

# Meeting 605th of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS held at The Banstead Centre on Saturday 16th November, 2024

#### MINUTES - Part 1

Mr. V. Broad, Chairman (VB) Present:

Mr. B. Steele (BS) Mr. D. Hatcher (DH) Mr. D Atkins (DA) Mr. J Mill (JM) Mrs. L Shea (LS), Clerk

Cllr. P. Harp (PH)

Public

Jane Davis, Peter Taylor Medhurst, Rachel Turner, Peter Mattey

gallery:

### Apologies for absence

Nadean Moses and Nathan Mollett.

#### 2. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of last meeting held on Saturday 20th July were confirmed as correct.

## Matters arising

Site Management Plans are now finalised and we expect to be published on our website by the end of the year.

#### 3. Quarterly report

## Site Management

This quarter the operational team have been busy with bracken and grassland management. BCC manages c.168 hectares of grassland with a large percentage under prescriptive management with Natural England. Management techniques include cut and collect, conservation grazing and mowing.

Livestock from the Downlands Partnership Grazing Team remain on Banstead Downs and Park Downs. The Downlands Partnership Grazing Team continue to monitor the sites and give expert advice to ensure stocking densities are optimal for each enclosure to meet the management objectives.

Vegetation growth has been vigorous this quarter as a result of the wet, mild weather and more time than usual has been spent maintaining clear sight lines at road crossings and other visitor access points on the Commons.

General maintenance has included tree safety work, installation of noticeboards, clearing of camps and fly tipping and regular habitat management. Habitat management most recently has focused on pond restoration and management tasks on Banstead Heath.

The electrical storm on 7 September damaged our telephone, Wi-Fi and alarm systems at the BCC depot.



## Volunteer & public engagement

Volunteer numbers continue to grow. Tadworth and Walton Residents Association and Trustees from the Downlands Trust joined and supported two work parties.

The Nature Detective Days were a huge success and attended by over 130 children and adults – c.38 different families. BCC gave thanks to all the volunteers who made the events possible and highlighted that an event sponsor is required for next year.

Guided Walks have also been well attended. The BCC received a private donation following one of the walks.

With thanks to Rebecca Paul MP and SCC Your Fund, Banstead Heath Pond Restoration Project commenced in September. Significant clearance work has been carried out to the pond next to The Bell at Withybed Corner and Workhouse pond adjacent to Dorking Road.

## 4. Matters arising

#### Banstead Downs Golf Club (BDGC)

BCC had a constructive meeting with BDGC, Natural England and RBBC on 22/8 to discuss the concerns that had been raised related to green waste dumping and parcels under Higher Level Stewardship. Minutes of the meeting have been published. Subsequently, BDGC has now started to address some of the green waste that had been dumped recently and relations between BCC and BDGC appear to be improving.

#### The Sportsman

The dialogue with Gosschalks Solicitors regarding the illegal effluent pipe on Banstead Heath from The Sportsman's septic tank continues. Most recent update was received on 13/11 stating that investigation works have been undertaken and we have been informed the potential solution has a significant cost. A meeting is being organised to decide the next stage of resolving this concern.

## Winkworth Road Drainage Improvement Scheme

To address the flooding concerns on Winkworth Road, it was discovered that SCC had carried out a topographical survey with a view to installing a new Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) on Banstead Downs. Following intervention, work has been paused whilst SCC explore alternative solutions that focus on delivering improvement with the road area itself. Clerk to remain in contact with SCC and provide an update at the next Quarterly Meeting.

### The Green at Burgh Heath

Residents have been dumping a substantial amount of green waste on the Common. Clerk liaised with Burgh Heath Residents Association and a short article raising awareness of the concern was placed in their newsletter.

## 6 Mogador Road

Resident at 6 Mogador Road has installed wooden posts on the Common. It was agreed to issue an encroachment letter and if the posts are not removed by the date specified in the letter our operational staff will remove them.



#### Withybed Corner

Residents have raised concerns about the access track at Withybed Corner. The Clerk met with Officers from RBBC to assess the current state of the track on 24/10. It was noted that the track is designated as a Footpath 76 and the access road is not publicly maintained. There is no requirement for RBBC or BCC to maintain it to Highway standards for vehicular traffic nor is it designated as a Bridleway. RBBC have committed to carrying out remedial works to the track to level out some of the potholes. It was suggested that advisory signage could be installed to highlight the nature of the track and need for user caution.

#### Banstead Commons Conservators Professional Dog Walking Scheme

As a result of the growing number of professional/commercial dog walkers operating on the Commons and concerns related to visitor safety and damage to priority habitats because of dog excrement, the BCC obtained legal advice to clarify our authority to regulate activities under our Act. Counsel confirmed that under paragraph 18 of the Act the Conservators can regulate for the prevention of nuisances and the preservation of order upon the Commons, which would include the ability to license, and, by correlation, ban certain activities. Over the past 12 months the BCC has developed details of the Licence Agreement and plan for implementation. One of the requirements of the licence will be for walkers to wear visible photographic ID when operating on the Commons. Staff will be issued body worn cameras to assist with enforcement. Details of the scheme will be published on our website in November and publicised widely using our social media pages, posters on site and local community newsletters in the New Year. The scheme will be formally adopted by the Conservators in Part 2 of the Quarterly Meeting.

## 5. Any other business

**Clir. Harp** noted the general issues with dog walkers (Clir. Harp was recently bitten by a dog on Banstead Heath) on the Commons and suggested whilst it wouldn't be appropriate at present, the BCC should in the future consider requiring dogs on leads in the areas of the Commons where there are ground nesting birds, for example Mill Field.

**David Hatcher** noted the law states you must keep your dog on a lead no longer than two metres between 1st March and 31st July when on any open access land to protect ground-nesting birds.

**Peter Mattey** informed the meeting that a consultation has been launched by Surrey County Council on a proposal to reduce the speed limit on the 'Mad Mile' from 60mph to 40mph. The consultation closes on 28th November 2024. Follow the link to participate: <a href="Brighton Road">Brighton Road</a>, <a href="Banstead-Speed Limit Proposal-Surrey County Council-Citizen Space">Brighton Road</a>, <a href="Brighton Road">Banstead -Speed Limit Proposal - Surrey County Council - Citizen Space</a>.

**Rachel Turner** mentioned the concerns related to antisocial behaviour in the community, especially the increase in motorbikes/dirt bikes being ridden in public open spaces.

**Jane Davis** submitted a list of concerns related to highway verge management adjacent to Tadworth Street, Tower Road and New Road. Clerk to investigate.

Meeting closed at 10:30

Dates of 2025 meetings to be held at the Banstead Centre:

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2025 Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025 Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025 Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2025