

Law Historian — chat archive

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This is a reading copy of **user-visible messages** from the Law Historian bot conversation, prepared before merge into Local historian. Tool calls, hidden system prompts, internal reasoning, and large tool-result dumps are omitted.

Agent id: b2d6ffde-30b2-4af7-b5c1-e8c45c9786ef **Messages included:** 101 user-visible entries (17 user texts, 3 user file attachments, 71 Law Historian replies, 8 bot file attachments, 2 in-chat widgets noted briefly).

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:17 BST

Hi Wade — good to meet you.

I'm here for legal history: cases, statutes, doctrines, how the law changed over time. What do you most want help with?

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:17 BST

[In-chat widget] **What should we focus on first?** — options: English legal history, A specific case or statute, Teaching or research notes, Something else

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 07:19 BST

the metropolitan commons acts and related legislation up to the present day

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:19 BST

Got it — the Metropolitan Commons Acts and the line of related law through to now. Digging in.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:19 BST

Pulling the statute trail and how the regime still works today.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:19 BST

I'll come back with a clear statute trail once I've checked the sources.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:21 BST

Here's the line from the Metropolitan Commons Acts through to today.

Why they happened By the 1860s London's remaining commons were under real enclosure and gravel-working pressure under the general Inclosure Acts. The Commons Preservation Society (1865), a Select Committee on metropolitan open spaces, and fights over places like Wimbledon and Epping Forest pushed Parliament toward **regulation and protection**, not enclosure.

The core statutes

- **Metropolitan Commons Act 1866** — the foundation. A “metropolitan common” was (and still is, for this Act) any common wholly or partly in the **Metropolitan Police District as defined when the Act passed**. It barred the Inclosure Commissioners from taking new enclosure applications for those commons, and set up **schemes of regulation** (drainage, improvement, byelaws) that only took effect when **confirmed by Act of Parliament**.
- **1869** — widened “common” and let **12+ ratepayers** petition for a scheme.
- **1878** — read with 1866–69; let the Metropolitan Board of Works (later London boroughs) buy common rights to stop them dying out; extended Commons Act 1876 illegal-enclosure remedies to metropolitan commons.
- **1898** — adjusted who the “local authority” was outside the County of London; **wholly repealed** in 1985.

Confirming “Supplemental” Acts then locked individual schemes in — e.g. **Tooting Beck (1873)**, **Clapham / Ealing / Bostall (1877)**, **Banstead (1893)**.

Related tracks (don't mix them up)

- **Commons Act 1876** — general England/Wales regulation; not the metropolitan scheme system (though 1878 borrowed bits of it).
- **Commons Act 1899** — simpler district-council schemes **without** a confirming Act; **s.14 excludes** land that is or might be under the Metropolitan Commons Acts, so the two regimes were designed not to overlap.
- **Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act 1871** and the **Epping Forest Act 1878** are **bespoke local Acts**, not MCA schemes — same open-space politics, different legal route.
- **Law of Property Act 1925 s.193** — still in force: public rights of access for air and exercise over metropolitan (and certain other) commons. **s.194** (fencing/enclosure restrictions) was later repealed and replaced by the Commons Act 2006

works regime.

- **Commons Registration Act 1965** and **Commons Act 2006** — modern registers and works consent.
- **MHLG Provisional Order Confirmation (Greater London Parks and Open Spaces) Act 1967** — for London borough–managed commons, qualifies how recreation buildings and street works sit against the enclosure bar (with ministerial consent).
- **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000** — open-access over mapped open country and registered common land; s.15 leaves older rights (including LPA s.193) in place rather than duplicating them.

What still matters now The **1866, 1869 and 1878 Acts remain on the statute book**. There has been no clean consolidation. Day-to-day, a metropolitan common typically sits in a stack: identity under the 1866 MPD definition → any historic scheme and its confirming Act → London borough management → LPA s.193 access → registration under 1965/2006 → works rules under MHLGPOC 1967 and/or Commons Act 2006 s.38. The Commons Act 2006 also narrowed the live enclosure bar in MCA s.5 to metropolitan commons **under London borough control and management**.

If you want to go deeper next, the highest-value follow-ups are usually a **named common’s scheme and confirming Act**, the **1866 Metropolitan Police District boundary**, or how **works/buildings** on a borough-managed common are consented today.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:21 BST

[In-chat widget] **Where next?** — options: A specific common, 1866 MPD boundary, Works and consent today, Something else

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 07:32 BST

I'm trying to understand how the London Boroughs of Merton, Croydon and Sutton can stop paying for the maintenance and upkeep of Mitcham Common, given that they, and their predecessor authorities have been paying since the 1891 supplemental Act. Can you examine all metropolitan common schemes and identify the legal obligation to pay, citing the legislation.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:32 BST

On it — I'll dig into the Mitcham Common 1891 scheme and how payment duties are written across metropolitan commons schemes generally, with statute cites.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:32 BST

Starting with the 1891 Mitcham Supplemental Act text and the contribution clauses, then comparing other schemes.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:38 BST

Checking the 1891 Scheme and MCA contribution clauses against the official texts, then I'll set out what they actually require.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:39 BST

Short answer: On the face of the *Metropolitan Commons (Mitcham) Supplemental Act 1891* and the Scheme it confirmed, Merton, Croydon and Sutton are **not under a continuing statutory duty** to fund Mitcham Common's maintenance. The long payment history looks like practice (and, for Croydon, a capped sealed-agreement condition), not a permanent rate precept. Croydon and Sutton have already stopped grants; Merton's contribution is treated as voluntary. Stopping does **not** require repeal of the 1891 Act.

This is legal-historical analysis of the public legislation, not formal advice on any live dispute.

1. What the 1891 Act actually does

Cite: *Metropolitan Commons (Mitcham) Supplemental Act 1891* (54 & 55 Vict. c. xxvi), Royal Assent 11 May 1891. It confirms a Scheme under the Metropolitan Commons Acts 1866 and 1869 for Mitcham Common, Upper Green, Lower Green, Figgs Marsh and Beddington Corner.

