



**Meeting 608 of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS held on
Saturday 19th July 2025 at 9.30am
Banstead Community Centre**

MINUTES – Part 1

Present:	Mr. V. Broad, Chairman (VB) Cllr. N. Moses (NM) Mr. J Mill (JM) Mr. D. Hatcher (DH)	Mr. D. Atkins (DA) Cllr. P. Harp (PH) Mr. E Isaacs (EI) Mrs. L Shea (LS), Clerk
Public gallery:	Mrs L Traynor – Minute Secretary Barbara Harrington, David Green, Jill Coleman, Andrew Gumpert, Lisa Salmon, John Kerwood, Matt Thomas, Chris Payton, Louise Crysell, Carol Greens, Keith Turner, Scott Hagley, Paul Barker, Jane Anderson, Clare Smyl, Charles Harvey, Edda Harvey, Jane Davis, Miriam Maxim, Gillian Hein, Rachel Turner, Ian Mockford, Fintan O'Toole, Catalina Vassallo-Bonner, Bob Pain	

1. Apologies for absence

Mr. B. Steele (BS)

VB – reminded gallery of our role in relation to our statutory duties and provided some examples. We discharge our obligations under an Act of Parliament. Our role is to discharge our legal obligation to preserve and protect the Commons for the benefit of all.

2. Welcome (newly appointed Conservator Edward Isaacs) & introductions

Edward Isaacs welcomed by VB on behalf of BCC.

3. Minutes of last Meeting

Agreed

4. Matters arising

- 4.1 The Sportsman – still working through the three outstanding concerns: effluent pipe/pollution spill, veranda and bench licence. BCC has received no further communications from the proprietors in relation to the above concerns, despite sending several emails to the publican and a formal letter via solicitors.
- 4.2 Mogador Cottages – SCC confirmed to BCC that the area is not under the jurisdiction of SCC nor considered a vehicular crossover and BCC Act applies. Authorised solution to address the concern to be decided by the resident.
- 4.3 Withybed Corner (Public Right of Way – Footpath 76) – DA & LS attended a meeting facilitated by RBBC with residents on 23 May to address responsibilities and possible solutions. CIL bid discussed as a possible way forward. Subsequent meeting is planned for 24/7. Track is used by public service vehicles and delivery to The Bell. Jane Anderson commented that residents do not want a hard surface.

5. Quarterly Report



Reflecting on the past three months, we're always amazed by how much our small but mighty team of staff and volunteers accomplishes:

- A new grazing enclosure was introduced on Park Downs, with additional sheep added in June. There are now three active grazing pens across Banstead Commons. Lisa has recently recruited and inducted two new volunteer stock checkers to the team.
- Our "odd jobs" list has been as varied as ever: installing a new memorial bench, putting up fire risk posters across our sites, carrying out tree safety tasks (including scheduling Ash dieback work), treating Japanese knotweed, managing fly-tipping incidents, strimming highway sightlines, mowing firebreaks and footpaths/bridleways on the Commons and liaising with Surrey County Council to unblock the drains on Mogador Road.
- New dog fouling awareness posters have been produced and displayed across the Commons.
- A joint patrol with Surrey Police was held on Sunday, 18 May, on Banstead Downs. We hope to organise more of these in the future.
- Annual staff away day with other Conservator bodies was hosted on Tunbridge Wells & Rusthall Commons this year.
- LT and LS also met Rangers from the City of London Corporation at Farthing Downs to discuss their Skylark conservation projects.
- Volunteer work parties have been focusing on Cherry Laurel removal at Withybed Corner – a hugely successful and rewarding effort.
- Special thanks to local volunteer (CS) who has been hand-pulling Canadian Goldenrod in his spare time on Banstead Downs.
- Biological recording on Banstead Commons has increased significantly in recent years. There are now four [UKBMS](#) walk transects in place, the newest covering Banstead Downs Golf Course and an area where Chalkhill Blues are abundant.
- Working together with the Surrey Bat Group, we have spent the last 13 months surveying the presence and distribution of bat species foraging on the Heath. The group carried out two surveys on Banstead Heath in May.
- Fortunate to have such a dedicated and growing team of volunteers who so generously share their time and expertise. It was a pleasure to celebrate Volunteers' Week with two guided walks as a small gesture of thanks.

6. Planning applications:

- 6.1 London Cancer Hub (London Borough of Sutton) – LS: The LCH will increased visitor numbers of people into the area around Banstead Downs. We will need to closely follow the proposals for road accommodation works which may impinge on our boundary. There have been discussions such as changing Downs Road to a 1-way street. LS highlights an opportunity to follow-up their proposals under Biodiversity Net Gain. PH has been tracking their proposals for staff car parking which as yet have not been finalised but that the idea of creating a car park by Banstead Station has been scrapped.
- 6.2 The Bell Change of Use – LS: Change of use has been approved to residential. They have a large car park so building work shouldn't encroach onto BCC land.
- 6.3 Vernon Walk – Burgh Heath. Concerns raised at planning meetings. PH commented that archaeological explorations have discovered a possibility of a Roman Bath.

7. Public engagement & volunteering



7.1 Nature Detective Day Thursday 7 August 10am – 1pm – LT provided an update on this free public engagement event.

- 140/150 attendees
- 9 stall holders (Downlands Trust, Surrey Nature Partnership, Downlands Partnership, Surrey Dormouse Group, Surrey Bat Group, Surrey Hills Society, Tadworth & Walton Treewardens, Banstead Swift Protection, Surrey Wildlife Trust).
- 4 facilitated activities: Tree walk, bug hunt, nature walk and arts & crafts. Many volunteers running these activities are here today.
- 1 self guided quiz – correx boards were on display for conservators and attendees to view.

