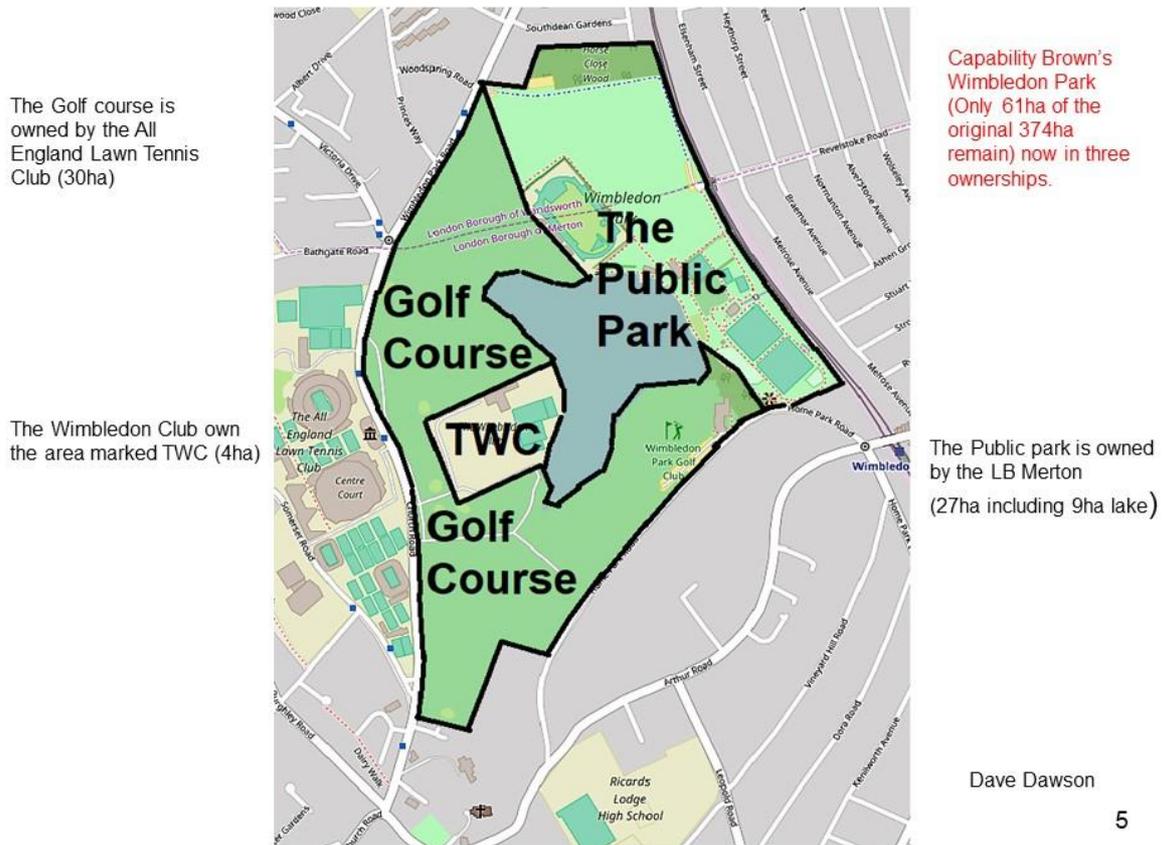




Friends of Wimbledon Park

Members' newsletter, December 2018

Understanding the Ownership of Heritage Wimbledon Park is important and the map below shows this in simple terms. The Public Park, Golf Course and TWC are the Heritage Park.



As many of you will be aware the AELTC takeover of Wimbledon Park Golf Club is effective 21st December 2018.

Johnny Perkins (AELTC) said:

The AELTC welcomes the decision of the members of Wimbledon Park Golf Club to vote in favour of the AELTC's offer to acquire the Club.

