

Wandsworth Common Management Advisory Committee (the WCMAC)

c/o 9 Dorlcote Road
London
SW18 3RT

Paul Martin,
Chief Executive
Wandsworth Borough Council

(by email)

5th December 2018

Dear Mr Martin

Neal's Lodge on Wandsworth Common

At a recent meeting of the Wandsworth Common Management Advisory Committee (WCMAC) the subject of the future use of Neal's Lodge was once again raised and I was asked to contact you on behalf of the Committee.

As far as we are aware, there has been no public statement by the Council, since the appeal against the High Court's decision was rejected by the Court of Appeal, about proposals for the future use of Neal's Lodge or about the current legal position.

Neal's Lodge is a significant asset on our "patch". The flat and cottage have not been occupied for over 12 years now and as such have fallen into a state of considerable disrepair, in a very prominent location within the borough. The high-profile nature of the legal proceedings means that the property's status and condition have a high level of awareness amongst the Wandsworth Common community. Equally, it is a wonderful building and space with great potential to play a high value and positive part of life in the area.

We would like to suggest that we, the MAC, alongside our sister group the Friends of Wandsworth Common (with members and followers now exceeding 1,000 and rising) and in conjunction with the Wandsworth Society, jointly play a role in assisting the Council in devising and implementing a plan for the building. We have great insights into life on the Common, the priorities for the local population, and a positive and growing reputation with residents. We firmly believe that a good proposal presented by these parties in conjunction with the Council, would enjoy strong support.

We have considered a range of ideas for its use, all within the spirit of the judgement and in compliance with the Long Act and will now begin reaching out to the community for their views. However, we need to engage with an individual at the Council with the necessary authority and strategic oversight, to ensure that we understand the operating, legal and financial parameters with which to develop more meaningful proposals. This is particularly in the light of the judgement's potentially wide-ranging implications.

Now would be a good time to draw a line under the past legal conflicts and make a positive and visible effort to achieve a satisfactory outcome on the use of Neal's Lodge in the best interests of the whole of the Wandsworth Common community and its stakeholders.

It has been suggested that we could possibly meet with your nominated representative at Skylark Cafe and with that person, have a tour of the property, as, despite various requests, we have yet to be shown the interior of Neal's Lodge. If we could get something in our diaries for early New Year, so much the better.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

George Meakin

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Chair: Wandsworth Common Management Advisory Committee

cc:

Councillors in wards adjoining Wandsworth Common

Cllr K Stock

Cllr S Sutters

Ian Mitchell

Simon Ingyon