The short Act mainly confirms the Scheme. The money rules are in the **Scheme schedule**, not in a "boroughs shall pay forever" clause.

Management: Scheme **cl.1** — the Commons are regulated and managed by a body of **Conservators** (still a separate statutory body today).

Appointing bodies (1891): lords of the manors; vestry of **Mitcham** (4); county borough of **Croydon** (4, subject to a proviso); vestries of **Beddington** and **Wallington** (2 each, if they exercise the right).

2. Payment clauses in the Mitcham Scheme

| Body (1891) | Modern successor | What the Scheme says | Character | |---|---|---|---| | **Croydon** | LB Croydon | **cl.6** — council must not appoint Conservators until it has entered an **agreement under seal** to pay annually **one third** of Conservators' expenditure under the Scheme, **not exceeding £100** without the council's consent | Condition of appointment + capped contractual contribution — **not** an open-ended rate duty | | **Beddington / Wallington** | LB Sutton | **cl.21** — ratepayers “under no circumstances whatever” liable to contribute **unless** previously sanctioned by a **two-thirds in value** ratepayers' meeting (Public Improvements Act 1860 procedure) | Express **shield** against liability by default | | **Mitcham** | LB Merton | Elects Conservators; **no “shall pay / shall contribute” clause** found | Appointment without statutory maintenance duty | | Conservators generally | MCC | **cl.24** — may receive subscriptions/donations; **cl.44** — expenses **may** be paid out of moneys coming to their hands | No precept / local-tax levy |

Mitcham Common Conservators' own materials match this: unlike some other boards, they **cannot raise funds by a local tax levy**.

So the 1891 text does **not** create a three-borough duty to keep paying for upkeep “because they always have.”

3. The parent Metropolitan Commons Acts — power, not duty

Metropolitan Commons Act 1866, s.25 (still in force):

> “The local authority **may** ... contribute **such amount as they think fit** (in a gross sum or by annual payments or otherwise) towards the expenses of executing any scheme ... when confirmed by Act of Parliament...”

That is a **discretionary power**. The 1869 and 1878 Acts do not convert it into a maintenance levy. Scheme-preparation costs (s.24) are separate from ongoing upkeep.

4. How other metropolitan schemes treat money (the contrast that matters)

Across confirming Acts, two patterns appear:

A. Managing authority = local board / Metropolitan Board of Works — scheme costs are often that body's raiseable expenses:

- **Tooting Beck** (*Metropolitan Commons Supplemental Act 1873*): expenses “shall be deemed to be expenses of the Board ... and be raised accordingly.”
- **Clapham, Bostall Heath** (*Metropolitan Commons Supplemental Act 1877*): expenses “shall be contributed by the Board” as Metropolis Management expenses.
- **Ealing Commons** (same 1877 Act): costs “shall be contributed by the Board” as Public Health Act 1875 expenses.

B. Independent Conservators board (Mitcham, Banstead 1893) — typically **no rate levy**; money from donations, agreements, and voluntary authority grants. Banstead today is also grant/other income, not a Scheme precept.

Different model again: Wimbledon and Putney (1871 private Act) have a true **levy** on surrounding properties — that is **not** Mitcham's structure.

Mitcham sits firmly in pattern **B**.

5. Succession to Merton, Croydon, Sutton

Under the London Government Act 1963 (borough map in Sch.1; continuity of local Acts in **s.87**):

- Mitcham → **Merton**
- Croydon CB → **Croydon**
- Beddington & Wallington → **Sutton**

Successor boroughs inherit the Scheme's appointment roles (and whatever money machinery the Scheme actually created). They do **not** inherit a funding duty the Scheme never imposed. The Conservators were not abolished in 1965.

Modern practice fits that reading: Conservators' accounts show **Sutton and Croydon at £0**; Merton's figure is reported as a **grant**. Commons Act 2006 / DEFRA London commons guidance regulate works and enclosure — they do **not** create Scheme funding duties.

6. Can they stop paying?

Yes, on the face of the 1891 Scheme and MCA 1866 s.25, for the reasons above. Stopping payment does not by itself dissolve the Conservators' statutory management role; they must manage within available funds.

Croydon caveat (cl.6): the best textual hook for *any* structured Croydon payment is the sealed-agreement proviso tied to **appointment**, historically capped at £100 unless Croydon consented to more. Possible constructions of ongoing appointment without payment are unsettled without the historic sealed agreement and any later variation. That is a different question from a free-standing debt claim for modern full maintenance costs.

To impose a mandatory continuing contribution or Conservators' levy, you would need an **amending scheme** (Scheme cl.36; MCA 1866 s.27) **confirmed by Act of Parliament**, or fresh primary legislation — not byelaws, not a political understanding alone, and not DEFRA works consent.

Sources (primary)

- [Metropolitan Commons \(Mitcham\) Supplemental Act 1891](#) (PDF schedule)
- [MCA 1866 s.25](#)
- Supplemental Acts 1873 (Tooting) and 1877 (Ealing/Clapham/Bostall); Banstead 1893; London Government Act 1963 ss./Sch. as above

Scheme quotations above are from the official PDF via OCR — use the legislation.gov.uk PDF itself for any formal quote.

If useful next, I can pull the **exact cl.6 / cl.21 wording** cleaned against the PDF page images, or dig for the **historic Croydon sealed agreement** and any post-1891 amending instruments.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 07:39 BST

Happy to go next into the Croydon sealed-agreement point, or clean PDF quotes of cl.6 and cl.21, if that's the pressure point.

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 08:25 BST

[Attached file: [18910718 Conservators Minutes.pdf](#)]

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 08:25 BST

in your response, I contest the statement "Mitcham Common Conservators' own materials match this: unlike some other boards, they cannot raise funds by a local tax levy." by pointing you to the minutes of the Mitcham Common Conservators of 18th July 1891, where they raised money by a precept against the Mitcham parish. Doesn't that contradict the statement?

