

**MINUTES of the 579th Meeting of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS
held on Saturday 20th January 2018 at The Banstead Centre, The Horseshoe, Banstead.**

Present: Mr. J Peacock Chairman
Mr. J McCrae
Cllr. R Mantle
Mr. J Mill
Cllr. V Broad
Mr. D Atkins
Mr. J Milner Clerk
Warden

Also present were Gillian Hein (Tadworth & Walton RA), Ralph Maciejewski (NRA), Alan Sherren (Burgh Heath RA), George Curry (Tadworth & Walton) and David Gradidge,(BVRA).

Part 1

1. Apologies for Absence

Mr. N Cull

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 sheep have now been moved from Park Downs to Banstead Downs where they are in a much larger pen. They are making some impact but not as good as that on Park downs.

John Peacock submitted a paper on 'Peacock's Field – restoration of arable field to chalk grassland'. The paper discussed the improvement in the sward and flora after 3 strips had been cut once, twice and three times a year respectively. The conclusion was that multiple cutting does accelerate the disappearance of coarse grasses but as yet this has not been associated with a dramatic increase in herbage. The few areas where the rabbits have grazed suggest that the field should now be included in our grazing regime from 2019 on, whether with continued cutting needs to be decided.

- 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** – This issue is still being pursued by Steve McLeod, RBBC. The Clerk will liaise further with him.

- iii. **Summer Walks** – It was agreed that the dates for summer walks for 2018 will be;

Banstead Downs – Tuesday 1st May - meeting at Highdown Road at 6.00pm
Park Downs – Tuesday 5th June – meeting at Holley Lane car park at 6.00pm
Banstead Heath – Tuesday 3rd July – meeting at Mill Road notice board at 6.00pm
Burgh Heath – Tuesday 7th August – meeting at the pond at 6.00pm

Members of the public and local Residents Associations will be invited to attend.

4. 125th Anniversary of Banstead Commons Conservators

Most of the chapters have been written together with some photographs and the chairman needs to speak to Ralph Maciejewski to determine the format required for publication.

5. Warden's Report

The Warden reported that the inclement weather is hampering operations to some extent although the staff are being kept busy with other duties. There are areas of the commons where it is undesirable to take heavy equipment at the moment as the ground would cut up quite badly. The scrub having been reduced on Park Downs has been beneficial and is now showing a big improvement to the common. There is still some fly tipping taking place, mostly Christmas trees and garden rubbish, and the lack of foliage on the trees tends to make any tipping stand out more.

6. Forthcoming Events

None reported.

7. Any Other Business

- i. **Burgh Heath Signage** – Plans for signage on Burgh Heath as a result of the surveys in connection with the Preston Regeneration Scheme had been circulated to members. The plans were discussed and the members views on suitability and amendments will be forwarded to RBBC.
- ii. **Planting of Trees on The Green, Tadworth** – Residents of Tadworth had requested permission to plant trees on The Green, partly in support of their tree planting project and partly to muffle road noise from the adjacent houses. After discussion it was determined that permission would not be granted as the area should maintain its village green aspect, trees would hinder grass cutting and to limit road noise the branches would need to be low enough to effectively form a hedge.
- iii. **RBBC Tender for Fishing Rights** – The Conservators agreed to a request from RBBC to include the pond on Burgh Heath in a tender, together with Woodhatch Lake and water at Horley, for a private fishing club. The council already hold the piscatorial rights for the pond and it was thought that the presence of an organised club might eliminate the regular outbreaks of social disorder by those fishing illegally in the pond.

- iv. **Notice Board in Sutton Lane** – David Gradidge pointed out that there were no notices on the board in Sutton Lane.
- v. **Water Pooling in Sutton Lane** – The chairman had been informed that a member of the public had reported to SCC Highways water pooling in Sutton Lane due to blocked drains. The response he received was that they filled up with mud flowing off the commons and that they had no money to keep them open and they can't do anything about it. John Peacock will provide details to the Clerk for further investigation.
- vi. **The Mere Pond** - was low on water and did not seem to have the flow of previous years. Cllr Curry and Cllr Broad had visited the area and, although not totally within Banstead Common, the Warden was able to call on his local knowledge and give some reasons why the flow of water may have ceased or been diverted.
- vii. **Dog Litter Bins** – Cllr Curry enquired about the policy in relation to dog litter bins and the reasons for their not being on the commons was explained to him. Some of the RBBC litter bins will now accept wrapped dog poo and notices to that effect will be placed on them.
- viii. **The Bench at Chapel Road Pond** has been removed, having for a time been in the pond, and David Atkins reported that elderly people who regularly used it were in need of somewhere to sit.

8.

Date of the Next Meetings

21st April 2018

21st July 2018

20th October 2018