

Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust Committee Minutes

Wednesday 24 September 2025

PRESENT

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

Co-opted members: Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen

Advisors to the Trust:

Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm)
Jessica Bastock (Head of Parks and Cemeteries)
Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager)
Vicki Abel (Development Manager)

Clerk: Debbie Yau

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

The Committee noted that Faye Thomas (Co-opted member) was not available to attend the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

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

4. MANAGER'S REPORT

AEM Masterplan Procurement and Timetable

Vicki Abel (Development Manager) provided an update on progress towards awarding the AEM Masterplan capital works and maintenance contracts. Vicki explained that after the tender was first published in June 2025, the procurement process had to be terminated temporarily due to a technical issue in one of the tender documents. The amended tender was republished in August and the four bids received were now under evaluation with the successful tenderers planned to be known by mid-October. It was expected that the contractor, after signing the

contract detailing the programme of works around mid-December, would start mobilizing for the works to commence in early February 2026. The capital works would take approximately six to nine months to complete depending on the weather conditions and after which, the management and maintenance plan would start.

Replying to Councillor Dominic Stanton's question, Vicki Abel noted that the original plan was to start on-site work in early January 2026 which was now delayed by about four weeks.

Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) asked whether the work would be deferred under exceptional wet weather. Vicki Abel confirmed there would need to be flexible in the programme to ensure that work was only on site in appropriate weather conditions. However, a lot of work was seasonal. For example, a main part of the capital work was the planting of over 300 trees, which, if weather conditions in February were too warm or too wet, would be delayed to autumn 2026. Another seasonal example was excavation works under the Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme which was programmed to take place in the drier spring months but ground conditions would determine exactly when it could start.

Sir Waley-Cohen noted the proper timing of tree planting under the present context of climate changes was between October and January. Vicki Abel agreed that tree planting should happen next October/November if weather conditions in February were not conducive to planting.

The Committee noted the update.

Old Oak Common Lane diversion via UTX site

Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager) updated members on the planned diversion of Old Oak Common Lane via the HS2 UTX site and the mitigation measures. He said that several utilities running beneath the carriageway would be excavated and diverted along a section of the road which ran parallel to the Scrubs. To keep vehicle traffic flowing, HS2 had proposed a traffic diversion via the UTX site (under compulsory purchase) for a period of up to 3 years.

Officers had reviewed the design package and approved the diversion, with the following measures to be adopted:

- To mitigate any of the surface water runoff flowing into the scrubs from laying a new carriageway, HS2 agreed to build an additional drainage channel into the construction.
- To allow the Trust to accurately assess the environmental impact of bringing the roadway closer onto the Scrubs and contextualise any future mitigation requests, pre-construction and post-diversion soil contamination surveys would be conducted by the Trust if HS2 failed to take them up.
- To clear approximately 20 square meters of vegetation to allow for hoarding replacement on the eastern edge of the diversion and on the Scrubs side. It was expected that the hoarding seal would further mitigate any surface water run-off.

Osama El-Amin said that as informed by HS2 last week, there was a separate work package leading to the potential longer closure of Old Oak Common Lane. He would share with the Committee the relevant information after receiving them from HS2 around end December/early January 2026.

The Chair reminded the Committee that all these works were allowed to happen within the UTX site, as that land was under compulsory purchase by HS2, which was a power conferred to HS2 via the HS2 Act 2017.

The Committee noted the update.

UKPN 7-year lease extension

Osama El-Amin outlined the proposed 7-year extension to the UK Power Networks (UKPN) lease to occupy land at the north-east corner of Wormwood Scrubs. He sought the Committee's approval to the extension and its terms.

Osama El-Amin said the substation site, covering approximately 1,350 square meters, was leased out to UKPN at £3,446 pa for 7 years which was due to expire in March 2026. In seeking an extension of another 7-year lease ending March 2033, UKPN accepted a 44% uplift of the lease value to £5,000 pa which had been worked out in consultation with the LBHF Corporate Property Team. UKPN also agreed to continue the current terms, i.e. paying all rates and taxes applicable to the sub-station site, not assigning or underletting the property to any third party, indemnifying the Trust against any claims that were the foreseeable consequence of any wrongful or negligent act, and maintaining the agreed ecological management plan for the site. UKPN also agreed to re-imburse the Trust up to £2,500 plus VAT for the professional fee incurred in relation to this extension.