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:25 BST

Fair point — I'll read the 18 July 1891 minutes and put them against the Scheme text before I stand by or correct that line.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:25 BST

The PDF looks scanned — converting the pages so I can read the precept wording properly.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:25 BST

Handwriting is fighting the OCR — reading the page images themselves.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:26 BST

You're right that the minutes record a precept — now checking what statute or Scheme clause, if any, authorised it.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:26 BST

Scheme text still shows no obvious levy clause — checking what statutes it incorporates, and Victorian precept practice.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:26 BST

Yes — those minutes do undercut how I put it.

What the 18 July 1891 minutes show At the Conservators' first meeting (Vestry Hall, Mitcham), with G. P. Bidder in the chair, they resolved that the Clerk issue a **precept under the Common Seal** to the **Overseers of the Parish of Mitcham** for £75, payable in two moieties. The same meeting also chased Croydon's sealed agreement under **Scheme cl.6**. So your primary source is clear: early Conservators *did* use precept language against Mitcham parish, and they treated that as a financing step from day one.

Where my earlier sentence went wrong I leaned on the modern Management Plan (§6.1): that the Scheme “does not provide ... any financial means” and that Conservators “cannot raise funds by a local tax levy.” That is a claim about what the **1891 Scheme grants as a power**. I then stated it as if it described the whole historical practice. Your minutes show that practice was messier — Conservators *issued* a Mitcham precept almost immediately. So the unqualified “cannot / did not raise by levy” framing was too neat. Fair contest.

What still does not follow from the minutes alone* **Issuing a sealed “precept” to overseers is strong evidence of what the Board thought it could do (or what Mitcham was willing to meet). It is not*, by itself, proof that the Scheme created a continuing statutory rate-levy power that today's boroughs must obey.

On a fresh pass of the Scheme text, I still do **not** find a clause empowering Conservators to precept Mitcham (or anyone) for maintenance:

- **cl.6** — Croydon only, via sealed agreement, one-third capped at £100 unless consent
- **cl.21** — Beddington/Wallington expressly *not* liable unless two-thirds ratepayer sanction
- **cl.24 / cl.44** — subscriptions/donations; expenses payable from moneys in hand
- No Mitcham “shall pay” / overseers / precept clause in the OCR of the confirming Act PDF

So the live question your minutes raise is sharper than a simple contradiction: **were the 1891 precepts grounded in some other statute, in Mitcham vestry’s willingness to raise via the rates, or in a claimed Scheme power that isn’t there on the face of the text?** Until that hook is identified, the minutes correct the *practice* story; they do not yet reverse the conclusion that Merton/Croydon/Sutton lack a clear *Scheme-imposed* duty to keep funding.

I’m still tracing the legal basis of that Mitcham precept (and whether later minutes show it recurring, challenged, or abandoned). I’ll come back when that is pinned down.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:29 BST

Pinned down the precept point — here is the refined answer against the Scheme and MCA 1866.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:29 BST

Refined answer: the minutes are right about what Conservators *did*; they do not show a Scheme power to levy.

What your minutes prove

On 18 July 1891 the Board resolved to issue a sealed “precept” to the Mitcham Overseers for £75 in two moieties. That is real practice, and it was right to press me on it. Same meeting chased Croydon’s **cl.6** agreement — so they were already distinguishing Mitcham money from Croydon’s Scheme-backed contribution.

What they do *not* prove

A Victorian “precept” was ordinarily a **statutory** demand on overseers (school boards, burial boards, and so on), where an Act directed payment out of the poor rate. **Labelling** a sealed demand a precept does not create that power.

A full search of the 1891 Scheme still finds **no** precept, overseers, Mitcham rate, levy, or assessment clause. Funding text remains:

- **cl.6** — Croydon sealed agreement ($\frac{1}{3}$, £100 cap unless consent)
- **cl.21** — Beddington/Wallington not liable unless $\frac{2}{3}$ ratepayer sanction
- **cl.24** — subscriptions/donations
- **cl.44** — pay expenses from moneys in hand

- **cl.35** — limited Commissioners Clauses 1847 incorporation (contracts/deeds/notices) — not rating

Parent Acts likewise give Conservators no general precept power. **MCA 1866 s.25** lets the *local authority* contribute “such amount as they think fit.” Under the First Schedule as enacted, for a parish common the local authority was the **vestry** and the local rate was the **poor rate** (historical **s.26**, later repealed). That is a **discretionary vestry contribution**, not a Conservators’ right to tax.

The minutes’ cite of **Commons Act 1876 s.20** is about gravel digging on regulated commons — not funding. (The Act’s rate machinery in s.14 belongs to a different, non-metropolitan provisional-order track.)

Contrast schemes that *do* have express overseers’ precepts (e.g. Malvern Hills Acts). Mitcham has no analogue — which is what MCC Management Plan §6.1 is saying when it claims no local-tax levy power.

So how to read the 1891 £75

Best fit on present evidence: Conservators issued a demand *styled* a precept; Mitcham overseers/vestry could honour it as a **voluntary MCA s.25 contribution** from the poor rate (or similar parish arrangement). That explains the minutes without inventing a Scheme levy clause that isn’t there. Croydon’s money had a Scheme footing; Mitcham’s “precept” did not.

Bottom line for your contest

| Claim | Holds? | |---|---| | Minutes show a Mitcham “precept” in 1891 | **Yes** | | That contradicts “Scheme confers no levy power” | **No** — nomenclature ≠ authority | | Creates a continuing statutory duty on Merton (or Croydon/Sutton) to fund today | **No** — still no Scheme “shall pay”; modern money is grant/other income |

I should have put it: *the Scheme confers no levy power; early Conservators nonetheless demanded Mitcham parish money under precept language, most likely as a cooperative MCA contribution*. Thanks for the push — the minutes sharpen the history without overturning the statutory reading.

If you have later minutes showing repeated Mitcham precepts (or a vestry resolution authorising them), that would test whether this stayed a standing practice.

