



**Meeting 590 of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS  
held on Saturday 16 January 2021**

---

**MINUTES – Part 1**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr. J Peacock, Chairman Mr. J Mill Mr. D Atkins Cllr. N Moses Cllr. P Harp	Dr. W Bellenger Mr. V Broad Mrs. L Shea, Clerk Warden
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mr. N Cull	
<b>Public Gallery:</b>	<a href="#">Cllr Mark Brunt</a> <a href="#">Cllr Jill Bray</a> Ian Mockford, <a href="#">Tattenham &amp; Preston Resident Association</a> Gillian Hein, Tadworth Residents Association Richard McGreevy David Talbot Banstead Village Residents Miriam Maxim, Banstead Heath Consultative Group Sally Knight	Ralph Maciejewski, Nork Residents Jackie and Rob Sexton - neighbours of Park Downs Juliet Quartermain Jean Clew, Banstead Heath Consultative Group Bob Welfare - Belmont Resident Arrun Sutherland - Belmont and South Cheam Resident's Association (BSCRA)

### 1. Minutes of last meeting, matters arising

Signed.

**Resurfacing of the footpath leading from Hatch Gardens on to Burgh Heath.** Consent given, work commencing mid-January. Contractors are Marshalls.

### 2. Clerk's report

**H&S update.** Other than COVID, there are no health & safety concerns to report.

**Tadworth Cricket Pitch.** The issuing licenses to Tadworth Cricket Club and Chinthurst – to be covered in item 4.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding** to improve the area around the entrance of Burgh Heath, Chetwode Road, including Lonesome Ponds. The Clerk and Warden met with Cllrs Harp and Harper at the end of October. A project proposal was submitted which included the clearance of vegetation, woodland ride management and pond weed clearance. Due to the presence of the Great Crested Newt the Conservators connected with [SARG](#) to ensure due diligence and that work enhanced the area for the benefit of resident wildlife, as well as people.

Project proposal was approved by local councillors in December. Work at the site has commenced.

**Community Engagement.** 817 Facebook followers, 45 on Twitter. Due to Covid no further work has been done regarding the guided walks, these are simple to promote and organise at short notice. Walton on the Hill May Day Fair has been cancelled. BCC would be happy to give a virtual talk to any of the Resident Associations, covering background of the Commons and Conservators and the natural and cultural history of the Commons – liaise with Clerk. Currently looking at getting our website redesigned.

**Thank you to the local litter picking volunteers.** Acknowledgment of and thanks given to all those who help to clear litter from the Commons. Whilst it has been fabulous to see more people



discover the Commons during lockdown, fly-tipping and litter has increased greatly. The team are very appreciative for the support we get from our local communities.

Cllr Bray noted the lack of awareness of the Banstead Commons Conservators. Residents Associations would be happy to include an article in newsletters and websites.

**Action:** BCC to submit articles for the local RA newsletters. **Who:** Clerk

### 3. Warden's report

Cut and collect on all the sites were able to be completed. We continue to deal with trees suffering from Ash Die-back, a problem that will be continue for quite a while. The lockdowns have led to a dramatic increase in footfall on all the Commons. Whilst it is great that more people discover the Commons that has brought its own problems especially with litter and trampling. The recent very wet weather has not helped. Social distancing means that our activities are often affected in that we may have to stop work to allow people to pass.

**Action:** Warden to write report for inclusion in TWRA newsletter. **Who:** Warden

### 4. Meeting with Officers at Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

Cllr Bramhall requested that BCC contact **Greenspaces Team** to discuss our work; Chair and Clerk met with Officers Lee Wilcox and David Watts from the Green Spaces Team. At the meeting the role of the Conservators was discussed and Greenspaces have committed to regular walks on the Common and will report back to Cllr Bramhall.

Chair, Clerk and Conservator David Atkins met with Jo Stilwell from **Property Services** in January to discuss licenses in relation to a proposal for a mobile trader to operate on Banstead Heath and Tadworth Cricket Club and Chinthurst School. RBBC view is that as they own the commons only they are entitled issue licences and charge rent to groups and organisations operating on the Commons. However RBBC would do so in conjunction with us and include details and regulations from our Act.

