

THE RICHMOND AND BUSHY PARKS FORUM

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London SW14 8JJ
020-8876-1123

19 October 2011

Sir Edward Lister
Deputy Mayor
City Hall
London SE12AA

Dear Sir Edward,

Royal Parks Board

We are writing to express our concerns about aspects of the proposed new Royal Parks Board.

The Richmond and Bushy Parks Forum was formed in September 2010 to provide a forum for local stakeholders in the two Parks to input into the proposed changes in the Park's governance. It now comprises 38 local groups of park users, Friends, amenity, wildlife and conservation bodies, and charitable and commercial organisations that operate in the parks. You will have heard references to the Forum at last Wednesday's meeting of the GLA Environment Committee.

We welcome the principles of the new arrangements for governance of the Royal Parks, and particularly the new Board. It achieves a good balance between national and London interests and between continuity, in the experience brought by the present Board members, and new approaches.

However, we are concerned about two key aspects of its composition:

1. Council representation. It is essential that Richmond is one of the councils on the Board. Richmond covers both Richmond and Bushy Parks. They are the largest and second largest of the 8 Royal Parks and are qualitatively different from the central Parks in terms of their wildlife, ecological significance and conservation status (Richmond is a National Nature Reserve and SSSI and Bushy should be an SSSI soon).

Their issues tend to get overlooked by TRP's focus on the central Parks and it is critical that there is someone on the Board who understands these issues. It would be a pity if the new Board started out without local support in this area because of its lack of representation. It seems to us that the composition of the new board must be dictated by the Board's functions rather than by an attempt at political balance. To exclude representation from the Borough of Richmond is surely also at odds with the purported aim of giving a greater say to local people.

2. Ecology and natural environment experience. At present there are no non-executive Board members with knowledge and experience of ecology and natural environment issues, and only one executive member (the Deputy Chief Executive). This is in spite of one of TRP's two Corporate Objectives being to "Conserve and enhance the natural and built environment, historic landscape and bio diversity of the parks ...".

The appointment of the new Board provides an excellent opportunity to rectify that situation. We recognise that the Board will not have representatives of particular interests (e.g. Natural England for ecology) but we urge you to ensure that the specification for at least one of the new independent Board members (and preferably two) requires knowledge and experience of ecology and natural environment. This would also demonstrate the Mayor's strong commitment to these issues.

We trust that our concerns will be taken into account in the consideration of the new Board. We would be happy to discuss them further.

Yours sincerely



Ron Crompton
Co-Chairmen, Richmond and Bushy Parks Forum



Pieter Morpurgo

cc: John Penrose MP, Minister for Tourism and Heritage

Zac Goldsmith MP

Dr Vince Cable MP

Ed Davey MP

Justine Greening MP

Tony Arbour AM

Lord True

**THE RICHMOND AND BUSHY PARKS FORUM –
PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS**

Bushy Park Wildlife Group
Bushy Park Education Volunteers
Environment Trust for Richmond
Esher and Walton Conservatives
Friends of Bushy and Home Parks
Friends of Palewell Common
Friends of Richmond Park
Ham and Petersham Association
Hampton Hill Association
Hampton Hill Cricket Club
Hampton Society
Hampton Wick Association
Hampton Wick Royal Cricket Club
Holly Lodge Centre
Kingston Society
Kingston Stables
London Dynamos Cycling Club
London Parks and Gardens Trust
London Wildlife Trust
Molesey Residents Association
Petersham Conservators
Pembroke Lodge
Queens Road (Teddington) Residents' Association
Richmond Environment Network
Richmond Hill Terrace Residents Association
Richmond Park Charitable Trust
Richmond Park Flora Group
Richmond Park Wildlife Group
Richmond Society
Royal Ballet School
Safer Parks Panel, Richmond Park
Strawberry Hill Association
Teddington Cricket Club
Teddington Town Cricket Club
Teddington Rugby Club
Teddington Society
Weybridge Society
Wimbledon Common Conservators