



**Joint Action Meeting
Tuesday 2nd September 2025 at 7.30pm
Banstead Downs Golf Club**

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Introductions - Banstead Commons Conservators (BCC)

- **Victor Broad - Chair BCC**

Victor Broad thanked the Banstead Downs Golf Club (BDGC) for hosting the event and also the residents for attending in such numbers.

Note: well over a hundred members of the public attended. In addition, there were three borough councillors from Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (RBBC), two Surrey County councillors, and the MP for Sutton.

- **Lucy Shea - Clerk & General Manager BCC**

Lucy stated that BCC acknowledges the overall scale of the issue of off-road bikes on Banstead Commons, but particularly in the area around Banstead Downs. Within the last year the Commons have seen unprecedented levels of this type of anti-social behaviour. It poses a serious threat to life, it is spoiling the enjoyment of visitors and damaging habitats for wildlife. The individuals participating in these activities are often intimidating and aggressive – specific examples would be covered later in the presentation.

Banstead Commons are not alone. BCC are aware of a wider problem on open spaces within the area including the recent Bike Storm that was observed on Winkworth Road (which is adjacent to the Common) recently.

The panel members were introduced:

Banstead Downs Golf Course

- Gary Rowe - Greens Manager

Walton Heath Golf Course

- Allan Wright - Chair of the Green

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council



- Richard Drewar – Joint Enforcement Team

Surrey Police

- Inspector Jon Vale – Borough Commander Reigate and Banstead
- Sergeant Dan Heather – North Reigate & Banstead

2. BCC presentation – Lucy Shea (overview of content)

Banstead Commons consists of 1350 acres of biodiverse and culturally important landscapes. There are four protected sites of internationally important habitats, two are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

In addition Banstead Commons are a precious and well-respected and loved public amenity.

Focusing on Banstead Downs and the commonly named Track 40, motorised bikes have had a catastrophic impact on vegetation and wildlife.

With respect to protected species, the chalk spoils on Track 40 have historically been an important habitat for native flora including Broadleaf Cudweed and Early Gentian. Broadleaved Cudweed plants are now significantly reduced and instances of Early Gentian have not been found on this site in recent years.

The motivation for this Joint Action Meeting is the impact that off road bikes are having on visitors and users of the Commons. BCC are hugely concerned with the impact on people – BCC sites are intended to be areas of safe open access, peace and tranquillity. It is totally unacceptable for individuals to feel unsafe anywhere on the Commons.

The presentation slides showed statements provided by residents, and including video evidence collected by residents showing off road bikes travelling at totally unsafe speeds in narrow Public Right of Ways along the rear of residents gardens as well as multiple bikes being blatantly unloaded from trucks in residential roads adjacent to the Common. BCC receives regular information and evidence about incidents on the Commons.

Lucy gave a personal experience where she was threatened and intimidated by a lone male while working on the site one weekday morning – the incident was reported to the Police and a Crime Reference recorded.

Banstead Commons Conservators know from past experience, and in other areas in Surrey, that enforcement action is effective – seizing and destroying bikes will act as a deterrent.

There are various Acts that could be used to prosecute offenders. It was made very clear that Banstead Commons need effective law enforcement presence and action to address this ongoing, dangerous, and illegal activity.

Allan Wright – Walton Heath Golf Club

Allan Wright provided an insight into the issue from their perspective.



There are 350 acres lowland heath, heather and acidic grassland and the area is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). There are 184 species of flora and fauna – 37 of these are protected.

Allan stated that breaking the byelaws is a criminal offence. There has been deliberate persistent criminal damage - 13 attacks since Dec 2022. All criminal damage is reported to the Police.

The impact of this activity is that it damages the golf club's global reputation. As regards staff, the greenkeepers' morale is affected as repairs are soon damaged and the important work they need to do is overtaken by even more repair work.

Inspector Jon Vale - Borough Commander Reigate & Banstead

Stated:

The number of people in room signifies the strength of feeling.

The geography provides challenges with Banstead Downs sitting on border of Metropolitan area. Off road bikes are a significant issue nationally.

Legislation that is currently going through Parliament will be important for enforcement.

It is sobering to see the impact on members of the public.

