



**Meeting 612 of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS held on
Saturday 18 July, 2026 at 9.30am
Banstead Community Centre**

MINUTES – Part 1

Present: Mr. J Mill (JM), Chairman Ms. Rachel Barnes (RB)
 Cllr. N. Moses (NM) Mrs. L Shea (LS), Clerk
 Mr. D. Hatcher (DH) Mr. D. Atkins (DA)
 Mr. B. Steele

Apologies: Mrs L Traynor (LT) Cllr. Peter Harp (PH)

Public gallery: Ian Mockford (IM), Rachel Turner (RT), Gillian Hein (GH), Catalina Vassallo-Bonner (CVB)

1. Apologies for absence
Apologies received from LT & PH JM welcomed newly appointed Conservator Rachel Barnes and explained meeting procedures.
2. Minutes of last Meeting
DH provided the following amendments to the minutes: - you name Peter "Maffey" in the attendance list but call him "Mattey" in AOB. - Item 5, quoted DH as saying "All obstructions..are removed.." but should read "We aim to remove..."
3. Matters arising
N/A
4. Quarterly Report
Operations The team continued to prioritise visitor access, verge management, estate maintenance, wildlife monitoring, public engagement and planning the winter work programme. Routine path maintenance was completed using tractors, mowers and strimmers, with infrastructure defects reported as identified. Prolonged dry weather and strong winds resulted in an increased number of fallen trees and branches requiring clearance. A new entrance was created on Freedown Lane to improve access to the site as the adjoining bridleway is regularly obstructed by vehicles.



Grazing livestock were moved twice during the quarter, with the goat enclosure expanded to include additional scrub. Thanks were extended to volunteers for their continued support, particularly during periods of hot weather.

Antisocial behaviour remains a significant issue, particularly on Banstead Downs and Burgh Heath. Joint working with Reigate & Banstead Borough Council and Surrey Police continues, alongside valued support from the local community.

A visit from Natural England confirmed the need for additional scrub management resources, and an application to the Higher Tier Capital Grants Scheme is being prepared to support future habitat management.

Wildlife and Conservation

Grassland condition assessments continued with support from the Surrey Botanical Society. Volunteers carried out regular bird and butterfly surveys, contributing valuable ecological data. Highlights included confirmation of breeding Red Kite and Woodlark (both Schedule 1 protected species) and a sighting of a Purple Emperor butterfly.

Public Engagement

Activities included guided walks (including a partnership event with Banstead Swifts), a volunteer recognition event, and the transfer of historic records to the Surrey History Centre.

Staff Welfare

New welfare facilities were installed at the operations depot, improving staff welfare, reducing lone working risks and ensuring compliance with minimum Health and Safety Executive standards.

JM – would like to acknowledge and thank the staff team for their continued hard work and efforts.

5. CIL Application for office and welfare facilities at the depot

It was noted that new staff welfare facilities had now been completed following the successful award of CIL funding. The project addressed previously identified shortcomings in staff welfare provision and compliance with minimum standards.

An official opening is planned for 4 September, with invitations extended to the Mayor and local MP. A Conservator will be invited to give a short presentation at the event

6. Surrey Fire and Rescue – training and equipment checks at Burgh Heath pond

Members noted that Surrey Fire & Rescue Service had requested permission for the Banstead and Epsom units to undertake personnel training and equipment checks at Burgh Heath Pond. The Conservators approved the request, subject to use being limited to quarterly sessions and taking place outside the bird nesting season or, where this was not possible, following a survey to ensure no nesting wildfowl would be disturbed. Clerk to issue letter of authorisation.

7. AOB



GH – does the BCC have any funding confirmed to provide security as we move into the Unitary council.

JM – reported that RBBC and BCC had entered into a four-year Funding Agreement, providing financial security for the Conservators during the transition period. In addition, the Conservators had benefited from several CIL project grants in recent years, which had enabled improvements to assets, including new staff welfare facilities.

Members recorded their thanks to Vicky Wise, Head of Greenspaces, Leisure and Culture, for her significant contribution in helping to secure the Funding Agreement ahead of the Section 24 process.

GH – now that Woodlark has been reported to be nesting and we have large and healthy populations of Adders, can the Heath be re-classified as lowland heath.

LS – noted that Special Protection Areas are designated against national criteria. While the Commons support breeding Woodlark, SPA designation would generally also require qualifying populations of Nightjar and Dartford Warbler. Smooth Snake and Sand Lizard were referenced as species associated with similar heathland habitats.

GH – the Resident Associations/Banstead Federation is aware of the antisocial behaviour at Burgh Heath Pond and the efforts of residents to mitigate concerns.

Meeting closed at 10:16

Date of next meeting/s:

- October, 2026