The proposed practice pitches were mentioned at the meeting, Jo S highlighted they may be subject to section 38 of the Commons Act and may need to contact the Secretary of State.

Cllr Brunt highlighted that without BCC the maintenance could not be achieved and gave thanks. Regarding revenue from licenses, RBBC would issue the license and collect fee however they could issue a grant to ensure any revenue from licenses issued on the Commons was returned to the Conservators for conservation and land management.

Cllr Brunt committed to twice yearly meetings with BCC and acknowledged that RBBC was not able to manage Banstead Commons and the Council is incredibly grateful for the hard work.

**Action:** BCC to organise bi-yearly zoom meeting and a guided walk on the Common with Cllr Brunt. **Who:** John P/Clerk

### 5. Tadworth Cricket Club (TCC) proposal

TCC's proposal to lay two AstroTurf practices pitches and a similar all weather playing strip adjacent to the square on the Common was suggested by the RBBC to as prohibited work and come under Section 38 of the 2006 Commons Act and would therefore require approval from the Secretary of State.

V Broad mentioned that the area of land could be used by any club. The Square was set aside for cricket.

It was suggested a meeting is organised with TCC, Reigate and Banstead Council and BCC to discuss the viability of the proposals.

**Action:** Organise a meeting with Tadworth Cricket Club, Reigate and Banstead Council and Banstead Commons Conservators. **Who:** Clerk



## 6. Pond Management on Burgh Heath, SARG report

Met with Kevin Morgan at end of Nov to address aspects of Pond Management at Burgh Heath associated with the CIL grant. SARG happy with the project proposal that we submitted and gave advice on clearance of invasive species from Lonesome Pond.

SARG also recommended we apply for further funding to carry out the following:

- Desilt Lonesome ponds and sheepwash pond
- Construct additional pond in the open glade to the SW of Sheep Wash Pond
- Carry out regular GCN surveys, recruit and train local volunteers
- Consider erecting a fence around one or both ponds.

All the above suggestions were highlighted in the RBBC ecological survey carried out in 2013 in relation to the Preston Estate Regeneration.

David A acknowledged that there is a contract in place with Horley Piscatorial Society. John P confirmed that we would liaise with Horley Piscatorial Society, although no works were planned at Burgh Heath Pond (the main pond).

Cllr Bray would encourage the Conservators to apply for further grants from the CIL for a second phase of habitat management work in the area, which would include pond works.

**Action:** Organise meeting with Cllr Bray and Warden to discuss stage 2 of works. **Who:** Clerk

## 7. Christmas Tree at Nork

Cllr Harp asked if BCC would permit the local community to install Christmas lights next year on a pine tree on the commons (Banstead Downs) at the junction of Fir Tree Road and Nork Way (ie opposite the Co-Op). This pine tree is a modern replanting of the fir trees planted, we believe c1740, to denote the edge of the Nork Estate, and which gave their name to Fir Tree Road. It has been suggested that rather than feed electricity off the proximal streetlamp or cctv mast, it could use LEDs powered by a battery pack.

The Conservators unanimously voted in favour of the idea of LED lights on the tree at Christmas.

**Action:** Confirm agreement with Nork Business Guild. **Who:** Cllr Peter Harp

## 8. AOB

John M thanked Cllr Mark Brunt for attending and invited him to join a walk on the Common. Invitation accepted.

Cllr Bray asked if there was scope for volunteer groups on the Commons. Idea to be developed further by the Conservators.

John P raised the **Cancer hub at Belmont** and the proposed road changes around Downs Road and Banstead Park & Ride at Banstead Station. BCC would like to confirm that the Conservators would be against all proposals.

David Talbot, Chair BVRA, mentioned that Belmont and South Cheam Residents Association Neighbourhood Development Plan has been submitted to the BVRA and in it, it is suggested BCC are supportive of the plan. Latest draft has just been released. Arran Sutherland offered to connect John P with the Chair of the Belmont & South Cheam Residents Association, Peter Matthey.