The Committee agreed to approve the lease extension and its terms.

KAA2 site decommission programme

Osama El-Amin provided an update on the decommissioning programme for the KAA2 site by the Department for Education (DfE). He reported that the decommissioning programme was all on track, including the removal of 3 of the 6 classroom blocks which had open up the sight lines. The reinstatement programme had enhanced the site's accessibility whilst ensuring safety and security. With the removal of the remaining 3 blocks in September and October, the open plan site would then be handed over to the groundworks team for full remediation with a semi-permeable limestone aggregate. This would help absorb the surface water run-off from the Scrubs.

Referring to his engagements with residents at Woodman's Mews the following evening, Osama El-Amin said efforts had been made to ensure the operation was done between 8 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday and so far, no noise or other complaints had been received.

As regards the future use of the space, the Committee noted OPDC's advice that permitted development rights to maintain any of the assets in the space did not apply to the site, and that the Trust should consider a long-term plan. Osama El-

Amin said local stakeholders would be engaged to co-produce some feasible options for members' consideration outside the meeting.

The Committee noted the update.

Ground's Maintenance contractor oversight and planned works for Q3. 2025/26

Osama El-Amin updated the Committee on performance of the ground's maintenance contract and noted upcoming maintenance activities in Q3, 2025/26. He said that the contractor was performing satisfactorily, with consistent and growing numbers of volunteers engaged to undertake seasonal support works. Over June and July, idverde/RSPB/WSCT partnership had recorded a total of 1,495 volunteering hours delivered by 358 volunteers under a wide range of projects from butterfly transect surveys to seasonal ecological works on the Scrubs. It also included an event during Climate Action Week led by Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology and delivered with the Old Oak Primary Nature Champions.

Osama El-Amin noted that upcoming grounds maintenance activities in autumn were mostly ecological works to be overseen by the on-site Community and Ecology Advisor. He referred to the photo on page 13 and noted these ecological works would focus on high priority sections (in red) and wildlife hedge (in yellow). A proportion of scrubs would be dug out to prevent suckering re-growth and diversify the range of native species on-site.

On scrub management, Osama El-Amin said there was a contractual arrangement with idverde that they would continue to reduce the rate of bramble and scrubs at an annual rate of 20% for 5 years. The annual cutbacks would be completed in an "island" with scalloped edges giving habitats ability to connect with each other and allowing better management of the scrub encroachment and bramble. In this regard, the Chair remarked that 20% was roughly the quantity of scrubs growing back each year. As such, there was no question about having no scrub left whatsoever within 5 years.

Councillor Stanton observed that idverde had enhanced the quality of their work. Osama El-Amin acknowledged this and elaborated that since idverde had a change of contract manager over some six to nine months ago, there was a marked improvement in service delivery. Many of the previous issues on the scrubs were due to the lack of adequate programming. This should have been rectified during the six-month standstill/identification period at the beginning of the contract. Only since year 3 had idverde produced a regular programme of works on daily/weekly/monthly basis.

Sir Waley-Cohen noted that idverde's contract was expiring soon which might be related to its performance. In response to his question whether the contract would be rolled over or re-tendered, Osama El-Amin advised that taking into account the procurement process of the master plan which should cover most of the ecological works in the next 10 years, officers were reviewing the areas of the scrubs and specify works outside the master plan that belonged to the grounds maintenance contract. Then, different options with information on the costs and square

meterage would be worked out in detail for either re-tendering or extending idverde's contract for another five years.

The Committee noted the update.

Green infrastructure funding applications and continuation of outdoor learning on the Scrubs

Osama El-Amin updated the Committee on green infrastructure funding applications and elaborated that:

- In partnership with Imperial Health Charity whose campus covered a number of nearby hospitals, WSCT was applying to the Greater London Authority (GLA) 'Green Roots Fund' to deliver a 2-year project at a capital costs of up to £150,000. To address hospital patients' feeling of isolation, the application aimed at engaging them with the green space outside their window by creating a dedicated community growing/allotment space on the WSCT estate, to be designed and maintained with input from hospital staff and patients. If successful, a community operator would be engaged through a service level agreement to operate the space and provide engagement sessions during the period.
- WSCT had also applied to the LBHF Green Investment fund for £50K to support a feasibility study and a concept design (up to RIBA stage 2) for the construction of an ecology centre and a green waste processing facility on the estate.

