

Diane Neil Mills  
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators  
Manor Cottage, Windmill Road, Wimbledon Common  
London, SW19 5NR

3 October 2023

Dear Diane,

Thank you for your recent letter and accompanying consultation document which proposes increases to the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Special Levy, a local tax that some residents pay towards the upkeep of green spaces that you run in Wandsworth and neighbouring London boroughs.

With high inflation and the cost of living crisis affecting everyone in Wandsworth, it is more important than ever that residents' bills are kept as low as possible. That is why Wandsworth Council froze the main rate of council tax in 2023-24.

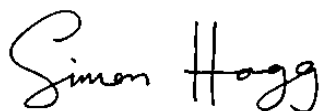
Wandsworth Council opposed the 12.6% rise that you imposed in your levy last year. There are no circumstances in which increasing your levy by a further 25%, in addition to future rises at the rate of inflation, can be justified. It certainly is not justified now during the cost of living crisis.

Many of the parks, commons and green spaces that the Council maintains are award-winning, with six open spaces being awarded a Green Flag this year. We have managed and funded them throughout many years of public sector austerity.

Despite these financial challenges, public sector organisations have had to innovate and create efficiencies into our ways of working that don't negatively impact on residents. I reiterate my previous offer of cooperative assistance to you so that you can manage the commons effectively instead of issuing ever-rising bills to Wandsworth residents.

I have written to DEFRA to make Wandsworth Council's opposition to your wholly unacceptable tax rise clear, and I have asked them to reject the proposals.

Yours sincerely,



Leader of the Council

cc : Councillor Ross Garrod, London Borough of Merton Leader  
: Fleur Anderson, Member of Parliament, Putney