David Atkins highlighted feedback from Tadworth residents and suggested we organise a guided walk for local residents. The role of the Banstead Heath Consultative Group mentioned, encourage participation from the RAs at future meetings.

Gillian Hein highlighted the ambition for the RAs to assist BCC with fundraising. BCC to write article for next newsletter. Friends of Group is currently being considered by BCC.

Cllr Brunt highlighted the Borough Magazine, especially if we were to launch a Friends Group.



**Action:**

Relevant articles to be submitted to RA publications.

**Who:**

John P/Clerk

**Dates of 2021 meetings:**

- 17 April 2021
- 17 July 2021
- 16 October 2021



**Meeting 591 of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS  
held on Saturday 17 April 2021**

---

**MINUTES – Part 1**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr. J Peacock, Chairman	Cllr. P Harp
	Mr. N Cull	Mr. V Broad
	Mr. D Atkins	Mrs. L Shea, Clerk
	Cllr. N Moses	Warden

---

**Apologies:** Mr. J Mill

**Public** [Cllr Mark Brunt](#)

Bob Welfare

**Gallery:** [Cllr Jill Bray](#)

Lindsay Cole, Kingswood Village  
Community Association

Ian Mockford, [Tattenham & Preston](#)

John Darter

[Resident Association](#)

Peter Matthey, Chairman, Belmont,  
South Sutton and South Cheam

Gillian Hein, Tadworth Residents  
Association

Neighbourhood Forum

David Talbot Banstead Village Residents

Miriam Maxim, Banstead Heath

Consultative Group

### **1. Election of Chairman**

John Peacock was nominated as chairman for the forthcoming year by Nick Cull and seconded by Vic Broad. The vote was in his favour and John Peacock was duly elected.

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council are currently receiving applications for Conservators, closing date end of July and election at Executive Meeting on 24 June.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

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

### **3. Matter's arising**

The issues with the temporary surface which RBBC laid on the track at The Green in Tadworth are ongoing and still a cause of concern to local residents. Cllr Mark Brunt suggested Cllr Harp and Moses follow up with portfolio holders Cllr. Dan Jones and Tim Archer.

Public Guided Walk dates have been confirmed and will be advertised shortly.

**Action:**

Cllrs Harp and Moses to make further enquiries regarding the track on The Green.

**Who:**

Cllr Harp and Moses.

Circulate guided walk promotional text once confirmed.

Clerk

### **4. CIL Funding Bid NW94 – clearance and habitat management on Burgh Heath**

The recent local improvement project to be funded by the Council's Community Infrastructure Fund (CIL) Funding Bid was approved by the local Council. The Conservators will receive £15,880 to carry out improvement works on Burgh Heath. Works will commence this year and will be carried out over an 18-month period.

Cllr. Bray shared pictures of the Chetwode Road entrance of Burgh Heath and expressed concern regarding the erosion of the bund. John P and Warden to meet Cllr. Bray on site to discuss remodelling of the bank.

**Action:**

Clerk to organise a site meeting at Burgh Heath Chetwode Road entrance.

**Who:**

Clerk



### **Withybed Corner proposal**

Residents at Withybed Corner have written to advise that the public access track which is maintained by RBBC is in a poor state of repair due to heavy vehicles' usage. They would like to the Conservators to introduce new restrictions to prohibit heavy goods vehicles using the track. A discussion related to the historical issues with the track was had, including a suggested land exchange to remove the track from the common, which was declined by RBBC at the time. It was decided that the suggestion was impractical and could make life difficult for residents in the future.

**Action:**

Clerk to send Conservators response to local residents.

**Who:**

Clerk

### **5. Tadworth Cricket Club proposal**

Jo Stilwell at RBBC is producing a licence for Chinthurst School and Tadworth Cricket Club however they have not produced paperwork yet. The Club would like a definitive decision regarding the three artificial pitches. Chair took advice from the Open Spaces Society it was suggested that under section 16 of our Act the term 'free of all encroachment' would imply the works are illegal. The 2006 Commons Act insists that any sports facilities on common land can only be temporary. If the Conservators refuse to allow the works the Cricket Club could appeal directly to the Secretary of State under section 38/39 of the 2006 Act. Chairman received a letter from the Club yesterday (16 April), they advised that the Club is aware of the legal obligations of the Conservators and would like to organise a meeting to address a possible way forward. Suggested course of action is to write to the Cricket Club informing them that we view the works as prohibited under the commons act and we welcome a meeting with the three parties (RBBC, Tadworth Cricket Club and BCC) to discuss the license, their proposal and future relationship.