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 08:34 BST

I have pdfs of scans of all minutes of Conservators meetings from 1891 to present day. The early pdfs have hand written minutes. I haven't put these earlier ones online. The range of years were provided to me by the researcher of the Mitcham Golf Club's history, and the latter ones from the Conservators.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:35 BST

That's a serious archive — especially the handwritten early books that aren't online.

For the funding question, the minutes that matter most are the ones that show whether Mitcham “precepts” (or parish/council contributions) were a one-off in July 1891 or a standing pattern, and what language Conservators and Mitcham used when the money was authorised. Croydon's cl.6 agreement trail and any Beddington/Wallington sanction votes would sit in the same run.

If you can share the early volumes (or even a slice — say 1891–1910, then a sample after Mitcham UDC / the 1930s borough, then post-1965), I can work through them for precepts, contributions, and any challenge or change of footing. No need to put them online; attaching here or dropping them on that machine is enough.

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 08:42 BST

here are the sizes of the pdfs, which go up to 2006 : 1891-1900.pdf, 44.22 MB 1901-1910.pdf, 63.44 MB 1911-1920.pdf, 41.12 MB 1921-1930.pdf, 87.37 MB 1931-1940.pdf, 173.08 MB 1941-1950.pdf, 95.59 MB 1951-1960.pdf, 76.78 MB 1961-1975.pdf, 71.79 MB 1975-1987.pdf, 59.26 MB 1987-1996.pdf, 46.31 MB 1996-2006.pdf, 63.98 MB

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:42 BST

Nearly 800 MB of minutes — useful. Checking whether those decade PDFs are already on your machine so we can start with 1891–1910 on the precept trail.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:42 BST

Looking for those decade PDFs on your machine now.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:42 BST

Machine is connected — searching for the decade PDFs by name.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:43 BST

I can't reach the files on your Mac yet — local tool access is set to Never.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:43 BST

I can see the decade list (~823 MB total), but I can't open files on Triumph-T100 while local tool access is **Never**.

Two easy routes: 1. Turn on local execution in [Local execution](grokbot://app/v1/settings?id=local-execution), then tell me the folder path — I'll start with 1891-1900.pdf and 1901-1910.pdf for precepts and contributions. 2. Or attach those two volumes here (drag into chat). Later decades can follow once we know the pattern.

Either way I'll mine for precepts, parish/council contributions, Croydon's cl.6 agreement, and any Beddington/Wallington sanction votes — not a full transcription of every meeting.

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 08:44 BST

too large to attach

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:44 BST

Understood — at that size, attach won't work.

Best path: switch [Local execution](grokbot://app/v1/settings?id=local-execution) away from Never (Ask or Always), then send the folder path where the decade PDFs live. I'll pull 1891-1900.pdf first onto my computer and work from there — no need to attach anything.

If you'd rather not flip that setting, you could drop just the early years somewhere I can fetch (cloud link) or split 1891-1900 into smaller year PDFs and attach those. Local execution is the cleanest for the full run.

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 08:52 BST

[Attached file: MCC minutes links.txt]

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 08:52 BST

I've uploaded them all to my Mitcham History Notes blog. Attached file contains urls to the pdfs.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:52 BST

Perfect — reading the URL list and starting with 1891–1900 for precepts and contributions.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:52 BST

URLs look good — downloading 1891–1900 first, then mining it for precepts and contributions.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:52 BST

1891–1900 is on my computer (143 pages). Mining that volume for precepts now, and pulling 1901–1910 in parallel.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:53 BST

This will take a bit — handwriting OCR across 143 pages — I'll report as soon as the 1891–1900 funding pattern is clear.

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 08:58 BST

while you are scanning, can you produce pdfs of the OCRd text? that will save doing that task again

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:58 BST

Yes — I'll save searchable OCR PDFs alongside the funding extract so you don't have to run that again.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 08:58 BST

Told the scan run to emit searchable OCR PDFs (plus plain-text dumps) under the minutes folder as it goes. I'll pass you the files when the first decade is done.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 09:08 BST

1891–1900 is done — funding pattern first, then the OCR files.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 09:08 BST

1891–1900 funding pattern (vision-checked against the page images)

Precepts to Mitcham Overseers — only two verified 1. **18 Jul 1891** — £75 in two moieties (the minute you raised) 2. **17 Dec 1892** — another sealed precept to Mitcham Overseers (amount not on that page)

No further verified use of the word “precept” through 1900. Mitcham money **continues**, but the language shifts to **Parish Council contributions** after the 1894 local-government change — e.g. £40 received (1896); **£95** in the 1898 estimate; **£85 + £10** voted (May 1900).

Croydon (cl.6) — agreement prepared Jul 1891, **sealed Nov 1891**. Then treated as an ongoing receivable: £40-15-1 received (1893); ask £50 on account (1894); £100 due for 1897; £95.2.7 due for 1898.

Wallington — clear **£30/year** by 1898, usually for Beddington Corner (half-year £15 in May 1900; £30/yr × 3 years reported Jan 1901).

Beddington — repair contact 1893; annual contribution under discussion by Jan 1901.

Also: Corporation of London **£500** (1893); golf rent/subscriptions; 1894 overdraft / Chairman advance; 1898 “no funds / wholly unable” on roads. No minute found that says “we have no power to precept” — practice just moves from overseers’ precept language to council votes.

Legal takeaway: early practice confirms **recurring Mitcham (and other) money**, first under precept style then as contributions. That still does **not** by itself prove a Scheme *levy power* binding Merton today — but it ends any idea that parish funding was a one-off in July 1891.

OCR files: searchable PDFs are ready (53 MB + 77 MB) but too large to attach in chat (26 MB limit). Plain-text OCR dumps attached below. To get the searchable PDFs onto your Mac, either:

- turn on [Local execution](grokbot://app/v1/settings?id=local-execution) and tell me a destination folder, or
- open my computer from the chat header and copy from the `OCR` folder yourself.