Actions we have currently taken in my last year in post:

- Stepped up patrols and also we now conduct joint patrols.
- Resource deployment is evidence based – the more formal crime reports we get, the more I can justify resources.
- Following reports of ASB, additional patrols on the footpath behind Winkworth Road were carried out by the Police.
- In June on the A217 at Reigate Hill individuals were throwing rocks off the bridge onto the cars below. One perpetrator was arrested and some footage from their phone is helping with further investigations.

In the longer term our capabilities are increasing. The proposed law allowing bikes to be seized rather than just issuing a Section 59 will have an impact. We are awaiting this new legislation.

There will be more collaboration with Met Police due to Banstead Downs straddling the border with Surrey Police.

3. Open Discussion - comments raised with panel members with responses if given

- Times of day – after Marsden March, four bikers ran individual off the road. Bikers are out in force on bank holiday weekends and are threatening and intimidating.
- There are photos of the vans with number plates identified, why is nothing done – **Inspector Jon Vale** replied that the Police do follow up reports. The van unloading isn't evidence of them riding over the Commons but Police



can employ other tactics such as putting a marker on the van. Illegal parking is another enforcement measure that can be deployed – **resident** replied that parking concern had also been reported, no response came - the vehicle was parked for over two hours.

- The activity poses a significant danger to life – in the Public Right of Way behind Commonfield Road a gentleman was clipped by a bike doing 30mph.
- It was suggested Saturday or Sunday afternoons are a good time to dedicate resources.
- Young children c. 9-11 years old have been observed riding dirt bikes, often without helmets, along with their parents who are also on bikes.
- It was stated that historically Mole Valley Police had purchased off road vehicles and staff were trained specifically to tackle the illegal off road vehicle situations. Apparently, the project was carried out in overtime so was not taking resources from their usual working hours.
- It was questioned whether the Police could infiltrate these organisations if they are a large and organised unit from across Metropolitan areas?
- It was asked whether fencing could be installed in certain areas on the Commons. **Lucy Shea** replied that the original BCC Act of 1893 and the 2006 Common Land legislation prevent permanent fencing. Timber chicanes have been used in the past but were destroyed within 24 hours.
- It was questioned whether drones could be used.
- Drugs usage – nitrous oxide has been found on the chalk spoils, also crisp packets with cannabis inside have been found.
- It was stated that it costs £400 to convert a push bike into an off-road bike.
- The area where off road biking is taking place is growing as more trees and scrub are being cut down to expand the informal tracks.
- The Course Marshall at Banstead Downs Golf Club commented that it was hard to stop off road bikers, helmets, no ID
- It was stated that on any Sunday between the hours of 11:00 and 16:00 on Banstead Downs you will always find someone riding on the Common.
- **Steven Cormack** – Surrey County Councillor – and chair of Epsom Downs Conservators. - stated that they are also having similar issues and they also held a meeting last month for ASB issues. There are many items and problems in common and that reporting is a key factor. There would be a Police and Crime Commissioner Public Meeting scheduled next week at the County Council – Steven will raise and highlight the issue.
- **Luke Taylor MP** – MP for Sutton and Cheam – said he was aware and in parliament that day he spoke to Rebecca Paul MP. He could offer liaison with Sutton Met Police to collaborate on intelligence and potentially deploying resources to tackle things on his side of the Borough.
- **Victor Broad** - Chairman BCC - commented that the frustration is that Police know about it the problems but are not able to deploy resources.



- A Community WhatsApp group was suggested.
- It was raised that [What3Words](#) is used to identify the exact location of these crimes.
- **Sgt Dan Heather** said that he had been deployed to the recent incident where 300 bikes travelled in convoy on Winkworth Road. He confirmed that four Police forces were involved and that helicopter tracking took place. Individuals travelled from Orpington. Seven arrests were made.
- Residents were keen to re-emphasise the danger to life issue - walkers are having to take evasive action in many cases to avoid being hit by off road bikes. It was only a matter of time before a serious accident occurs.

4. Closing remarks

Call to action

- **If the crime is in progress you must call 999 and obtain a Crime Reference Number.**
- **If the crime has happened then report online, 101 or via social media channels.**
- **Report any intelligence to the BCC for their records.**