**Action:**

Chairman to respond to Cricket Club and accept the meeting invitation.

**Who:**

Chairman

### **6. Annual report**

Annual report was circulated to the Conservators. This year was overshadowed by the pandemic. Chairman noted that following Brexit our Rural Payment Agency funding will be phased out over the next few years. Two weeks ago, the new Sustainable Farming Incentive to replace it was launched. Pilot scheme starts this year, the full scheme will start in March 2022 when funding criteria will be heavily directed towards changing farming practices. Unfortunately, Common Land applications are excluded until 2024. Cllr. Mark Brunt has agreed to meet with BCC to discuss future funding.

Peter Matthey highlighted London Borough of Sutton CIL money for improvements on Banstead Commons and offered to provide contact details of local Councillors.

### **7. Warden's report**

The Warden reported that spring is normally the quietest time a year when the focus is on maintaining banks and ditches, posts and general security on the Commons. Ash Die-Back is widespread on Banstead Commons and the team are prioritising the felling of trees that are likely to cause damage, injury or obstruction to roads, people or property. In some areas we have combined forces with the Greenspaces Team at Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (outside Chinthurst and on Dorking Road) to work on stands and individual trees which are beyond our resources, either due to the road network or the risk the tree works pose to neighbouring properties. Footfall on the commons is much higher due to the pandemic. Some visitors of the Commons continue to ignore the safety signage when erected during tree safety works on the Heath – on one occasion someone cut through the safety tape. The team take pictures of taped off areas and signage before the works start. CIL funding NW92 work at Burgh Heath was



completed this winter, final task is the pond clearance, which will be carried out late summer. Grass cutting season will commence soon.

Miriam M, gave thanks to Richard for maintaining the Commons.

## 8. AOB

1. **Dog Walkers Leaflet** – due to the unprecedented increase of dog walkers on the commons Nick Cull shared the draft Dog Walkers Leaflet that was developed previously. David Atkins circulated the National Trust Dog Walkers Code poster. Nick Cull will update existing leaflet and circulate at July meeting.
2. Local habitat improvements at Tadworth was raised by David Atkins. Local resident John Darter has suggested the common and Tadworth could be improved along the stretch of Mere Road south of the Tadworth crossroad, suggested work includes the scrub and deadwood clearance to increase the diversity of ground flora. Would like the Tadworth sign to be cleared. Warden highlighted it is the job of the Council to clear the sign. Cllr. Bray suggested BCC could submit a CIL bid for improvement works. It was suggested this item is held until after the removal of the ash this year (planned for July/Aug) which will significantly change the area.
3. The Coach parked on Mill Road was raised by TWRA. The coach is legal and is still in place, the police and RBBC JET enforcement team are monitoring.
4. Peter Matthey who is Chairman, Belmont, South Sutton and South Cheam Neighbourhood Forum addressed the Belmont and South Cheam Residents Association Neighbourhood Development Plan which was discussed at January's quarterly meeting. Discussion was related to the issues surrounding the London Cancer Hub and the traffic movements in the area and the widening of Downs Road and re-routing the road behind the cottages. In 2016 the request to widen Downs Road was approved by BCC, however plans did not progress further than Sutton Council who wouldn't support the land exchange. Peter will write up proposal and send to the Clerk for consideration.

### Action:

Nick Cull to update Dog Walkers leaflet and circulate prior to July meeting.

Peter Matthey to provide project proposal to the Conservators.

