



**Meeting 594<sup>th</sup> of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS  
held at The Banstead Centre on Saturday 15 January 2022**

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**MINUTES – Part 1**

**Present:** Mr. V Broad, Chairman  
Cllr. N Moses  
Cllr. P Harp – left at 10:25am  
Dr. J Peacock  
Mr. J Mill

Mr. N Cull  
Mr. I Mockford  
Mr. D Atkins  
Mrs. L Shea, Clerk

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**Apologies:**

**Public** Ralph Maciejewski, Banstead History Research Group, Secretary & Nork RA  
**Gallery:** Jane Davies, Banstead Heath Consultative Group  
Gillian Hein, Kingswood Resident Association  
Keith Robertson, Commoner – Banstead Heath  
David Hatcher, local resident  
Sal Wright, local resident

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**Chairman's statement**

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the public gallery, providing a background on the role of the Conservators and explained why there was a new Chair – the previous Chair resigned during a meeting with RBBC in November last year.

**1. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes were agreed as circulated and signed by the chairman.

**2. Matters arising**

**Richard Knight resignation.** In November last year we said goodbye to Richard Knight who served BCC as warden for 30 years. Recruitment for a new warden is on hold until our future working relationship regarding management of the commons has been confirmed with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.

**The track at The Green, Tadworth.** The property services team at RBBC sent the proposed specification for the track to the Conservators on 3 December, approval was given. Meeting to update residents on the proposals for track replacement and parking is scheduled for 6pm on Tuesday 18 January. Property Services Manager Daniel Jones and Jo Stillwell will be leading discussions.

**Public Engagement.** Dates for our public guided walks have been confirmed this year, four walks in total. Clerk is exploring the possibility of holding a Banstead Downs Bioblitz Family Day in the summer.

**Village Fairs.** A stall has been confirmed for Tadfest on 18 June is confirmed. We have requested stall at Lower Kingswood Village Fete (2 May) and the Walton on the Hill May Pageant (21 May).

**Memorial bench.** We have one request for a memorial bench on Banstead Heath pending.

**Social Media** 1116 followers on Facebook Page. 127 Twitter followers.

**AONB Boundary Review.** Surrey Hills ANOB are reviewing their boundary. Clerk has submitted evidence for Banstead Heath and Park Downs and the consultation has been promoted on our social media pages.

**Speaking engagements.** Clerk to give a talk to Walton & District Local History Society (2 Mar).

**Conservator appointment.** Following Dr. Bellenger's resignation from the Conservators Mr. Ian Mockford was elected at the Executive Meeting on 18 November, 2021. Adverts for the March



recruitment process has commenced and applications are welcome.

**Encroachments.** We are currently dealing with one encroachment on Banstead Commons. We have received complaints regarding Walton Heath Golf Course encroaching on the Common, there were having a new water irrigation system installed and have been driving on the common. The course manager has apologised and will level out the ruts when the weather has improved.

**CIL Funding Bid NE61 and NW108.** Our CIL funding bid was successful and approved at Executive meeting on 20&24 Octobers. Councillors have recommended that the full award of £38,360 is allocated. Terms and conditions of the grant will be shared once discussions regarding the Service Level Agreement are complete. The tractor that we had on hold has now been sold and Haynes Agricultural Ltd. are waiting for a delivery, arrival anticipated no sooner that March/April 2022 - the whole of our industry is struggling to supply anything at this moment in time, and its likely to stay this way for the foreseeable future.

**Finance meetings with RBBC.** The date for our subsequent funding meeting with RBBC was postponed twice (24/11 & 9/12) and is now scheduled for Monday 31 January. Cllr. Mark Brunt sent his apologies for the delay. RBBC is currently in the process of finalising 22/23 budget proposals and these discussions needed to be completed first. Cllr. Brunt has advised that the Council has options to present to the BCC at our next meeting which should allow both the council and the BCC to move forward together and provide a sustainable future for the management of Banstead Commons. It was highlighted that RBBC has not consulted with BCC on the development of the proposed options.