Happy to keep the same pipeline running through later decades.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 09:08 BST

[Sent attachment: `1901-1910_OCR.txt`]

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 09:08 BST

[Sent attachment: `1891-1900_FUNDING_REPORT.md`]

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 09:08 BST

[Sent attachment: `1891-1900_OCR.txt`]

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 09:09 BST

Attached: both OCR `.txt` dumps and the funding report. Say if you want the next decades mined the same way, or the searchable PDFs copied once local execution is on.

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 10:01 BST

[Attached file: `Screenshot 2026-09-12 at 09.59.17.png`]

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 10:01 BST

the ocr text files don't look useful, see attached

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 10:01 BST

Agreed — for those handwritten volumes, plain tesseract OCR is basically noise. Sorry that dump wasted your time.

What *did* work for the funding report was reading the page images directly (not the OCR text). The searchable PDFs will have the same weak layer on cursive pages, so I wouldn't treat them as a reusable transcript either.

Better plan going forward:

- Keep mining by **page images + visual read** for funding/precept/contribution hits (as with 1891–1900)
- Skip shipping more OCR `.txt` for handwritten decades
- For later volumes that turn **typed**, OCR should suddenly become useful — I'll check script type before running another dump

Want me to push on through 1901–1920 that way (funding trail only), or pause until we have a better handwriting pipeline?

Wade

12 Sep 2026, 10:06 BST

agreed. skip providing the ocr texts, and continue with all the pdfs!

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 10:06 BST

On it — every decade volume, funding trail only, page images not OCR dumps. Starting downloads and working forward from 1901.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 10:07 BST

Downloading the remaining decades now; mining 1901–1910 in parallel.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 10:07 BST

Working through in bands: 1901–1930 first, then 1931–1960, then the borough-era volumes through 2006. I'll post findings as each band lands.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 10:26 BST

1901–1930 funding trail

- **No precepts** in this band — money is contribution / grant / voted. The 1891–92 Overseers precept form does not return.
- **Croydon:** printed formula matches Scheme cl.6 — $\frac{1}{3}$ **of prior-year spend, capped at £100**; often the full £100, lower in war years (£63 / £54 / £37 etc.).
- **Wallington £30/yr** for Beddington Corner continues; from **1915** via **Beddington & Wallington UDC**.
- **Mitcham:** early PC sums (£50 / £75 / £100); then **£100/yr claimed but years in arrears ~1910–1922**; restored by the **Mitcham UDC Act 1923** as a **minimum £100 p.a.**
- Minutes turn **typed from 27 Oct 1910** — clearer evidence from there.

Pushing on into 1931–1960 and the borough-era volumes.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 10:26 BST

All decade PDFs are on my computer. Mining 1931–1960 and 1961–2006 in parallel now.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 11:11 BST

1961–2006 (borough era)

- After 1965, funding is treated as **negotiated annual/percentage contributions** among Merton, Croydon and Sutton — **not** a Conservators' levy.
- In practice boroughs **could and did** condition, reduce, delay, and omit; Conservators chase by representations, not compulsion.
- Counsel on the **1891 Act** was sought (**Hames Q.C., Nov 1975**); the Opinion's substance is **not** minuted. The Scheme is cited for seats/constitution, not a duty to pay.
- **Merton** becomes lead payer and managing agent. Croydon still explicit into the mid-1980s; Sutton still paying/chased in **1993/95** (£10,150 / £650 shortfall). Exact years Croydon/Sutton fully stop are **not** pinned in these minutes alone.

- Language stays “contribution” for boroughs into the mid-1990s; “grant” is more for external funds later.

Still waiting on the **1931–1960** band, then I’ll stitch the full 1891–2006 synthesis.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 11:11 BST

1931–1960 is still grinding through — I’ll post that band as soon as it’s ready, then the full synthesis.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 11:12 BST

1931–1960

- Still **contribution** language only — no precept/levy power found in the minutes.
- **1931 vesting Bill** (Mitcham + Croydon; would have repealed the 1891 Act) **defeated** at a Mitcham poll (2088–1199); Conservators survive.
- **1933 uplift**: Croydon and Mitcham each +£100 → mid-1930s triad about £200 / £200 / £50; Croydon’s extra framed under the **1891 Act** for a run of years (~1933–1943) plus pitches.
- Mitcham back toward £100 by WWII; Beddington & Wallington £30 → £50 → £100, and **Mill Green** maintenance from 1933.
- WWII: local-authority contributions continue for a time; Croydon drops after ~1943; War Office/SWAEC compensation and War Bonds; amusements become big non-LA income.

Stitching the full 1891–2006 picture now.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 11:12 BST

Full picture, 1891–2006

Bottom line: The minutes confirm a long, real payment culture — but almost entirely as **contribution / grant / voted / percentage** money. After two early Mitcham Overseers “precepts” (1891–92), that form disappears. Nothing in the books shows Conservators enforcing a Scheme levy. Boroughs (and predecessors) **arrear, condition, reduce, renegotiate, and get chased by representations** — which is how discretionary funders behave, not ratepayers under a precept.

Arc in four beats

1. **1891–1900** — Two sealed Mitcham precepts; Croydon cl.6 sealed; then Mitcham Parish Council contributions; Wallington £30/yr. 2. **1901–1930** — No precepts. Croydon printed as $\frac{1}{3}$ **spend** ≤ £100. Mitcham £100 claimed

then years in arrear; **Mitcham UDC Act 1923** restores a **minimum £100 p.a.** (statutory floor on Mitcham UDC after a Bill fight — not a three-authority levy). 3. **1931–1960** — Vesting Bill to kill the 1891 Act **defeated** (2088–1199). 1933 uplift (~£200/£200/£50); wartime wobble; still contribution-only. 4. **1961–2006** — Three LBs renegotiate from 1965 (“contribution for the future must be considered”). Matching conditions; Merton becomes lead payer/agent; **Hames Q.C. Opinion on the 1891 Act (Nov 1975)** circulated but **not transcribed**; Sutton still contributing mid-1990s; later volumes go quiet on Croydon/Sutton schedules.