### Who

Nick Cull

Peter Matthey

**Meeting closed at 12.10pm**

### Dates of 2021 meetings:

- 17 July 2021
- 16 October 2021

Belmont and South Cheam Residents Association Neighbourhood Development Plan





**Meeting 592 of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS  
held on Saturday 17 July 2021**

---

**MINUTES – Part 1**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr. J Peacock, Chairman Mr. D Atkins Cllr. N Moses Cllr. P Harp	Mr. V Broad Mr. J Mill Mrs. L Shea, Clerk Warden
<b>Apologies:</b>	Nick Cull	
<b>Public</b>	David Talbot, Banstead Residents	Shaida Dorabjee, Local Resident
<b>Gallery:</b>	Association Ian Mockford, Tattenham & Preston Residents Association Paul Stevenson, Banstead Heath Consultative Group	

### 1. Minutes of the last meeting

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

### 2. Matters arising

**Natural England** carried out a site visit on Banstead Heath, Park Downs and Banstead Downs as the grant is coming to an end this year. Natural England's North Downs team visited Banstead Heath in the morning and met with John P, warden & clerk at Park Downs in the afternoon. Current grants that are replacing stewardship grants are directed at farms (as is the replacement for single farm payment), there is however a pot of money to extend current grant for another two years. If Natural England circulate a report on their visits, it was recognised that it should be shared with RBBC.

John M acknowledged the efforts of Richard and the team for their hard work.

**Public Engagement** – Three of our four Guided Walks have been held: two over Banstead Heath and one on Park Downs. Fully booked within two weeks – c. £250 raised in donations.

Four articles have been submitted to each of the Residents Association newsletters.

John P gave a talk to Banstead Horticultural Society and talks to the Burgh Heath & Banstead Resident Associations are planned for later this year.

**Social Media** Nadean M highlighted that we now have 927 followers of our Facebook Page and more people are sharing and commenting on posts.

Vic B would like us to raise awareness of our statutory obligations with the local community and Council.

**Oak Processionary Moth** on Banstead Downs; Natural England have stated that on SSSI sites nests must be removed by hand. Due to absence of funding for such work, management of the tree pest has been handed back to RBBC as landowner.

**The Green at Tadworth.** Conservators David A, John P and the Clerk met with RBBC to discuss the track. BCC to research what materials have been used on similar tracks on other commons, contact was made with Wimbledon & Putney and Epping Common Conservators. As the status of the track is questionable, tripartite meeting with residents and RBBC to be scheduled to discuss the way forward. Wayleaves/Easements were mentioned. As landowners, RBBC can issue wayleaves to residents. The track is registered as footpath (91) and therefore maintenance of the footpath would be the responsibility of Highways.

**CIL funding bid** has been submitted for the replacement tractor at £26K.





**Banstead Downs Chalk Spoils.** PC Katie Jarrett was in touch with Peter H regarding the motorbikes on the Common. Letter of authorisation has been issued to Surrey Police to enable them to drive vehicles on the Common. Meeting to be arranged with JET Enforcement Team, Surrey Police and BCC – it was suggested we should invite Natural England enforcement team.

### **3. Warden's report**

Site management is going well. Managing a few breakdowns, tractor and Landrover. Grass is growing quickly due to the warm, wet weather and team concentrating on fire breaks and path cutting. Bracken control in-line with Natural England agreement, topping the bracken in compartments where there is more than 60%. Grassland Meadows will be cut in September. Flytipping hasn't been as bad in recent months, mainly garden waste/grass cuttings. RBBC spy camera has been parked on Mill Road which may be acting as a deterrent. Ash dieback work is on hold until summer tasks complete.

Ash trees at on the road outside Chinthurst School are being managed by RBBC (because of required road closures), works were scheduled for the summer holidays. Meeting with RBBC greenspaces scheduled for Thurs 22 July. List of Ash dieback trees has been sent to RBBC to be funded or managed directly.

### **4. AOB**

Nadean M. highlighted Banstead Village Residents Association article and gave thanks to the Clerk.

