



Meeting 603rd of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS
held at
The Banstead Centre on Saturday 20th April, 2024

MINUTES – Part 1

Present:	Mr. V. Broad, Chairman (VB)	Cllr. P. Harp (PH)
	Mr. D. Hatcher (DH)	Mr. B. Steele (BS)
	Cllr. N. Moses (NM)	Mr. D Atkins (DA)
	Mr. J Mill (JM)	Mrs. L Shea, Clerk
	Lisa Taylor – Minute Secretary	
Public gallery:	Keith Lelliott, Peter Medhurst Taylor, Rachel Turner, Catalina Vassallo Bonner, Peter Mattey, Miriam Maxim	

1. Apologies for absence

Mr. N. Mollett

2. Minutes of last meeting

A proposal by PH that VB be elected Chair for the ensuing year was seconded by JM.

Minutes of last meeting held on Saturday 27th January were confirmed as correct. No matters arising.

3. Quarterly report

Two large areas of scrub have been cleared on Banstead Heath to restore a pocket of lowland heath. Heather scrapes will be created later this year.

The livestock on Park Downs and Banstead Downs have been moved to their final pen for this winter's grazing season. Subject to cost/funding, we are looking to extend our grazing programme on our Downland sites this year to include summer grazing and create two new grazing pens on Park Downs. Permission for summer grazing has been given by Natural England.

Two Ash trees were felled on Burgh Heath. The trees were located next to a busy footpath and had been assessed at health class 4 (less than 25% left of canopy). Thanks to the efforts of Ian Mockford, the historic litter at the back of Hatch Gardens has been cleared and taken off the site. Thanks were given to the JET Team for collecting the rubbish from our depot.

High winds have meant that the team have been out on several occasions clearing trees from public right of ways and popular footpaths. Footpath and bridleway inspections have also been completed on Park Downs, Burgh Heath, Banstead Downs and part of Banstead Heath.

Mat Burnell who is the Trees and Woodlands Officer at Reigate and Banstead Borough Council has supported the Clerk to develop a plan for managing Ash dieback on the Commons. BCC thanked RBBC for the ongoing and specialist support given by Mat.



Six practical volunteer tasks have been hosted on the Commons this quarter and duties ranged from the removal of invasive species, scrub clearance and tree popping. Leatherhead Youth Protect volunteered on Banstead Heath for their Making Good Day during the February half term and we have developed a new relationship with Ahmadiyya Muslim Elder's Association. In total, 872 volunteer hours have been recorded this year – which is an approx. economic value of £11,000.

Social media presence continues to grow - 1,483 followers on Facebook, 359 followers on Twitter and 170 followers on Instagram.

DH delivered a talk at 'Lunch and Talk' community events organised by the Tadworth & Walton Resident Association (attended by 27). Four articles have also been submitted to Resident Associations and community groups for publishing in their newsletters.

Our Guided Walk Programme for this year is being promoted and we are processing the bookings. Thanks to funding from Your Councillor Fund Surrey, we are also introducing three family events this year and a Volunteer Summer Social. Details of all of events can be found on [our website](#).

This year's Annual Report is in draft format and the accounts have been sent for auditing.

4. Matters arising

Banstead Downs Golf Club (BDGC)

Concerns have been raised regarding the management of the habitats around the periphery of the course on Banstead Downs Golf Course. There are three main areas for concern; herbicide use on the course and lack of safety signage, arboricultural work and scrub clearance and the extensive dumping of green waste in the wooded areas of the site. Natural England and BCC are working with the course manager this year to address the concerns with habitat management. It was suggested BCC and RBBC organise a meeting with BDGC to discuss the removal of the green waste and prevent any further dumping on the Common.

Felling Licence and the Forestry Commission – Moved to Part 2

Higher Tier Woodland Improvement Grant - Moved to Part 2

Edward Harris Council Advice & regulating commercial dog walkers – Moved to Part 2

5. Any other business

Catalina – the Banstead Federation have their meeting on 26/4. Please send through any matters for discussion with the resident associations in advance of the meeting.

Miriam – raised her concerns regarding the disturbance dogs are causing to wildlife on Banstead Heath. It was acknowledged that this is a concern across the Commons. The BCC put up seasonal warnings on notice boards and other visible location, and also on social media pages.

Rachel – suggested the BCC could consider introducing a volunteer warden role to help inform visitors of the countryside code when visiting Banstead Commons.