Osama El-Amin added that if WSCT did not secure any of the above funding, the Trust could pursue alternative sources. Councillor Bora Kwon referred to the funding stream known as "Project Flourish" for which WSCT might consider applying. Osama welcomed this and looked forward to connecting with those who were involved in project consultation. Councillor Kwon agreed to follow up.

Sir Waley-Cohen said members of the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs found these projects very positive. They would like to be part of the discussion on the location of the allotments and the feasibility study in respect of the ecology centre.

ACTION: Osama El-Amin

As regards outdoor learning on Wormwood Scrubs, Osama El-Amin remarked that the programme would continue this autumn under the same framework, i.e. two weekly sessions, with one delivered to pupils at Old Oak Primary School as an after-school club and the other for the children and parents of the stay and play group at the Old Oak Family Hub. As the outdoor learning programme delivered by Urbanwise London was very well-received by both children and parents, Osama said the Trust continued to seek longer term funds for the children to understand seasonal changes on the Scrubs and contribute to use the green space as a learning resource.

The Committee noted the update.

Linford Christie Outdoor Sports Stadium – Capital Programme

Osama El-Amin briefed members on the completion of the artificial pitch scheme and details of the remedial work required for the resurfacing scheme of the running track as follow:

- The four-year artificial pitch re-development scheme, constructed in partnership with the Dragons football club was now complete. A 40-year lease, with a break clause at 25 years was now in place with the club, covering the 11-a-side pitch the facilities which could be put to good use by local schools. Under the terms of a service level agreement (SLA), the club was to deliver weekly training sessions for local young people, and a one-week summer soccer school aimed at boys and girls wishing to join new U11's teams until the age of 18. In addition, the Trust/Council would be able to use that pitch to host semi-final and final school competitions along with sporting events for disabled players during the summer. Outside that time, the club and the Trust had agreed that local state schools would be given priority booking with the same booking terms as Council's to avoid price mismatch. The above would be ensured through the booking sheets and via the SLA to be monitored quarterly. Osama noted that the scheme also included 3 new tennis/netball courts and adaptable 7-a/5-a-side pitches which would also be available for booking through the usual means.
- On the running track, as advised by England Athletics, the Trust had engaged "Labosport" to conduct a site survey across the track to ascertain the extent of remediation work required for the damaged concrete subbase. Upon receipt of the new quotation, the officers would review the budget and if necessary, consider an uplift before liaising with the Chair to progress this scheme. Osama asked the committee to delegate authorisation to the Chair if a decision on progression is required between committee meetings.
- Once the scope had been finalised, a framework contractor would be engaged to deliver the scheme, and their work programme would be fed to the Thames Valley Harriers, local schools, clubs and users of the stadium. It was expected that works would take place in Spring 2026, to be completed in 8-10 weeks' time. It was noted the club had been engaged throughout this process and recorded their frustration at the delay to this scheme. Osama expressed appreciation on the level of patience and understanding that the club demonstrated. He was committed to ensuring that the facility would be useful for the next 20 to 30 years and bring significant impacts on the health and wellbeing for local people.

The Chair said she was pleased to note the developments notwithstanding some challenging delays.

The Committee agreed to delegate approval to the Chair for progression of the running track scheme.

MUGA re-surfacing behind the Old Oak Family Hub

In outlining the progress made on MUGA re-surfacing, Osama El-Amin noted that this committee had approved an initial £40K budget to re-develop the multi-use

games area behind the Old Oak Family Hub. Due to significant damage to the sub-base which became clear once the shock pad was removed, an additional £26K was required to excavate and re-lay the concrete sub-base before installing suitable surfacing. Under the committee terms of reference relating to officer delegation, the Chair had approved the uplift. To limit disruption, works had been postponed until the conclusion of the summer holiday camp and would commence across September and October. Osama added that additional CCTV would be commissioned along with a code lock to further secure the facility.

The Committee noted the progress.