**Meeting closed at 10:30am**

#### **Dates of 2021 meetings:**

- 16 October 2021

**Banstead Commons Conservators is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

**Topic:** Banstead Commons Conservators - Quarterly Meeting, October 2021

**Time:** Oct 16, 2021 09:30 AM London

#### **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81678540599?pwd=ZE53TkxhbnpiZlFlU9JNDIIV3NBQT09>

**Meeting ID:** 816 7854 0599

**Passcode:** 985569



**Meeting 593<sup>rd</sup> of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS  
held at The Banstead Centre on Saturday 16 October 2021**

---

**MINUTES – Part 1**

**Present:** Mr. J Peacock, Chairman  
Cllr. N Moses  
Cllr. P Harp  
Mr. V Broad  
Mr. D Atkins

Mr. N Cull  
Mr. J Mill  
Mrs. L Shea, Clerk

---

**Apologies:** Warden

---

**Public** Closed meeting was held due to Covid.

**Gallery:**

**1. Minutes of the last meeting**

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

**2. Matters arising**

**The Green, Tadworth**

Tripartite meeting with local residents and RBBC was organised by BCC and held on Monday 6 September. Daniel Jones from the Property Services at RBBC led discussions and gave residents an opportunity to voice their concerns and explore solutions. Health & safety concerns regarding the current surface were raised and RBBC said that they would survey the site and respond to residents within a month. Residents were last updated again by email on 14/10. RBBC appointed an independent consultant to advise, taking into consideration drainage and common land restrictions on permanent surfaces. Recommendations are outstanding.

**Public Engagement** – End of guided walk programme, events raised £337.80 in donations to cover administration cost. Introducing a small fee also helps to confirm attendance.

Councillor walk held on Banstead Heath, Sunday 5 September. Attended by Cllrs. Moses, Harp, Bray, Turner, Bennett, Neame. Glorious weather on the day, the walk was led by John P and gave BCC an opportunity to raise awareness of our statutory duties, countryside management and discuss funding concerns.

John P gave a talk to Banstead Horticultural Society, £50 donation was given.

Clerk gave a talk to Burgh Heath Resident Association.

Talks planned for Banstead Rotary 19/10 and Banstead Village RA 21/10.

Similar programme of events to be planned for 2022, details to be circulated to the Conservators once confirmed.

**Memorial benches** – two memorial benches have been installed this quarter; one on Burgh Heath the other on Banstead Heath. Feedback received:

*"We walked over on Saturday morning and spent some time there. We are so pleased to see it back and the plaque in place. I have sent pictures to the family and everyone was excited to go and see it. Thanks again to you and your team. Best wishes for the future."*

**Social Media** 1031 followers on Facebook Page. 94 Twitter followers.

**Banstead Downs motorbikes & quads.** Following the continued concern of vehicles on the common, it was suggested by PC Katie Jarrett that we erect more signage at entrance by Downs Road (replace the faded sign) and by the Chalk Spoils. Signage has been authorised by Sargeant Wagjani. Clerk to instruct design company.

**Burgh Heath antisocial behaviour & vehicles on the common.** Antisocial behaviour continues to be a problem at Burgh Heath pond; a quad bike also frequents Burgh Heath regularly and rider has acted aggressively to visitors who have questioned their presence. Visitors have been advised to



call the Police at the time of the incident. It was suggested BCC install signage on Burgh Heath, as well as Banstead Downs.

**Conservator appointment.** Two applications were received. Appointment to be made at the Executive Meeting on 18 November, 2021.

**Encroachments.** We are currently dealing with three encroachments on Banstead Commons.

**Meeting with RBBC.** On 6 October J Peacock, J Mill, N Cull and L Shea attended a meeting with the Leader of the Council Cllr Brunt and Cllr Bramhall (Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services) and Schofield (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance) to discuss the future funding and relationship with BCC. BCC prepared and submitted a two-page statement prior to the meeting, see pages 4 & 5. It was disappointing to learn that despite our attempts to engage Cllr Bramhall and more recently the Greenspaces Team, apparently neither knew what work we do on Banstead Commons. It was requested that BCC provide a draft Service Level Agreement and a list of Statutory Duties to the Council and the group meet again in 4 weeks time. Subsequent meeting scheduled for Monday 8 November.