Actions:

- NM and Clerk to arrange meeting with Banstead Downs Golf Club to discuss removal of green waste on the golf course.
- Clerk to email Catalina Vassallo Bonner, matters to raise at forthcoming Banstead Federation meeting, Commercial Dog Walkers, Volunteers Wardens, Conservation heroes – grazing appeal and Site Management plans.

Meeting closed at 10:25

Dates of 2024 meetings to be held at the Banstead Centre:

- Saturday 20 July, 2024
- Saturday 19 October, 2024



Quarterly report in pictures

April 2024



Clearance work on Banstead Heath – approx. 1,237.20 m²



Heather scrapes in the newly cleared area will be created in August / September 2024



Scrub clearance work on Banstead Downs – approx. 51.82m²





Rubbish clearance on Burgh Heath



...a special **thank you** to local resident Ian Mockford and JET.

Thank you!





Volunteering and public engagement

- Talk given to Tadworth & Walton Resident Association
- Articles submitted to four local newsletters



**872 volunteer hours have
been recorded this
financial year! Approx.
economic value of
£11,000**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9dxs0dV40I>



Leatherhead Youth Project – Making Good Day on Banstead Heath



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9dxs0dV40I>



Public engagement events

- Guided Walk Programme and Nature Detective Days have been finalised and are now being promoted.
- Volunteer Summer Social is scheduled for Thursday 6 June on Banstead Downs.
- David Hatcher will attend a stall at the Surrey Hill's Insect Awareness Stall on Leith Hill to promote our Nature Detective Days



Invitation to join our
Volunteer Summer Social



*Thursday 6 June, 6pm
on Banstead Downs*

TO MARK VOLUNTEERS' WEEK AND TO CELEBRATE THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS, WE ARE INVITING YOU TO JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER SUMMER SOCIAL ON THURSDAY 6 JUNE AT 6PM ON BANSTEAD DOWNS. THE SOCIAL WILL BE HELD IN THE BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS' HALL, BANSTEAD DOWNS, SURREY. THE SOCIAL WILL BE HELD IN THE BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS' HALL, BANSTEAD DOWNS, SURREY. THE SOCIAL WILL BE HELD IN THE BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS' HALL, BANSTEAD DOWNS, SURREY.

For more information, please contact the Banstead Commons Conservators on 01883 811111 or email enquiries@bansteadcommons.org.uk

We will also be displaying our new annual Banstead Commons Conservation Calendar for 2024. The calendar will be available to purchase for £5.00. The calendar will be available to purchase for £5.00. The calendar will be available to purchase for £5.00.



Join our Nature Detective Days on Banstead Commons to learn more about the wildlife that lives on our Downs.

You'll be able to meet the wonderful Wildlife Warden, our Conservation Team, and our experts will help you to identify the local plants and animals that are found in the grass and woods.

Just for you, we have special events which will be available to view the whole family enjoying.

Banstead Downs Saturday 3 June 10am - 12.30pm	Banstead Heath Thursday 25 July 10am - 12.30pm	Banstead Heath Thursday 9 August 10am - 12.30pm
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For further information and how to register
email: enquiries@bansteadcommons.org.uk



Reptile survey 7/4/2024



6 Adders – 4 adults, 2 juvenile
8 Slow worms
2 Common lizards



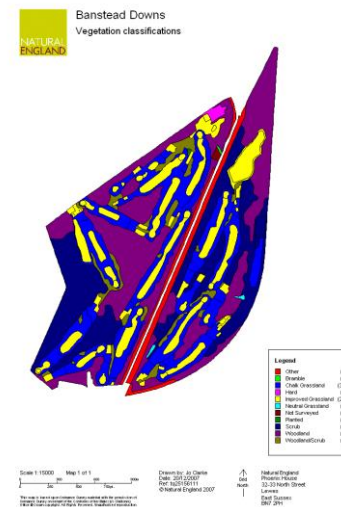


Matters arising

Banstead Downs Golf course - site inspection 28 January

The following concerns have been raised with the golf course:

- Arboricultural work does not meet British Standard 3998:2010
- Pesticide use on the course and safety signage – complaint has been received from a member of the public.
- Dumping of green waste in the woodland and damage to Juniper trees





Banstead Downs Golf Course



“With the Golf Club being located on a SSSI (a statutory designation), the management of the land and activities on the land, in this instance a golf club, must be sensitively managed and with due care over the fragility of the site. It is evident that green waste is being dumped in the woods with very little care for the SSSI habitat or landscape value. This green waste should be disposed of responsibly, current piles should be cleared and future arisings should be dealt with appropriately.”

Position statement from Reigate and Banstead Borough Council



Green waste dumping outside Chinthurst School

