



**Meeting 607<sup>th</sup> of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS  
held at  
The Banstead Centre on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2025**

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**MINUTES - Part 1**

|                 |                             |                          |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Present:</b> | Mr. V. Broad, Chairman (VB) | Mr. B. Steele (BS)       |
|                 | Cllr. N. Moses (NMos)       | Mrs. L. Shea (LS), Clerk |
|                 | Mr. J. Mill (JM)            |                          |

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Mrs L Traynor – Minute Secretary

**Public gallery:** Rachel Turner, Barbara Harrington, Peter Taylor-Medhurst, Sharyn Valentine-Wells, Jane Banerji, Fintan O’Toole, Tim Snowdon, Jennifer Clarkson, David Jackson, Lisa Salmon

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Mr. D. Atkins, Cllr. P. Harp, Mr. D. Hatcher

### **2. Election of Conservators and Chair**

Election of Conservators is being made at Executive Meeting on 7 May.

V Broad was proposed as Chairman by JM and seconded by BS

### **3. Minutes of last meeting**

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as correct.

### **4. Matters arising**

**4.1 Professional Dog Walker Scheme (PDWS)** has been implemented and licenses issued. News item was covered by BBC Radio Surrey and Surrey Live. Staff increased their presence on site in March with aim to engage with businesses that hadn’t had direct contact with the BCC. Staff have been issued with body worn cameras to assist enforcement.

**4.2 The Sportsman** solicitors responded yesterday (26/4) with no further detail than previously shared. Following a communication received from John Kerwood who was acting on behalf of The Sportsman raising concern related to the safety of the porch, an inspection of the property was carried out on 11/4. Staff discovered much of the porch had rotten timbers and reported it to RBBC for further inspection. RBBC has carried out an inspection and the BCC is waiting to receive a copy of the subsequent report.

**4.3** A response was received from **6 Mogador Cottages** regarding their driveway and possible vehicular crossover application to Surrey County Council (SCC). Clerk contacted Jack Nicholls SCC Highways Engineer to request confirmation of the



highway designation. No further action can be taken until the BCC is assured that the driveway is under their jurisdiction.

## 5. Quarterly report

LS delivered a report of the works that have taken place on our sites:

- Ash dieback work adjacent to Bridleway 3 on Banstead Downs complete.
- Ride management work completed on Footpath 10 on Banstead Downs leading from Sutton Lane to Commonfield Road exit.
- One of the large grazing enclosures was divided and straining posts installed to create a new grazing pen on Park Downs.
- New notice board installed on Park Downs and bench repairs carried out across our sites.
- Some boundary was secured by remodelling earth bund at Withybed Corner and Mill Road.
- Staff have cleared camps from Burgh Heath and Banstead Downs.
- Staff have observed an increase in youths lighting fires and burning aerosol cans.
- Dog Walker Code of Conduct posters installed on noticeboards and visitor notices regarding PDWS installed on stakes at main access points.
- 13 bags of purple refuse bags full of dog poo were cleared from main access points on Banstead Heath.
- BCC signed up to Surrey Hill's National Landscape [Love Dogs, Love Nature Project](#). Working group has been established to develop a programme of practical and promotional initiatives aimed at dog walkers that foster a healthy balance between enjoying the natural environment and ensuring its preservation
- Volunteers issued with branded high-vis jackets.
- Volunteer work parties focused on scrub removal on chalk downland and the removal of old stock fencing and clearance along one of the fence lines on Park Downs.
- Thank you to Lindsey Von Backstrom for a generous private donation and the Downlands Trust for purchasing two water tanks and troughs.
- Thank you given to RBBC Street Cleansing team for removing the rubbish collected from the Commons from our yard.

## 6. Withybed Corner (Public Right of Way - Footpath 76)

Residents continue to raise concerns to RBBC and BCC regarding the suitability of the track(Footpath 76) for vehicular access and general health and safety concern due to the potholes. Victor Davey who is the Project Engineer at RBBC Greenspaces Team is facilitating a meeting with relevant parties to discuss authorised/legal long term solutions.

BCC considers de-registration of the track the most efficient long-term solution. CIL money could also be explored with resident's match/part funding shortfall.



## **7. Antisocial behaviour and dog related incidents**

Dog related incidents – one dog on dog issue where a dog was killed. One of our Professional Dog Walkers was able to assist us with this. BCC recommends any dog incident is reported to us to hold a formal record.

Dog fouling continues to be a concern on our sites. See above report.

Off-road biking on Banstead Downs continues. BCC has met with Banstead Downs Golf Club and is in liaison with Walton Heath Golf Course. Liaison with Surrey Police regarding joint patrols and other mitigations are in progress.

## **8. Grassland management (Higher Level Stewardship)**

LS met with Nick Bullen who is a Surrey County Council tenant farm to discuss hay bailing areas on Banstead Heath. There are various environmental considerations but we hope an area designated as Acid grassland in our Site Management Plans might be feasible in addition to some areas on the Mogador field.

## **9. Public Engagement Events**

Now that we are at full staff complement, the delivery of our Public Engagement Programme will commence. Two Summer Social events for volunteers and warm contacts will be held during Volunteer's Week. Nature Detective Day is confirmed for Thursday 7 August. Details will be published on our website and social media pages.

## **10. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution**

Funding – from RBBC came about when years ago they had to ask permission constantly. Downside is now that we have no guarantees that they will give us any funding – we need a channel of communication if Borough Council's are being amalgamated. We should shortly know if we are amalgamating into two or three unitary authorities in Surrey. Debt from other Council's (5 billion) will be shouldered by our residents. As Conservators we have had no communication and we do not know who will represent us in discussions.

## **11. Any other business**

Fintan O'Toole – raised concern regarding increase in bikes and motorised vehicles on Banstead Downs. Letter was written to MP for Sutton and Cheam who subsequently contacted Met Police to learn that Surrey Police haven't communicated with the Met regarding the concern. Fintan felt that the BCC is failing in their duty to protect the Downs and its visitors.

LS – confirmed that the BCC liaises with Police regularly. Information provided to the BCC via members of the public is always forwarded to the Police and other agencies.



Requested that all visitors report incidents to the Police and obtain a crime reference number.

A discussion regarding possible solutions to the concern followed with participation from the gallery. JM ended discussion by advising visitors to report live incidents to the Police.

Fintan O'Toole – felt the introduction of a water tank for the sheep was not in keeping with the Common.

Jennifer Clarkson – request for the minutes of the Banstead Commons Consultative Group be published on the website. Action agreed.

Jane Banerji – raised query regarding the recent dog incident on Banstead Downs. LS – confirmed that a dog-on-dog attack is considered a civil offence, not criminal. Requested that visitors report all dog attacks to Dog Warden and the BCC. Dog Warden is able to issue a community protection notice.

Barbara Harrington – expressed her dissatisfaction with how the BCC have handled the concern regarding their driveway at 6 Mogador Cottages. VB confirmed that BCC will honour the legal position given by Surrey County Council and continue to communicate until an authorised solution is reached.

**Meeting closed at 10:30**

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

**Conservator Quarterly Meetings – 9.30am until 12pm**

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2025