Mark Raisbeck (Advisor to the Trust) explained that there were no further updates at this stage. He noted that the overall programme for HS2 was currently being reassessed, and once that process was complete there would be further clarity on delivery timescales.

Stephen Waley-Cohen also requested a progress update on the renewal of the Ideverde contract. Mark Raisbeck confirmed that the contract had been issued for tender and combined with the Highways and Maintenance contract. The evaluation process remained underway, with an outcome expected around Summer 2026. He also confirmed that Wormwood Scrubs would remain an independent unit within the wider contract tender.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. MANAGER'S REPORT

WSCT Annual Report and Financial Statements – 2024/25

Nicholas Falcone (Advisor to the Trust) noted that the Trust delivered a surplus for the year of £713,601. This surplus was substantially underpinned by the additional income from the Kensington Aldridge Academy's occupation of the parade ground

which concluded in December 2025. Deferred capital expenditure of some projects to 2025/26 also contributed to this position.

Further financial details were provided in the Statement of Accounts and Trustee's Annual Report, circulated to Committee Members in December 2025 and approved electronically in January 2026. MHA were reappointed as auditors for 2024/25 and carried out most audit work in November 2025. Their Audit Findings Report was shared with Members alongside the Trustee's Annual Report, and an unqualified audit opinion was issued following approval in January 2026. The 2024/25 Annual Report and Accounts were submitted to the Charity Commission as part of the 2025 annual return, ahead of the 31 January 2026 deadline.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) requested that the final version of the accounts be circulated to the Committee. Nicholas Falcone noted that they had already been shared and are available on the Charity Commission website.

The Committee unanimously agreed the recommendations.

AEM Masterplan Procurement

The AEM Masterplan tender launched on 7 August 2025, closing on 4 September, with four bids received and assessed for technical quality and pricing. All bids exceeded the budget but were consistent with market rates, triggering clause 8 of the 2016 AEM Agreement, which required HS2 to raise the funding cap if value for money was demonstrated. Officers had shared costs with HS2 under an NDA, and with the contract start planned for February 2026, the Committee was asked to delegate authority to the Chair to finalise the decision. An update would follow in March 2026.

Councillor Dominic Stanton asked whether the bid was significantly higher than expected. Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager) confirmed that, while commercially sensitive details could not be disclosed, the bid fell within the expected market range.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) queried whether works could be delayed avoiding starting while the ground remained wet, as this could cause damage. Osama El-Amin explained that works were unlikely to begin before Summer and given the wide scope of activities on the Scrubs, the programme would be prioritised so that tasks began in an order appropriate to weather conditions.

The Chair emphasised that the priority was to ensure the project enhanced the Scrubs and avoided any potential damage.

The Committee unanimously agreed the recommendation

Kensington Aldridge Academy (KAA2) Site re-instatement

Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager) noted that the DfE's reinstatement plan ran from June to December 2025, with the Trust negotiating continued rent after the licence expired. Works were completed on time, and an extra week's rent funded new railings to prevent vehicle access. The Trust Manager was also working with Woodman's Mews residents on communal improvements to their estate, in recognition of the disruption caused.

Due to the site's Metropolitan Open Land designation, officers were developing outline future-use proposals with local community groups, which would be brought to the Committee once aligned with planning policy.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) said the update was very encouraging and positive. He noted that a few large community groups had approached him expressing concern that they had not been consulted. Osama El-Amin responded that he would be happy to discuss this further and invited those groups to contact him directly.

Action: Stephen Waley-Cohen

The Committee noted the update

Grounds maintenance performance and planned activities

Osama El-Amin noted that around 8,000m² of scrub and bramble had been managed this autumn with volunteer support, and the remaining areas would be completed after the bird-nesting season ends in September 2026. Officers were monitoring the increasing green-waste pile and awaiting the contractor's final invasive-weed treatment plan; failure to meet requirements may result in penalties.