### 3. Warden's report

The team is in the midst of our cut and collect regime on Banstead Commons - we manage approx. 168 hectares of grassland, and as they'll be no grazing on Park Downs and Banstead Downs this year, we will be cut and collecting all areas. Some areas are on rotation. Unfortunately, our large tractor was taken of the road for a period to be repaired which has put us behind and this has been compounded by exceptional seasonal growth. Our small team have worked exceptionally hard in recent weeks to catch up. In the last 30 years, the warden can't remember a time we were so far behind with the cutting or a season with so much growth late in the season.

This winter we will continue to fell ash trees that have been identified. Trees that are beyond our control will be managed Greenspaces Team - Greenspaces have been awarded additional budget to manage ash dieback in the borough and the areas of Banstead Commons were included in the proposal. BCC to provide a list of trees with expected timescales.

There have been several instances of fly tipping which have been dealt with.

### 4. AOB

**David Atkins** raised the suitability of water cut gullies on public and permissive foot paths where the slopes are severe, eg at the top of the rise from the bottom of the Holden Bottom dry valley, to the top going south. Climate change means the deluges which do the damage are becoming more frequent. It was agreed this could help with path maintenance. David A to liaise with the warden to discuss viability and possibly trial water bars on Banstead Heath.

**David White** has been in touch to ask for the Conservators view on a replacement sign just past The Sportsman turn off, the current one is half buried by the undergrowth. It is the view of the Conservators that the track in question is a registered Highway, residents would need to liaise with Surrey County Council.

**Ann Dobson** noted the antisocial behaviour at Burgh Heath Pond and asked who is responsible for policing the fishing rights. Burgh Heath pond is considered an ephemeral pond. The landowner has Piscatorial rights (RBBC) and it is the Council's responsibility to stop illegal fishing at the pond.

**Meeting closed at 10:50am**

**Dates of 2022 meetings to be held at The Banstead Centre**  
15 January 2022; 16 April, 2022; 16 July, 2022; 15 October, 2022



## Banstead Commons Conservators - Future funding

### Background

#### The Commons

Park Downs, at 74 acres as well as being the smallest of the commons, it is also the quietest forming a south facing chalk slope to the north of Banstead Woods and is part of Chipstead Downs SSSI.

Banstead Downs, at 350 acres is an important open space both for its strategic importance as a buffer between suburban Sutton and Banstead Village, as a recreational area for residents of not only Banstead but also Sutton, Cheam and Carshalton and finally as an important chalk downland habitat being designated a SSSI in 1955.

Burgh Heath situated adjacent to the A217, is surrounded by high density housing including the new Preston estate, hence an important green outlet for locals as well a busy thoroughfare. Important for wildlife because of the four ponds.

Banstead Heath, at 550 acres is by far the largest common, important as wildlife habitat (designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance SNCI) but is heavily used by walkers and horse riders and cyclists.

Overall, 1350 acres of open space, approximately half of all that owned by RBBC.

#### The Conservators

Established under our 1893 Act have the statutory duty to police and protect the integrity of the Commons and ensure free legal access to the Commons for all.

There are eight Conservators: two represent the landowner and the other six represent the electorate of Banstead, they receive no remuneration for their role.

#### Staff

One warden and two keepers carry out the day-to-day maintenance of the Commons and a part-time Clerk responsible for administrative, estate and statutory duties.

### Funding

#### 1893 to 2000

Because the 1893 Act provided no means for the Conservators to raise funds, the first few years were spent cajoling money but eventually Reigate Urban Council were convinced of the importance of the BCC policing role and provided funds for these activities, this enabled the employment of a Clerk, a Warden and often as many as five or six keepers. The “management” of the commons was at this time provided by commoner activities.

After WWII, social changes meant that commoner activity disappeared and without management the Commons started to revert to woodland whilst becoming increasingly important for recreation. When in 1955 Reigate and Banstead Council purchased the Commons, they soon came to an agreement with the Conservators to provide a grant, not only to cover the BCC policing role but also to cover all aspects of management responsibilities of RBBC as landowners.

This grant support continued until 2000.