With huge thanks to [Peter Taylor-Medhurst](#) for his professional input with our educational resources – they look incredible.

7.2 Practical Volunteering Update – the impact that our volunteers have had is incredible. We are looking to move to weekly work parties from September. Our aim is to uplift all habitats across our landscapes from moderate to good. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers for the continued support and hard work.

Joint Action Meeting with the Borough Commander to address Off Road Biking on the Commons.

LT - Communication sent to Police in May. We have been able to arrange a public joint action meeting at Banstead Downs Golf Club on Tuesday 2nd of September at 7.30pm. We will be joined by Inspector Jon Vale who is the Borough Commander for Reigate & Banstead and Sergeant Andy Prowse who leads the North R&B team. Invitations to local MPs and councillors have been circulated. Promotion of the event in the wider community will commence next week.

Fintan O Toole (FOT) – MP Luke Taylor is interested in attending. We are hopeful that police will have more powers to act following [the change in law](#) so enable them to seize a bike immediately.

DH – this type of enforcement has been mentioned in other areas of the county and has made a difference.

8. AOB

8.1 Chapel Road – parking request through either de-registering/selling land, applying licence or any other method available to resident. PH points out RBBC don't operate residents parking so change of use may not turn out the way residents would like. Council also has change of unitary to consider – land exchange, which is needed to enable parking, will not be considered at present due to the uncertainty around the reorganisation of local councils. LS - sets a precedent for other similar areas on the Common. It was decided that the request is not taken forward.

8.2 Property previously known as Nova Spa at The Green, Dorking Road – BCC will follow the building works closely to prevent any encroachment.

8.3 Highways management – the transition between SCC and RBBC – Highway verges on the Commons are no longer being managed and have been pushed back to BCC. LS had a meeting with Michael Hill who is the Greenspaces Manager at RBBC. Concern raised related to our statutory duty and available resourcing to manage Highway verges across all our sites. Areas were discussed and it was agreed to take a collaborative approach to managing overgrown vegetation. PH – the vegetation on bund adjacent to the A217 by Banstead Crossroads flailed by SCC until recently. It's currently impossible to litter-pick safely



8.4 Bund from Walton to Tadworth – DA - SCC lamppost obstructs the pavement. Can our operations team make a bigger space around the lighting for buggies and mobility scooters? A resident on a mobility scooter was upended due to the bank. **BCC Operations to action.**

8.5 Biodiversity Net Gain – LS suggested BCC should register habitats independently of RBBC. It was agreed to follow up with senior management at the Council.

8.6 Unitary councils – VB – worth noting that RBBC is the only Council with surplus funds. Our funding comes from RBBC and unless we have a transition we cannot deliver our management duties on the Commons. VB had a conversation with Leader of the Council Richard Biggs who is fighting our corner for funding.

PH – outlined the proposals for everyone present: The 11 borough councils will cease to exist with proposals to either split Surrey into 3 (with our area falling into the North Surrey pod) or 2 (East and West). Woking has the biggest debt and even though they would be in the West we would all end up paying for this debt. There is a public meeting on Monday evening (21/7) to propose the formation of a Banstead Parish Council. Banstead Commons might be best passing downwards to Banstead Parish Council meaning local people would have more of a say but would also shoulder some of the cost. For example, in Horley residents pay £50/year to manage all their own greenspaces. This local area parish council could arrange a precept to cover the cost of the management of the Commons.

Jane Anderson – as a resident of Withybed Corner there is concern around the disruption during building works to The Bell. There is also likely to be damage to the track and we'd like BCC to discuss a guarantee with the building company that any damage to the track will be made good. VB – this falls under planning.

Gillian Hein – comments that the changes on the plans are mainly internal so there shouldn't be any encroachment.

Laura Slade – Suggested contacting [BTCV](#) who facilitate conservation holidays. Queried when she would receive a response to her request pertaining to Dog Sitting. VB – To be discussed in Part 2 of our meeting and decision circulated next week.

Fintan O'Toole – Is there a possibility of more noticeboards with signage to discourage bikers and other antisocial behaviour on Banstead Downs. LS we limit all furniture on the commons including finger posts, dog poo bins etc to maintain the natural feel of the environment. In the past noticeboards displayed on the site were thrown over the railway fencing. Regarding the off-road bikes, it was noted at the Surrey biodiversity meeting that with concerted police enforcement patrols, the problem can almost stop overnight. FOT thanked BCC for the work that has gone into the public meeting.

John Kerwood – The Sportsman Public House expressed concern regarding the removal of the benches, rent increase – from £60 to £65 – and The Sportsman remains responsible for maintenance. The Sportsman also complained that benches opposite the pub are open to ramblers and other members of the public so this impacts our customers. The Sportsman complained directly to RBBC and SCC.

VB – the area in front of The Sportsman remains registered Common Land and therefore under the jurisdiction of the BCC. The licence fee did go up to £65/annum but The Sportsman has not responded to communications, formal and informal.

JM – for years successive tenants have paid the licence fee. BCC has written to The Sportsman a number of times including via recorded delivery and their solicitors but we have not received a response. We are keen on The Sportsman being a commercial success and offered to



arrange a meeting to discuss three outstanding concerns; effluent pipe, veranda and bench licence.

PH – clarifies that the track outside The Sportsman is the legal responsibility of both SCC and BCC, the former for the maintenance of the road surface and the latter for its use, protection from encroachment and management

Jane Anderson – comment on conduct at the meeting.

Date of next meeting:

- Saturday 18th October, 2025