Tree-work updates would be shared at least two weeks in advance, and weekly volunteering would continue with extra protection for ground-nesting birds. Users were reminded to keep dogs on leads in the Western Meadow until September 2026.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) noted that there were several large piles of logs in front of Linford Christie Stadium, including one that now contained dead Christmas trees, which he felt was not beneficial for the habitat. He asked whether these would be removed. He also observed an increase in fox numbers on the Scrubs over the past 12–18 months. Osama El-Amin explained that most of the logs would need to be removed to enable construction of the swales along the northern perimeter of the stadium. He added that the Christmas trees had been placed there as part of the annual drop-off point. These were normally collected and wood-chipped by the contractor, with the material reused on the Scrubs and across the borough. This work was expected to take place within the next three weeks.

The Committee noted the update

Linford Christie Stadium – Running track upgrade

Osama El-Amin noted that phase three of the Linford Christie Stadium programme had been refined after initial tenders came back £230K over budget. The revised scheme now prioritised the 400m track, floodlighting and base repairs, reducing the shortfall to £128K, which would be met through contributions from LBHF S106/CIL, LBHF Sports and Leisure department, and WSCT over 2025/26 and 2026/27. A letter of intent had been issued to the preferred bidder, and officers were awaiting confirmed dates while ensuring priority users, including local state schools, retained access. A final programme timetable would be reported in March 2026, and the committee was asked to approve a £20k uplift for this financial year.

The Committee unanimously agreed the recommendation.

WSCT workforce plan for 2026/27

Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager) noted that the Trust Manager, in consultation with the Committee Chair, the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs, and on-site staff, had identified key priorities for 2026/27, including compliance with grounds maintenance and ecological work, monitoring of byelaws, PSPO and sports bookings, and ensuring safe and accessible routes across the estate. With capital and community investment programmes increasing activity on the Scrubs in 2026, a revised workforce structure is proposed to meet these needs.

The Head of Operations and Sustainability would replace and expand the Trust Manager role, taking on development leadership, line management, compliance oversight, and delivery of a 5-year sustainability strategy. The Wormwood Scrubs Development Manager would remain funded through the HS2 AEM Agreement, while existing grounds maintenance staff and the Ecology Advisor continue under current arrangements. A new part-time, seasonal Engagement Officer would be recruited in spring 2026 to support on-site monitoring, with the structure piloted for one year. The proposal increased costs by £40K, bringing staffing overheads to approximately £110K for 2026/27, and the committee is asked to approve the workforce structure ahead of formal budget approval in March.

In response to a question from Councillor Max Schmid about whether the new Site Engagement Officer would have powers to issue fines or warnings, Osama El-Amin confirmed that they would not hold enforcement powers or issue FPNs. Instead, the role would act as the first point of contact on site, gathering information and reporting issues to support the Law Enforcement Team in carrying out proactive patrols. He added that while the post was intended to become permanent, the 2026/27 pilot year will help the Trust understand seasonal patterns and operational demands, noting that activity was expected to peak in spring and summer and reduce in autumn and winter.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) asked that, once the Council's HR team had prepared the job specification, it be shared with the Committee so that the Friends of the Scrubs can be encouraged to consider applying, subject to the required qualifications.

Action: Osama El-Amin

The Committee unanimously agreed the recommendation.

Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) improvement works

Osama El-Amin noted that the capital programme was completed in early December 2025 after a four-week closure. Works included replacing the damaged surface, installing a new asphalt sub-base and multi-use carpet, upgrading fencing, and adding LED floodlights, at a total cost of £64K. The facility would remain open access with strong support from local parents and youth providers, and feedback has been very positive. Officers would continue to monitor usage and factor maintenance needs into future budgets.

The Committee noted the update

Braybrook St play area improvement works

Victoria Abel (Advisor to the Trust) noted that Phase 1 of the play area improvements for under-8s was completed in November 2025 by Sutcliffe Play, with the footpath extension finished in December and minor surfacing repairs completed in January 2026. The final element a new set of gates and a 1.1m wooden fence would be installed in February 2026, completing this phase.

Phase 2 would deliver improvements to the over-8s section, including a large, challenging wooden play structure, new safety surfacing, and low-level fencing.

The tender process had concluded, a contractor had been appointed, and pre-start is scheduled for 23 March. Works would begin in early April and were expected to take 4–6 weeks, weather permitting. A planning application would be submitted to the OPDC once the equipment is in place. Officers would work with the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs to consider options for shade and additional seating.