#### 2000 - 2020

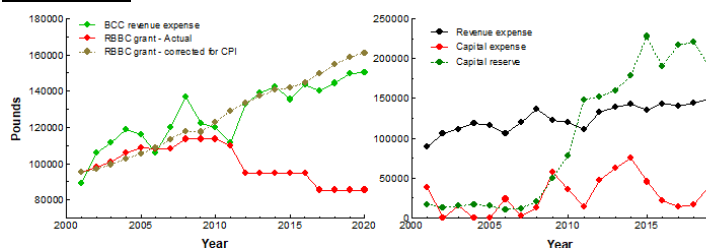


Figure 1: Comparison of BCC expenditure with both actual RBBC grant and that corrected for annual CPI

Figure 2: Annual B.C.C. expenditure and capital reserve, 2001 - 2020

In 2000 RBBC provided 90% of BCC funding with the remainder coming from LBS, Countryside Stewardship grant and Highways Maintenance, to a total Of £105,000.



In 2001 with changes in EU CAP we became eligible for and successfully applied for Single Farm Payment, this was an EU-funded grant increasing incrementally to 2012 and then reduced over the next six years in 2019, the last year its value was £33576. As a result of Brexit this grant has been abolished run-down payments disappear over the next four years (2024).

In 2005 we were transferred to the Core Funding programme, each year we presented a full business plan for consideration. As a result of our external funding the RBBC contribution was

reduced but we were allowed to keep all external funding both to cover costs and build up a capital reserve.

In 2010 we successfully applied for a 10-year DEFRA Countryside Stewardship grant; this was successfully completed this year with a glowing report from Natural England. This funding, £25,000p.a. was specifically addressed at improving wildlife habitat not only on the SSSI but also on Banstead Heath. By careful adjustments of our normal maintenance, we were able to fulfil the very specific requirements of the grant without compromising normal management.

In 2014, an attempt was made to convert our finding to a Service Level Agreement but after several years of discussion, the RBBC legal department would not allow this to progress, and we went back to grant funding.

In total, we received just over £1,000,000 from external sources in this 20-year period, whilst the RBBC provided approx.£2,000,000 to cover both revenue and capital costs.

It should be noted that we believe that RBBC received approx. £1,100,000 rent for Banstead Downs Golf Course over the same period and therefore their net cost to manage all aspects of the Commons was approx. £900,000 (£45,000p.a.) in this 20-year period.

#### 2020 onwards.

In 2020 RBBC's contribution covered 55% of our revenue costs with the remainder coming from, Environmental Stewardship (17%) and Single Farm Payment (23%), to a total of £150,000.

The Environmental Stewardship grant has ended this year and the SFP scheme continues to be run down the next three years. In both cases replacement grants will not be available for common land until at least 2024 and are unlikely to be as generous as in the past.

This means that the last financial year is the last where our income exceeds our revenue expenditure. For the next four years we shall have to use our capital reserve fund to help cover our costs. This will run out in 2023-24 leaving us unable to continue.

With no significant external options until at least 2024, in order to continue operating as we do now BCC until then, requires additional funding of approx. £250,000 as well as costs of replacing some of our equipment. As a statutory body we are not allowed to carry a debt and therefore we must prepare for the loss of funding. We have put aside a redundancy fund to cover statutory payments for the staff £34000 and if alternative funding cannot be guaranteed, to maintain our statutory duties we shall have to cease all maintenance work for RBBC and review our staffing levels. We feel it prudent to do this from the start of 2022.

Our continued survival as we are today in the hands of RBBC. Over the past twenty years we have sought to establish a dialogue regarding our relationship with RBBC. However, we have always been treated in a similar manner to voluntary groups (e.g. Core funding). The fact is that all the routine management of the Commons is work that if it were not done by us then RBBC would have to do it

We believe that this is an opportunity to initiate discussion to establish the feasibility of a formal relationship between the two bodies recognising that the statutory role of BCC is not anachronistic. The 2006 Commons Act encouraged the formation of "Commons Councils" to take control of the management and protection of Common Land.

We can find only one area of common land in the South-East with similar statutory protection to our own with no provision of funding, is [Tunbridge Wells & Rusthall Commons](#). In that case the Conservators are mainly funded by a precept from the local council. For 2020-2021 this totalled £165,850 for a total area of 256 acres, 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the area of Banstead Commons.