Against the Scheme law

Your July 1891 precept minute sharpens the *history*; it does not invent a Scheme power that isn’t in the text. The century of minutes after it actually strengthens the legal reading: when money was needed, Conservators **asked, negotiated, and sometimes went without** — they did not precept as of right.

So for “can Merton/Croydon/Sutton stop paying?” — **on the Scheme + this minute trail, yes**. Making payment mandatory would need new legislation or an amending scheme confirmed by Parliament.

Worth chasing next if you want to go deeper: the **Hames Opinion (1975)**, the exact **1923 Act** contribution clause, and the historic **Croydon sealed agreement**.

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 11:12 BST

[Sent attachment: `FUNDING_SYNTHESIS_1891-2006.md`]

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 11:12 BST

[Sent attachment: `1901-1930_FUNDING_REPORT.md`]

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 11:12 BST

[Sent attachment: `1931-1960_FUNDING_REPORT.md`]

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 11:12 BST

[Sent attachment: `1961-2006_FUNDING_REPORT.md`]

Law Historian

12 Sep 2026, 11:12 BST

Attached: the synthesis plus the three later band reports (1891–1900 report was sent earlier). Say if you want the Hames Opinion or the 1923 Act chased next.

Wade

13 Sep 2026, 09:22 BST

Thanks. I haven't heard of the Hames Opinion, but I do know about Mitcham UDC 1923 Act, which separated the Mitcham Greens from the Conservators. Find out what you can on the Hames Opinion, please.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 09:22 BST

On it — chasing the Hames Opinion: who instructed it, what survives of the advice, and where a copy might still be.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 09:22 BST

Noted on the 1923 Act and the Greens. Digging the Nov 1975 minute and any archive trail for Hames now.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 09:32 BST

Hames Opinion — what we can pin down

The Opinion **did exist** and was circulated to the Board. Its **substance is still missing** from the minute books (and from anything public I can find).

Timeline from the Conservators' minutes

1. **6 Nov 1974** — Clerk instructed to obtain Counsel's Opinion on the Conservators' **management powers** under the **1891 Act** ("a number of points"). 2. **26 Feb 1975** — Chairman and Clerk consult **Mr J.H. Hames Q.C.**; Opinion hoped for end of March, with a special meeting. **No special-meeting minutes found**; May 1975 also

appears missing from the 1975–87 volume. 3. **19 Nov 1975** — Case and Opinion **circulated**; points discussed; Chairman to investigate “**possible proposals.**” Still **no transcription** of what Counsel actually said. 4. From **Feb 1976**, the same Act heading is used around the **Sunday Market** (finance/preservation) — contextual only, not Opinion text. 5. **Aug 1977** — a **second**, separate Hames advice on a **planning appeal** is briefly minuted (don’t appeal unless parking rearranged). That is **not** the 1975 Act Opinion.

What we don’t have

- The Opinion’s conclusions (powers, funding, representation — unknown).
- Full name / chambers for **J.H. Hames Q.C.** (not identified; not to be confused with Christopher Hames KC without evidence).
- Any public PDF or published citation of the 1975 Opinion.
- Any link in these Hames minutes to the **1923 Act / Mitcham Greens** separation you mentioned — that doesn’t appear in the 1974–77 Hames/Opinion pages checked.

Best places left to look

Conservators’ own files (Mill House / Clerk’s papers), **Merton Legal or Heritage** (FOI/archive — Clerks were often Merton officers), and a **Law List** hunt for J.H. Hames. Happy to draft a tight FOI/archive ask if useful.

So: we know *that* Counsel advised on 1891 Act management powers in 1975; we still don’t know *what* he advised.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 09:32 BST

[Sent attachment: `HAMES_OPINION_1975.md`]

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 09:32 BST

Full note attached. I can draft a Merton / Conservators archive request next if you want that chased formally.

Wade

13 Sep 2026, 09:55 BST

The 1891 Act had a requirement for Croydon Borough to make a seal that they would contribute a third of Conservators cost, before they appointed members to the Board. As Croydon continues to appoint members, but have stopped contributing, does the legal weight of that seal still apply?

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 09:55 BST

Sharp question — I'll put Scheme cl.6 and the 1891 sealed agreement against succession and modern practice, and stay clear about what we can and can't prove without the deed itself.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 09:55 BST

Working through cl.6's wording and what still bites if Croydon appoints but doesn't pay.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 09:55 BST

Short answer: Scheme **cl.6** still sits on the statute book, and Croydon **did** enter a sealed agreement in **1891**. That does **not** mean Croydon is today legally bound to fund a third of modern Conservators' costs just because it still appoints members. The clause is narrower — and weaker for recovery — than that reading.

This is legal-historical analysis of the public Scheme text and minutes, not advice on a live claim.

What cl.6 actually says

Roughly (OCR of the confirming Act PDF; check the official PDF for quoting):

> the council shall **not exercise the power of appointing** Conservators ... **until** the council shall have entered into an **agreement under seal** with the Conservators to pay ... **annually a sum equal to one third** of the expenditure incurred ... executing this scheme, **such sum not to exceed (without the consent of the council) £100**.

So three separate things get mixed up:

| Piece | What it is | |---|---| | **Scheme condition** | Croydon must have *entered* a sealed agreement **before** it may appoint | | **The deed itself** | Whatever ongoing payment terms were in that 1891 agreement (text **not located**) | | **The £100 cap** | Even the Scheme's own description of the promised annual sum is **capped at £100** unless Croydon *consents* to more |

It is an **agreement under seal** (a deed), not Croydon "making a seal" as a free-standing act.

Does “still appointing but not paying” keep the seal alive as a duty to fund?

1. Condition precedent vs perpetual rate On its face, cl.6 is satisfied once Croydon **has entered** the sealed agreement. The Conservators’ minutes show that step was taken: agreement prepared July 1891, **sealed 13 Nov 1891**. The Scheme does **not** clearly say “you may keep appointing only while you keep paying,” nor “appointments become void if payment stops.”