In response to a question asked by Faye Thomas (Co-opted Member), Victoria Abel noted that the pre-planning advice received was positive and did not indicate any reason the application would be refused. Faye Thomas added that the consideration of additional seating and shelter would be welcomed.

Councillor Bora Kwon asked whether officers were monitoring playground usage and how this compared to other parts of the borough. Victoria Abel noted that this could be explored once Phase 2 was completed, including gathering user numbers and age ranges. Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager) added that officers could use the Council's *Active Exchange* mapping platform, which provided anonymised usage data aggregated from mobile phone signals. He noted that the data was not individually trackable but relied on users carrying a mobile phone to capture patterns and times of use.

The Committee noted the update

BALI awards 2025

Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager) noted that in December 2025, the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust and Idverde won BALI's Principal Award for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Enhancement, recognising the success of the Trust's eco-volunteering programme. In 2025, 168 sessions were delivered, with 1,224 volunteers contributing 5,732 hours, planting over 450 tree whips, managing 4,000m² of vegetation and submitting valuable ecological data. The committee was asked to note these achievements and thank Idverde/RSPB and all volunteers for their contribution.

The Chair thanked everyone who was involved in the co-ordination of the success of this award.

The Committee noted the update

Community safety report

Claire Willis (Advisor to the Trust) introduced the report, which outlined the recent activity of the Law Enforcement Team (LET). She highlighted that the team had carried out 22 weapon sweeps, with no weapons found, and 73 Anti-Social Behaviour sweeps in response to concerns raised by residents. Many of the issues related to dogs and general public space awareness. The report also set out how residents could contact the LET.

Stephen Waley Cohen (Co-opted Member) queried when the bollards next to Woodman's Mews would be operational. Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager) confirmed that the bollards were active but were kept lowered during the day to minimise noise for nearby residents.

Stephen Waley-Cohen went on to commend the team's work, noting their efficient handling of fly-tipping incidents. He reported a fly-tip on the UK Power Networks (UKPN) site and emphasised that it needed to be cleared. Osama El-Amin explained that this fly-tip was substantial and that all relevant information had already been passed to a UKPN contact, as it was their responsibility to arrange removal. He added that he had offered support if needed and would follow up again, as no response had yet been received.

Action: Osama El-Amin

Faye Thomas (Co-opted Member) reported that an abandoned motorbike on the west side of the Scrubs required removal. Claire Willis confirmed that the issue had already been reported to both the Police and Ideverde, and that all relevant teams were working together to arrange the removal. Mark Raisbeck added that he would escalate the matter with Parking colleagues to help ensure the vehicle was moved as quickly as possible.

Action: Mark Raisbeck

The Committee noted the update

WSCT Financial performance to year end

Osama El-Amin provided an overview of the financial forecast for the Trust. It was noted that subject to 2024/25 audit, the 2024/25 outturn was a £713,601 surplus. The budget for 2025/26 was agreed with an anticipated net expenditure outturn of £401,947.

The Committee noted the update

AOB

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) observed that all the trees planted in the north-west corner of the Scrubs over the past two to four years appeared to have died. He expressed the hope that these would be replaced and replanted by individuals with local knowledge, using species more suited to the site's conditions. Osama El-Amin confirmed that he would inspect the area to identify the trees in question and report back.

Action: Osama El-Amin

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

1. Approved the WSCT annual report and financial statements for year ended 31st March 2025.
2. Delegated authority to the Chair to progress the AEM Masterplan contract procurement.
3. Noted the re-instatement of the KAA2 site and resident engagement activities.
4. Noted performance of the ground's maintenance contractor and planned works from February – April 2026.
5. Approved a £20K uplift to the athletics track improvement scheme at Linford Christie Sports Stadium.
6. Approved a pilot workforce plan for 2026/27.
7. Noted completion of works to the Multi-Use Games Area.
8. Noted updates on the Braybrook play improvements scheme.
9. Celebrate the Principal Award for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Enhancement by the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI)
10. Noted a community safety update.
11. Noted a comparison of the Trust's finance to year end.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting will take on 24th March 2026.

Meeting started: 6:30pm
Meeting ended: 7:35pm

Chair

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