

**MINUTES of the 575th Meeting of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS
held on Saturday 21st January 2017 at Banstead Centre, The Horseshoe, Banstead.**

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

Also present were G Hein (TWRA), R Maciejewski (NRA), D Gradidge (BVRA).

Part 1

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr. J Clarke and P P Sherrin (Burgh Heath RA)

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 had grazed three pens on Park Downs and were now grazing a pen on Banstead Heath. The chairman commented that this spring and summer we should be able to see if they are making a difference or not.

b. **Natural England.** There has been no specific contact with Natural England during the last three months in respect of Higher Level Agreement although we have received the second tranche of the grant.

ii. **Travis Perkins** – Having been served with a Community Protection Notice Travis Perkins have now formally agreed to cooperate in resolving the issues. They have now instructed a boundary surveyor to prepare a report on the encroachment. RBBC will let us know the outcome.

iii. **Summer Walks** – It was agreed that summer walks for 2017 would take place on the first Tuesdays in May, June, July and August:

Tuesday May 2nd – Banstead Downs

Tuesday June 6th – Park Downs

Tuesday July 4th – Banstead Heath

Tuesday August 1st – Burgh Heath.

Catalina Vassellbonner will be asked to circulate these details through the Residents association federation.

iv. **Blocked Culvert Winkworth Road** - John Peacock and Richard Knights had attended the site with SCC Highways and identified and unblocked culverts. The ditches were cleared with the result that water and the rubbish it brings is now flowing onto the common. There is a free flow of water which is downhill and is spreading out towards the SSI and leaving a trail of sludge. There has not been a real rain storm since the culverts and ditches were cleared so the full effect is not yet known. Highways say maintenance of these areas is the landowner's responsibility but there may be an argument against that view. We could try to contain it with a small bank or a filter lagoon and there will be a need to clear debris from the traps, but whose responsibility is it? Richard Knights mentioned a similar issue where water drains off the A217 near the Pobjoy Mint and then ran downhill into buildings and SCC wish to investigate the A217 just south of Burgh Heath traffic lights, so they are probably looking to drain water onto the common from there. There are also issues with road water draining onto commons at Sutton Lane and Park Road. It was considered that we should identify and list all similar areas of the commons onto which road water is drained. Assess the problem and possible solutions and implement solutions through RBBC and/or SCC Highways. We also need to check our insurance to see if BCC are covered for claims by third parties in such instances and write to local SCC Councillor Ken GULATI with a copy to John FURY apprising them of the situation and involving them in possible solutions.

v. **Pedestrian & Cycle Connection from Banstead High Street to Railway Station** – Our request that if this plan goes ahead the area around the footpaths near Banstead Railway Station be taken out of the commons and replaced elsewhere had been passed to Justin Chatfield. An acknowledgement has been received but nothing further.

vi. **SCC Highway Works on A217** – The first phase has been completed inasmuch as the trees have been cut back on both sides of the road and the path by the side of the southbound carriageway reinstated. Two different drains have been inserted to see which is more efficient and the next steps will be to put in the chosen drains and then resurface the road.

4. SCC Drainage of Roads onto Commons

Included in item 3(iv) above.

5. 125th Anniversary of Banstead Commons Conservators

As the intention is to document our history John Peacock and John McCrear had visited the archives at Woking and collated a lot of material. They had already photographed the first ten years of our history and assistance was offered by Ralph Maciejewski in digitising these and other records. Work will continue along these lines to collect information and photographs for inclusion in an historical document.

6. Warden's Report

The Warden reported that there had been vehicles illegally driving on the commons. Despite the banks being in good order one had found its way on but had failed to get off and had now been removed.

The sheep had grazed Park Downs and were now on Banstead Downs and there had been no problems whatsoever this time.

Fly tipping still continues but it is not as serious as on past occasions.

Shrub clearance this winter has been across all four commons rather than concentrating on one as we did when clearing Banstead Downs. There were a couple of trees brought down by the weight of snow but our policy of cutting ivy from trees,

particularly at roadsides, is paying dividends as there were far more trees down on other sites.

Despite not being paid by English Heritage work had continued on the monument sites and some trees taken down but there is still a hedge barrier to try to prevent horse riders from getting in.

In answer to a question the Warden confirmed that Body Cameras are worn but not all of the time. They can get in the way and be damaged during some manual work but are fitted when there is a possibility of confrontation.

Another question was raised as a result of the work we do on the World War I and II trenches; should we be seeking suitable PR for our maintenance of them?

7. **Forthcoming Events**

No forthcoming events had been notified.

8. **Any Other Business**

- I. **Chinthurst School** – A request had been received that the school be allowed to put a gate in their hedge near the swimming pool so that children did not have to use the main entrance which was used for vehicles. Inevitably that would mean crossing the common on foot. No objection was raised to them doing so but it was noted that any future suggestion to lay a track may not be approved.
- II. **Pfizers Voluntary Service** - Gillian Hein mentioned this group who were looking for suitable tasks and might be useful to BCC. We have previously been approached by them but their requirements are generally too great inasmuch as they require toilets near the site on which they are working, they do not have tools, we cannot afford the time to supervise them and we do not carry insurance for them to work on the commons. Richard Knights had previously suggested to them that Surrey County Council might employ them on Rights of Way tracks as they were a much bigger organisation who could cover insurance, supervision etc.
- III. **Burgh Heath Track** – Gillian also mentioned that people using the track across Burgh Heath were crossing the Reigate Road at the point the track emerged onto the road rather than using the crossing further up. Some were mothers with pushchairs and it is a very dangerous practise. This had been foreseen and pointed out at the planning stage but no heed had been taken. The Clerk will write to SCC and RBBC.
- IV. **Path to Banstead Station** – Ralph Maciejewski said that the footpath was in need of the vegetation trimming back and trees taken down. This location was different from others as there was a lot of fly tipping in the area and to open it up is likely to encourage more tipping. Consideration will be given to what might be done in this area.

9. **Date of the Next Meetings**

22nd April 2017 (Easter intervenes on 3rd Saturday).

15th July 2017

21st October 2017