So the strongest *Scheme* hook for modern non-payment is not “you must fund all maintenance forever,” but at most an argument that **continuing to appoint while repudiating the contribution arrangement is inconsistent with the Scheme’s bargain** — a construction point, not an open cheque.

2. The deed might still matter — if it survives and still binds If the 1891 sealed agreement created a **continuing contractual** promise to pay one-third annually, *that* promise (not the appointment condition alone) is what might still have legal weight. Without the deed we cannot know:

- duration / termination clauses
- whether it was varied or abandoned
- how (or whether) it binds **LB Croydon** as successor to the county borough
- limitation / waiver from decades of negotiated “contributions” then nil payments

3. Even at full stretch, the money is tiny The Scheme text of the promised annual sum is $\leq$ **£100 without Croydon’s consent**. Later minutes show Croydon often paying **up to that cap**, and sometimes **extra by consent** (e.g. 1930s additional £100). Consent to pay more is voluntary. So cl.6 is a very poor vehicle for compelling today’s ~six-figure maintenance economics.

4. Practice undercuts “must pay to appoint” For most of the 20th century Croydon money was treated as the cl.6-style contribution (and later as negotiated borough contributions far above £100 **by agreement**). Modern Conservators’ minutes record Croydon **still appointing** after withdrawing funding (reportedly with Sutton, ~2014), with the Board **welcoming** resumed contributions rather than treating appointments as unlawful. That is not conclusive of the law — but it is how the statutory body itself has behaved.

5. LGA succession London Government Act 1963 continuity can carry local Act machinery to LB Croydon. That preserves the *Scheme framework*; it does not automatically inflate a capped 1891 deed into a duty to fund modern upkeep, nor prove the deed is still on foot.

Bottom line

| Claim | Holds? | |---|---| | Cl.6 still exists and required a sealed contribution agreement before Croydon appointments | **Yes** | | That agreement was entered (Nov 1891) | **Yes** (minutes) | | Therefore Croydon must now pay **one-third of current Conservators’ costs** while it appoints | **No — not on the face of cl.6**; capped at £100 unless consent; deed text unknown | | Appointments without payment are automatically void | **Not stated** in the Scheme | | The sealed agreement *might* still have some residual contractual weight | **Only if** the deed (or a successor) is found, still binding, and not varied/waived — and likely still under the historic cap unless Croydon agreed more |

So: the seal’s “legal weight” is real as **history of the Scheme bargain**, and possibly as a **small capped**

contractual stream if the deed can be produced. It does **not**, as currently evidenced, lock Croydon into funding a third of present-day maintenance merely because it still names Conservators.

The missing piece that would move this from construction to proof is the **1891 Croydon sealed agreement** (and any later deed of variation). That is the document to hunt in Croydon / Conservators / Merton legal stores.

Wade

13 Sep 2026, 10:29 BST

Indexed linked from 1891 is about £5K, a useful sum for the maintenance of Mitcham Common.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 10:30 BST

Fair — £5k a year is not trivial for the Common. Checking that index figure, then I'll adjust how I put the cap.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 10:30 BST

You're right — I undersold that.

Even taking the Scheme's **£100 without consent** seriously as a historic cap, an indexed equivalent is a **useful** annual sum for Mitcham Common, not a rounding error. Your **~£5k** is a fair working figure; some RPI/CPI long-run calculators put £100 in 1891 nearer **£10k–£16k** today, depending on the index. Either way, it is money that would matter beside Merton's ~£24k grant and nil from Croydon/Sutton.

So the better framing is:

- **Practically:** if cl.6 / the sealed agreement still supported something like an indexed (or even nominal-but-honoured) Croydon stream, it would be worth having.
- **Legally:** the hard parts are unchanged — proving the **deed still binds**, that **appointment without payment** is the right hook (or that the contract itself is actionable), and whether the cap is **£100 nominal** or was ever varied/consented upward. Indexation is an *argument about value*, not something the 1891 text writes in.

I was wrong to brush the capped figure off as trivial. The live question is still whether anyone can get from “useful indexed sum” to an enforceable Croydon payment — and that still turns on finding the **1891 sealed agreement**.

Wade

13 Sep 2026, 13:14 BST

the 1891 sealed agreement may have been deposited in the National Archives, or the Surrey History Centre

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:14 BST

Good thought — searching the National Archives Discovery catalogue and Surrey History Centre for that 1891 Croydon sealed agreement.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:14 BST

Querying Discovery and the Surrey catalogues now.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:14 BST

No exact hit yet — checking MAF commons-scheme files, Surrey collections, and Croydon's own agreement registers.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:15 BST

Catalogue pages are timing out — trying Discovery and Surrey search APIs directly.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:15 BST

Found a Mitcham Conservators file at Kew — not the 1891 deed. Searching the MAF commons series and Surrey/Croydon catalogues next.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:15 BST

Stronger Kew and Sutton hits now — pulling the catalogue descriptions.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:15 BST

You're right that those are the places to look. I haven't found a catalogue line that *names* the 1891 Croydon–Conservators sealed agreement, but there are real files that could hold it — or a copy.

National Archives (Kew)

Board of Agriculture / MAF commons correspondence (the department that ran metropolitan schemes):

| Ref | Dates | Title | ---|---|---| | **MAF 25/55/1** | 1890 | Surrey: Mitcham Commons: Scheme of Regulation | | **MAF 25/55/2** | 1890–1900 | same | | **MAF 25/56/1** | 1890–1913 | same | | **MAF 25/56/2** | 1909–1914 | Conveyance of Fair Franchise to Conservators |

The first three are the right *period* for a copy of the Nov 1891 deed to have gone on the scheme file. They are catalogued only as “Scheme of Regulation,” so you have to open them. **MAF 25/56/2** is a later Conservators conveyance, not cl.6.

Also at Kew (Parliamentary): **YHL/PO/PB/1/1891/54and55V1n24** — the Local Act itself, not the Croydon agreement.

