

**MINUTES of the 577<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS  
held on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at Banstead Centre, The Horseshoe, Banstead.**

**Present:** Mr. J Peacock Chairman  
Mr. J McCrae  
Cllr. R Mantle  
Mr. J Milner Clerk  
Mr. R Knights Warden

Also present were Colin Sutherland (PRRA) and Alan Higgs (Banstead Downs Golf Club).

**Part 1**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Mr. J Mill, Cllr. V Broad, Mr. D Atkins and Mr. N Cull.

**3. Minutes of last Meeting**

The minutes were agreed as circulated and signed by the chairman.

**4 Matters Arising**

**i. Environmental Stewardship**

- a. **Grazing/Cut & Collect.** John Peacock reported an astonishing difference on areas cut and grazed on Park Downs this year. Areas that had been cut and collected and then grazed by the sheep were definitely proving to be better. The cutting to different regimes on Peacock's Field is continuing and one area of Park Downs which had previously received attention from Surrey Wildlife Trust is now a bit of a jungle and needs re-thinking.
- b. **Natural England.** There has been no specific contact with Natural England during the last three months in respect of Higher Level Stewardship Agreement.

ii. **Travis Perkins** – There was nothing further to report on this topic and a response will be pursued from RBBC.

iii. **Summer Walks** – The Conservators summer walk on Banstead Heath had taken place on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July by 4 Conservators along with 5 members of the public. This had been quite successful with several areas being looked at. The remaining walk is on Burgh Heath on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August.

iv. **Blocked Culvert Winkworth Road and Road Drainage onto Commons-** We still need to determine if we are going to insert a ditch or a bund on Banstead Downs to prevent any overflow from Winkworth Road from reaching SSSI during exceptional wet periods. Mark Howarth, the SCC Highways Engineer has been assigned a different area so we will be dealing with his replacement in respect of Sutton Land drainage. (SCC Cllr. Harrison could possibly be of assistance in this matter).

5. **125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Banstead Commons Conservators**

John Peacock has researched the minutes up to 1954 and has drafted two chapters together with an outline plan for a third. John McCrea would like to produce a chapter on the commons during the wars. John Peacock will now need another visit to the archives at Woking. John McCrea will also attend if available and Ralph Maciejewski will also be invited with a view to scanning the minutes for future reference.

6. **Warden's Report**

The Warden reported that the bracken is growing prolifically this year. This is for no particular reason except, perhaps, that the weather conditions are favourable for it. It has already been rolled and this will continue. Similarly there is no obvious reason for the appearance of Giant Hogweed but this has been dealt with and has now abated. Japanese Knotweed is not particularly bad but is growing in known locations and will be treated in September. Ragwort is also quite prevalent this year.

Staff have been busy making new benches and installing roadside posts to prevent unlawful vehicular access. There is wear and tear on and alongside paths where the grass is thin but overall the machinery is holding up well.

A discussion on coppicing followed with the Warden explaining that when some trees are cut down some will grow from the base, such as hazel, and others will die off. The intention is always for some to grow and others to die off.

7. **Forthcoming Events**

Burgh Heath Dog Show – Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2017

8. **Any Other Business**

- i. **RBBC** have asked if we have any objection to their seeking sponsorship of the Belmont roundabout which would consist of a small sign showing the name of the sponsoring company being in partnership with RBBC. The roundabout was taken out of the commons several years ago, although for reasons suiting RBBC it was agreed to leave it nominally as part of the commons. We therefore have no objection to the proposal.
- ii. **Trees on the Common alongside Downs Road** are beginning to interfere with large vehicles travelling down the road. London Borough of Sutton are asking when we will trim them (even though they no longer pay us a small grant). As we are not equipped for dealing with trees along main roads, particularly where they would require a road closure as in this instance, the Clerk has asked RBBC if they would be willing to take on the task as they have done on previous occasions. Mark Jolley has agreed to get someone to look at the situation and report back.
- iii. **A217 Drainage Improvements on the Mad Mile** are nearing completion and there was a thought that SCC have done more than they had planned. The Clerk had spoken to Dave Piercy, the SCC Highways Engineer in charge of the project and such is not the case. However, the Clerk and Warden will visit the site next week with a view to ensuring compliance with the original plans and reporting any aspects that need further attention.

- iv. **Greenacre School** is merging with two other schools and will be known as Banstead Prep School. They have requested permission to use the triangle of common at the rear of the school for Level Three Forest School Leader Training. No extra charge was being levied on pupils taking the course in addition to their usual school fees.

After discussion it was determined that they could use the commons anyway providing they complied with our Byelaws but not to the exclusion of other users of the commons. A copy of the Byelaws will be forwarded to them and they will also be advised that unlawful drugs paraphernalia have been found in the area from time to time so extreme care should be taken not to expose children to such dangers.

9.

**Date of the Next Meetings**

21<sup>st</sup> October 2017