**Meeting of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSULTATIVE GROUP to be held on**

**Tuesday 22nd April 2025 7.30pm – 9pm**

**at**

**Banstead Community Centre (SM7 2BQ)**

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**MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

John Peacock, Banstead Commons (JP)

Jonathan Cooper, Cycling (JC)

Peter Taylor-Medhurst, Visitor - Banstead Downs (PTM)

Lucy Shea, Clerk and General Manager (LS)

Lisa Traynor, Office Manager (LT)

**Apologies:**

Gina Kitchener, Equestrian (GK)

Ian Mockford, Burgh Heath (IM)

Graham Colton, Banstead Downs (GC) – UKBMS transect walker

Mary Matthews (MM), Wildlife Monitor

Alan Matthews, Wildlife Monitor (AM)

Thomas Carmona (TC), Reigate and Banstead Borough Council Representative

David Hatcher, Chair (DH)

Miriam Maxim, Commoner (MM)

Karl Tarratt, Ornithologist – Birds (KT)

Jane Davies, Equestrian & Walker – Banstead Heath (JDav)

John Darter, Banstead Heath (JD)

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|  | **Item**  |  |
| **1.**  | **Welcome and introductions**LT professional background is in education, currently working in part time roles for Croydon School Sports Partnership and BCC. Interest in ecology, attended Nature Detective Day and closely followed BCC’s work ever since!PTM walks on Banstead Downs twice daily. Background in publishing. Photographer. Currently gives BCC support developing our image gallery, Canva and the production of marketing materials. JC cyclist. Interests in horticulture, birdwatching, photography, Redhill and Reigate cycle club.JP as a Conservator for 27 years. Scientist by trade and interest in Natural History with a particular interest in botany. LS General Manager of Banstead Commons | LT |
| **2.** | **Minutes of the last BCC Quarterly Meeting (Jan 2025) – update/matters arising** | LS |
|  | Professional Dog Walking Licence Scheme has been launched. LS outlined some of the complaints received and rationale for the decisions made. Update on the positives of the scheme included the reduction of dog poo, especially on Banstead Heath. It was noted that unlicensed Professional Dog Walkers using our sites are no longer covered by their public liability insurance – dog walkers were advised to check with their own insurers. The Walker and dog owner would be liable in the event of an incident. Visitors can identify licensed businesses by their fluorescent armbands.Professional Dog Walkers have been invited to join the forum (two spaces open, ideally from businesses operating on Banstead Heath and Banstead Downs).  [Love Dogs, Love Nature Project](https://surreyhills.org/love-dogs-love-nature-launch/) was discussed and the findings from the speakers who presented on the day. JP noted that the regular mowing of paths on Banstead Heath, especially Mill Field has helped to encourage walkers and dogs to stick to the paths and avoid the Skylark nesting zone. There have been two recent incidents on the commons with dogs – one dog on dog fatality. | LS |
| **3.**  | Discussions from around the table* Winter work programme discussed. Grassland management on Banstead Heath discussed and plans to introduce baling again in some areas. Exchange land and acid grassland by the Sportsman are the main potential sites for baling – need to monitor the Skylarks.
* Sheep population on Banstead Downs is being monitored nicely by the local community, in addition to our Livestock Volunteers.
* Motorbikes and quad bikes on Banstead Downs are a major issue at the moment. Police have taken some tentative action following damage on Walton Heath GC. A Section 59 must be issued first before a bike can be confiscated.

LS in regular communication with the Police and reiterated that visitors must report the activity to the Police and obtain a Crime Reference Number. * Firecrests have been recorded on Banstead Downs. Merlin app picks up their calls and likely they are nesting which is amazing because it isn’t considered suitable habitat for them. They are more likely to overwinter on the Downs.
* Mogador abundance and diversity of nesting bird species is impressive: Linnets, Yellowhammer, Garden Warblers and Meadow Pipits.
* Litter appearing on the Downs from the Prison – cigarette butts from the bin have been emptied. **LT to action – email.**
* Whilst it is early in the season, Butterfly numbers seem to be down on Banstead Downs.

Due to the dry weather conditions, spring flush hasn’t happened yet. Two sheep have been removed as a result.* JDav (comments submitted via email). The heathland has recovered amazingly following the wettest winter JD can remember on the heath.  There have been remarkably few equestrian users around and no sign of the visiting point to point trainers using the fields as in the past in the early months of the year.   The loss of riding schools and official livery yards in the area show the lack of regular use by larger groups of riders.
 | All |
| 4. | **Any other business*** Adders. Spring emergence surveys undertaken and a good number, adults and juveniles, have been spotted. Two sloughs have been sent for DNA analysis.

JC has volunteered to support Lucy with future surveys.JP noted Ken Livingstone paper on adders within the M25 and Banstead Heath was mentioned. | All |