Surrey History Centre

No dedicated “Mitcham Common Conservators” fonds showed up on Discovery. Their Mitcham Borough deposit (**6089**, NRA 38341) is mainly **1926–1965 rates/valuations**, not an 1891 Croydon deed. Worth asking them anyway — they may hold unlisted or quarter-sessions material — but **SHC is not the obvious home** of a county-borough of Croydon sealed agreement.

Stronger nearby shelves

1. **Croydon Archives** — collection **AR517** includes **Registers of Agreements and Policies, March 1880–March 1965** (and later Undertakings registers from 1898). A sealed Corporation agreement of Nov 1891 ought to be recorded there, even if the original deed stayed with the Town Clerk. This is the best *Croydon-side* hunt. 2. **Sutton Archives & Local Studies** - **3416/3/1–52** (1885–1891): gravel/scheme papers, Beddington vestry opposition (rates fears) — may discuss cl.6 / Croydon money. - **2813/5/40** (1960s): *list of documents* on Mitcham and Beddington commons under the 1866/1869 Acts — a finding aid, not the deed, but it may point to where copies were. 3. **Conservators / Merton** — counterpart of the deed (minutes show Conservators sealed it 13 Nov 1891). Still the most likely original.

Bottom line: Kew's **MAF 25/55–56** and Croydon's **agreement registers** are the two catalogue hits worth ordering first. Surrey History Centre is worth an enquiry, but I wouldn't expect the sealed agreement to have been deposited there as a matter of course.

I can draft a short enquiry email for Kew, Croydon Archives, and SHC if you want.

Wade

13 Sep 2026, 13:26 BST

what is 'AR517' and can I view the collection at <https://archives.croydon.gov.uk/>

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:27 BST

Checking Croydon's catalogue for AR517 and what you can see online.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:27 BST

Pulling the AR517 catalogue page and Croydon's viewing rules.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:27 BST

Their site is blocking automated fetches — opening the catalogue in the browser.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:27 BST

Opening the Croydon catalogue in the browser for AR517.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:27 BST

AR517 is Croydon Archives' catalogue code for the collection:

Croydon Borough Council and Coulsdon and Purley UDC records (roughly 1883–1992).

It's the corporate records deposit from the old county borough / successors — minute books, registers, and so on — not a single Mitcham Common file. Inside it (from the online description) are the series that matter for the 1891 deed hunt:

- **Registers of Agreements and Policies** — March 1880 – March 1965
- **Registers of Undertakings and Agreements** — from February 1898 (so slightly *after* Nov 1891; less useful for the original sealing, better for later renewals)

Can you view it at archives.croydon.gov.uk?

Yes for the catalogue entry — that URL is the right place: <https://archives.croydon.gov.uk/croydon-borough-council-and-coulsdon-and-purley-udc-records>

What you get online is normally the **finding aid** (titles, dates, series), not a digitised page-by-page scan of the 1891 register itself. To see whether the Croydon–Conservators agreement was entered, you'd almost certainly need to **order the register volume(s) covering late 1891** and read them on site (or request copies). I'm checking their visit/order rules in the browser now and will add anything useful.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 13:34 BST

Update from the live catalogue page — and one correction to what I said earlier.

AR517 is the collection “**Croydon Borough Council and Coulsdon and Purley UDC records**” (dated 1883–1992 on the record). Online at <https://archives.croydon.gov.uk/croydon-borough-council-and-coulsdon-and-purley-udc-records> you get the **finding aid only** — no digitised images of the registers, no order button. Physical items are requested by email.

Important correction

The **Registers of Agreements and Policies, March 1880–March 1965** sit under **Coulsdon and Purley UDC**, not Croydon Borough. That series won't hold the Nov 1891 Croydon–Conservators deed.

For **Croydon Borough** itself, the closest agreement series in AR517 is:

- **Registers of Undertakings and Agreements** — from February 1898 (then 1911–1936, 1936–1974)

That starts **after** the Nov 1891 sealing, so useful for later Croydon–Conservators arrangements, **not** the original cl.6 deed. Seal registers listed there only begin in the **1960s**.

So AR517 is still worth knowing — but it is a **weaker** lead for the 1891 sealed agreement than I first implied. Kew **MAF 25/55–56** and the Conservators/Merton counterpart remain the better first hunts for 1891 itself.

Viewing

- **Research Room**, Level 0, Croydon Clocktower, Katharine Street, CR9 1ET
- Email archives@croydon.gov.uk (phone 020 8253 1022)
- Free; **book ahead** (they ask for at least **five working days** for retrieval)
- Hours on the visit pages: roughly Wed/Fri/Sat 10–1 and 1:30–4:30, Thu mornings — but one repository note only lists Wed/Fri with slightly different times, so confirm when you book

Happy to draft a short request email (AR517 + what to ask them to check for Nov 1891) if useful.

Wade

13 Sep 2026, 18:36 BST

repeat again the steps taken to ask Hames QC for an opinion

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 18:36 BST

Pulling the minute trail and laying out the Hames instruction steps in order.

Law Historian

13 Sep 2026, 18:37 BST

Steps to instruct Hames Q.C. (from Conservators' minutes)

1. **6 November 1974** (Wimbledon) — Board discusses Conservators' **management powers** under the **Mitcham Common Act 1891**. Resolves that the **Clerk** obtain **Counsel's Opinion** "on a number of points in order to clarify the position." (Chairman then: G.W. Pearce J.P.)
2. **Clerk prepares a written Case to Counsel** — not pasted into the minutes; we only know from later reference that a Case existed.
3. **Consultation with Mr J.H. Hames Q.C.** — Chairman and Clerk attend. Counsel asks for **further information**; that is supplied. (Reported at the next step.)
4. **26 February 1975** (Wallington) — Clerk reports the consultation. Board is told the Opinion is hoped for **end of March 1975**, to be **circulated to members**, with a **special meeting** to consider it. (By now G. Watt is Chairman.)
5. **Spring–summer 1975 gap** — No special-meeting minutes found; May 1975 meeting appears absent from the bound volume. July 1975 only approves the February minutes.