

**MINUTES of the 573rd Meeting of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS
held on Saturday 16th July 2016 at Banstead Centre, The Horseshoe, Banstead.**

Present: Mr. J Peacock Chairman
Mr. J Mill
Mr. N Cull,
Mr. J McCrae
Mr. J Milner Clerk
Mr. R Knights Warden

Also present was Linda Mount – Birds & Flowers,

Part 1

The chairman welcomed John McCrae and congratulated him on his appointment as a Conservator.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr. V Broad, Cllr. R Mantle, Mr D Atkins, Cllr. J Clarke.

2. Minutes of last Meeting

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

3. Matters Arising

i. Environmental Stewardship

- a. **Grazing/Cut & Collect.** The grazing on Park Downs last winter is showing benefits and will be repeated again this year but starting at the end of August. The shepherdess has indicated her willingness to participate so we will follow the same format as last year, i.e. we will purchase the sheep and she will accept full responsibility for them, there will be no payment to her but the sheep will cede to her ownership at the end of the grazing period. During this period the sheep will also graze the same area on Banstead Downs as they did last winter as well as the area of the old cricket pitch. Cut and collect will take place on areas not grazed.
- b. **Natural England.** There has been no specific contact with Natural England during the last three months but we have received the first tranche of the 2016 fee.

- ii. **Travis Perkins** – Enquiries to be made with Alan Parr, RBBC, to see if this issue has moved on. Clerk to speak to Cllr. Broad. Also mention that the access drive is part of the common and may be used as a negotiating factor.

- iii. **Summer Walks** – Two have been completed and there are two more scheduled for August and September. More may be arranged depending on demand.

Tuesday 7th June 2016 – Banstead Downs. Meet halfway along High Down Road.

Tuesday 5th July 2016 – Park Downs. Meet at Holly Lane Car Park.

Tuesday 2nd August 2016 – Banstead Heath. Meet at Mill Road Notice Board.

Tuesday 6th September 2016 – Burgh Heath. Meet at the Notice Board by the pond.

- vi **Blocked Culvert Winkworth Road.**

Enquiry to be made with SCC Highways to see what if anything has been done as John Peacock saw them working in this area recently. Residents of The Warren have also highlighted pooling at the junction with A217. Although not strictly a BCC issue, water being directed off the junction will invariably be onto the common.

4. **Warden's Report**

The Warden reported that due to exceptional weather conditions a lot of time was being spent in cutting grass and vegetation but there were areas that, because of the wetness of the ground, heavy machinery could not access. Work completed earlier in the year on bracken rolling is paying dividends as the bracken is now under better control than usual.

Sheep pens are being erected on Park Downs in anticipation of grazing commencing in late August and the fly tipping problem seems to have moved to the Nork area.

John Peacock asked that the congratulations of the Conservators to the Warden and Keepers be recorded. The commons are looking exceptionally good and, bearing in mind there are only three of them, their hard work is very much appreciated and showing value for money.

5. **Burgh Heath Notices**

Following the Preston Regeneration and Burgh Heath Management Plan RBBC have some money left in the budget and would like to place interpretation boards on Burgh Heath. They suggested an A3 board by each of the four ponds and an A1 board at both ends of the new path. These would be educational and informative and give an overview of Heathland, particularly Burgh Heath, as well as information on wildlife and flowers in the area. They also suggested indicative walking routes with wayfinding signage.

The Conservators agreed that such interpretation boards would be acceptable on Burgh Heath on condition that RBBC maintained them to a good presentational standard and that BCC are able to preview and approve the information they will carry. Only the ponds by The Green and Chetwode Road should be included as the other two are away from distinct footpaths and there is no reason to disturb them.

6. **Banstead Pedestrian Cycle Route**

Due mainly to difficulties for pedestrian and cyclists crossing at Banstead Cross Roads on their journey from Banstead High Street area to the Railway Station an

alternative route is being sought. This alternative link includes the push button crossing across the A217 near Burgh Wood, Green Curve, Eastgate and then across the common where two tarmac footpaths already exist. SCC would like to upgrade and widen the path surfaces, preferably with tarmac, and would increase the number of street lights. The proposal is that the upgrades would be undertaken using a section 38 Commons Act, 2006, application for works.

After considerable discussion the Conservators determined that this was very similar to the path across Burgh Heath under the Preston Regeneration Scheme and that this path also cannot be relayed and enhanced. Both paths should therefore be taken out of the commons and replaced with land elsewhere.

(A further aggravating factor is that we already have problems with fly tipping in this area and to widen and enhance the footpaths would make them more accessible to tippers vehicles).

N.B. SCC still owe us 75 square yards for the works on the railway bridge just south of Tadworth roundabout.

7. Forthcoming Events

Burgh Heath Dog Show – Sunday 31st July 2016

8. Any Other Business

- i. RBBC have written to residents of both tracks at Withybed Corner with a proposal to maintain the tracks in return for an agreed annual payment by all residents. The cut-off date for responses is 1st August 2016.
- ii. RBBC has taken the treatment of Japanese Knotweed in-house and trained personnel accordingly. Richard Knights to provide details of patches of Knotweed requiring treatment which will be added to RBBC's list.
- iii. Clerk to enquire into status of 'forest school' that has requested permission to take children onto commons and build a shelter in case of inclement weather. It is thought 'forest schools' are a commercial organisation.

9. Date of the Next Meetings

15th October 2016