Braybrook play area improvement scheme - Phase 1 and Phase 2

Vicki Abel gave an update on the Braybrook Street Play Area improvement scheme - Phase 1 and Phase 2 as follows:

- Phase 1 of the improvement scheme would improve the under 8s play area and involve works including removal of existing stumps and posts, installation of play equipment including: a small train engine, carriage, and a ticket office, various climbing frames, a seesaw and a new set of swings, and laying/over-laying safety surfacing to new and existing play equipment to create a more accessible play facility. Subject to weather conditions, the installation and surfacing works would commence on 20 October for completion by 19 November. During the works, the areas for the new equipment would be fenced off throughout the contract period but the area where the existing safety surfacing was to be overlaid would only be fenced off for 2 to 3 days.
- Next, a low-level wooden fence would be installed to wrap around the under 8s play area and the footpath from Braybrook Street entrance would be extended into the play areas as soon as possible after the equipment was installed. Installation of the Phase 1 play equipment should be completed before Christmas subject to weather and ground conditions. Officers would then consider options for providing shade cover.
- Phase 2 of the improvement project would be to install one large scale, dynamic and challenging piece of play equipment and safety surfacing in the northeast corner of over 8's play area. This phase of work would also include additional safety surfacing to infill the grassed spaces in between the individual items of existing play equipment to make them more accessible and link to the new path. Procurement was due to commence in September/October this year with a view to awarding a contract by the end of November 2025. Pending contractor submissions, work was likely to commence in early 2026 when the timescale would be communicated to stakeholders and signs displayed on-site. The Chair added some of the play equipment like zipline and trampoline already in place was co-designed with the schools.

The Committee noted the improvement scheme.

Community Safety Report: June – September 2025

The Committee noted the Community Safety Report provided by the Law Enforcement Team (LET).

Councillor Stanton referred to previous issues with dog walking agencies and asked if the fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued had brought about improvements.

Osama El-Amin highlighted enforcing the PSPOs related to dog-walking within the Scrubs was always a considerable challenge, given that the open space covered 200 acres with 11 entrances. As far as he observed, there had been some effect from FPNs handed out to two companies whose dog-walkers had improved their behaviour slightly. Nevertheless, the Council was reviewing the PSPO and the areas of prohibited access including the newly designated local nature reserve. Those changes would then be consulted upon. Once those results were secured, the order would be amended to reflect the feedback. Osama undertook to seek some more detailed information from the LET officers on the impact of FPNs on dog-walkers' behaviour.

ACTION: Osama El-Amin

The Committee noted the report.

WSCT Q1, Q2 Financial Performance and comparison to year end

Osama El-Amin noted the financial performance of WSCT in Q1 and Q2, 2025/26, with a comparison to year end, as detailed in the report. He said that the Trust was in a very strong financial position at the moment, spending considerable amounts of money on capital schemes co-produced with residents to address local issues they had identified some time ago. In this context, 2025/26 was an outlier in terms of the level of expenditure expected this year.

Councillor Stanton noted from the report that the Total Charity Trust funds were estimated to 'increase' to £7,356,754 by the end of March 2026, which as he understood, was compared to 2023/24's £7,133,142. There was a decrease to the figure when compared to the unaudited outturn of 2024/25, i.e. £7,846,743 by about £500,000, which, in his observation, might be caused by the difference in unrestricted income funds. Osama agreed to refer this to the finance colleague for clarification.

ACTION: Osama El-Amin

On Councillor Stanton's further question about the timeline in setting the budget as he noted that spending in the following year might be similar to the last 5 or 6 years combined. The Chair acknowledged this observation noting lots of the expenditure were rolled over from previous years' commitments or due to delays of various projects. The decommissioning of KAA2 site happened sooner than expected also incurred expenditure for the year. The budget would have to be a bit tighter and hence less generous. Nevertheless, she appreciated Osama's effort in organising fundraising for different projects and noted and some were quite successful. She noted that the formal budget setting process was due to start imminently, and conversations were ongoing to ensure the Trust remained sustainable.

Osama El-Amin noted the expenditure forecast of £150,000 contribution to the Linford Christie Café which, if to be taken forward, would be constructed with prudence to ensure there was no increase in the overall footprint of the site. Councillor Stanton remarked the redevelopment of the Linford Christie Stadium area had already incurred substantial amount of money. The Chair referred to the conversations about the café some time ago that it would be part of the running clubs' building or a coffee car. She said given the significant amount of expenditure involved, the matter should be considered carefully before any financial commitment was made.

The Committee noted the financial performance of WSCT.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair noted that the date of next meeting would be moved from 2 December 2025 to January 2026 and a date was being identified.

Meeting started: 6.32 pm
Meeting ended: 7.28 pm

Chair

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