Clerk mentioned that she'd recently met with the Clerk of the Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons who have a similar Act and budget (£177K). Whilst it is difficult to compare sites due to management duties and responsibilities, it was worth noting that TW&R Conservators manage 256 hectares (BBC manage 550 hectares) and contractors are used for day to date management. The working relationship with councillors and officers is positive and the CEO meets monthly with the Clerk and Finance Director attends guided walks. The Council increases their budget each year in line with RPI, 4.9% increase was allocated for the FY2022/2023. Visit - <https://twcommons.org/> - for more information.

**2.1 Drainage concerns on Banstead Downs.** Following a recent boundary inspection we discovered four illegal gullies had been dug along Sutton Lane on Banstead Downs and the Clerk raised this as a concern with Natural England (NE) on 16/11. Assent from NE should have been gained before any works are carried out on or adjacent to a SSSI. To address the concerns regarding the work already taken and any future works at Sutton Lane, a meeting on site was arranged with Jane Sevenoaks from NE, Vic Davey from RBBC and Mark Davies Surrey County Council (SCC). SCC carried out drainage investigation/cleaning works and found the outlets were blocked and exposed the outlets to restore flow.

SCC suggested that interceptor chambers could be installed in the Highway verge behind the gullies to reduce contaminants and the outlets could then be routed into chalk filled soakaway pits which would have to be located just inside the SSSI boundary.

Natural England thought that this would be an acceptable solution therefore SCC are to design a proposed scheme and send this to RBBC for consideration. Future works at the site will require authorisation from NE and BCC.

**2.2 Chips Folly boundary concern.** The residents of Chips Folly (southern property) have been in touch with the Clerk regarding the boundary line of their property. They would like to move the current fence out by approximately one metre. Supporting paperwork was inspected. Discussion ensued related to the new fence which was erected at Chips Folly (northern property) with



concerns it encroaches on Banstead Common and Common Land legislation will apply.

**Action:** Clerk to organise a site inspection with Conservators J Mill and D Atkins. Clerk to compile relevant background information and share with the Conservators with a report following the boundary inspection.

### 3. Quarterly report

The large tractor has been repaired and is back on the road and the cut and collect and topping regime on grassland and heathland areas are complete.

Footpath and bridleway inspections were completed at the beginning of the New Year and trees that had fallen during the festive period were cleared.

Scrub clearance across all sites has commenced, prescriptions from NE are followed on Park Downs, Banstead Downs and Banstead Heath.

**Chalara Ash dieback.** List of trees of concern has been sent to David Watts (DW). DW has confirmed that the identified trees outside Chinthurst School are being assessed by Connick Tree Care 27 February, works are being coordinated by DW.

**Burgh Heath.** Clearance work on Burgh Heath as detailed in the CIL Funding Grant NW94 is complete. Trees have been crown lifted and some trees identified along the Chetwode Road/Reigate Road footpath have been felled. Contractors Kings & Son will be completing the remaining work around Lonesome Ponds in February.

**Park Downs.** A large area of scrub has been cleared on Park Downs to increase the calcareous grassland areas and promote successional areas of scrub as prescribed in our HLS grant. Coppicing at the site will also take place this winter.

### 4. AOB

**David Gradidge.** The chairman spoke about the loss of David Gradidge. Over the years David had been a good friend to Banstead Commons Conservators and played a key role in introducing grazing on Banstead Downs and monitoring the livestock. The Conservators send their condolences to David's wife and family.

**Wildlife Monitoring.** Following the recent report from Natural England the clerk has put requests out through social media for wildlife monitors. Local birder Steve Gale has volunteered to make monthly visits to our site and upload his bird lists to [Bird Track](#). Mr Karl D Tarratt from Bisham Barn Owl Group/Middle Thames Bird Conservation Trust/Runnymede Ringing Group has also signed up to register birds on Bird Track and is keen to erect nest boxes for targeted species once the site has been surveyed. Clerk requested authorisation which was unanimously approved by the Conservators. Clerk to collect license and insurance details.

Clerk has re-connected with Surrey Butterfly Conservation and is building working relationships with other Conservation bodies with the intention to launch a Banstead Commons Advisory Group. Note, the butterfly transect on Banstead Downs was the very first transect in Surrey (started in 1986).

**Meeting closed at 10:50am**

**Dates of 2022 meetings to be held at The Banstead Centre**  
15 January 2022; 16 April, 2022; 16 July, 2022; 15 October, 2022