Pending court approval of the acquisition, the ownership of the Wimbledon Park Golf Club will transfer into the AELTC group of companies effective 21 December 2018. This is an important and exciting step for the AELTC and future of The Championships. As per the terms of the acquisition, WPGC will continue to operate as an 18-hole golf course until 31 December 2021, with at least one further year as a 9- or 10-hole golf course on a rolling basis subject to a 12-month notice period.

We will now begin to consider our plans for the land as part of a broader new Championships Master Plan. As we have stressed throughout this process, any future development proposals will protect and celebrate the heritage of the park, be guided by our landscape advisers who have closely studied the significance and history of the land, and importantly, be delivered in partnership with the local community. For the avoidance of doubt, there never has been and never will be any plans to build multi-storey car parks and shopping villages or any other structures that would be completely out of character for the AELTC and The Championships.



Friends of Wimbledon Park

Over time, we plan to migrate the Qualifying Competition onto the land in order to elevate the event to world-class standards. At a community level, it is our long-term ambition to offer increased public access to the park outside the two weeks of The Championships. In the meantime, we will continue to work with the local authorities and local community to assist the beneficial management of the park as a whole. We anticipate being able to share further details in the spring of 2019.

Philip Brook, Chairman of the AELTC, commented:

“The decision of the Wimbledon Park Golf Club members to vote in favour of the acquisition offer is a hugely significant moment for the AELTC and The Championships. We have achieved what we set out to do many months ago in having certainty in our planning for the future. In many ways, it will be business as usual for the Wimbledon Park Golf Club during the next couple of years, but the AELTC will use this time to give careful consideration to our next steps.

“We have been open in our long-term ambition to move the Qualifying Competition from its current home in Roehampton to the AELTC Grounds as part of our mission to continue to maintain the position of The Championships as the pinnacle of the sport. Furthermore, we have the ambition to open the land up to increased public use in the future.

“We will work with the local authorities and other interested parties as these plans are developed and I would like to emphasise that we have no intention of applying for change of use, planning permission or other approval to use the land that would be completely out of character for the AELTC and The Championships.”

Our approach remains much the same to encourage the 3 owners to set up an ‘Owner’s Group’ which will lead to developing a ‘Master Plan for Heritage Wimbledon Park’. At these meetings we pass over a bundle of documents which include papers on the lake and special places for nature. This sets an agenda and at our meetings with AELTC & TWC these were well received. We plan to meet LB Merton and also LB Wandsworth who are the regulatory authority for the northern part of the Heritage Park but do not own any of it.

A brief comment is made from each paper in the bundle of documents as they are passed over. This includes:

- 1) ‘The lake remains essentially as designed by Brown, and is still set in green surrounds. One of Brown’s views was from the dam towards St Mary’s Wimbledon on the crest of a wooded slope and this is the best surviving view today. Other views remain, but most are compromised by ugly lakeside buildings, tall hedgerows and the great mass of buildings on the All England Lawn Tennis grounds’.
- 2) ‘Among the recommendations made when the site was recognised were to bring the streams that feed the lake above ground, to establish marshland vegetation, and to restore the southern arm of the lake. It was suggested that the southern arm could be developed as a minimally disturbed nature feature’.
- 3) ‘This suggests that the fish and other animals provide a food supply for these species but that nesting habitat is not sufficient. Similarly, Swifts, House Martins, Swallows and Sand Martins visit, but again none breed locally’.
- 4) ‘Ashen Grove is a remnant of a much larger wood. It should be protected, managed appropriately and judiciously expanded’.
- 5) Owl Copse is also mentioned with a request that a Management Plan be developed.
- 6) Our report on bats.
- 7) Suggestion to AELTC that fallen leaves be composted rather than burnt.

We look forward to receiving further details of AELTC’s plans in spring 2019. We will keep the Community updated with progress through our website, Facebook and the Friends Forum which includes Cllrs from each of the 4 wards, our GA member and both MPs.

Nick Steiner
Chairman Friends of Wimbledon Park.