

**MINUTES of the 572nd Meeting of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS
held on Saturday 16th April 2016 at Banstead Centre, The Horseshoe, Banstead.**

Present: Mr. J Peacock Chairman
Mr D Atkins
Cllr. V Broad
Cllr. R Mantle
Mr. J Mill
Mr. J Milner Clerk

Also present were David Gradidge – Banstead Village RA., Linda Mount – Birds & Flowers, Alan Higgs – Reigate.

Part 1

1. Apologies for Absence

Mr. N Cull, Cllr. J Clarke, Mr. R Knights (Warden).

2. Appointment of Conservators and Election of Chairman

Notice had been received from RBBC that John Peacock had been re-appointed and John McCrea of 132 Holly Lane East, Banstead, appointed as Conservators for the next 3 years. John McCrea had not been informed of this meeting as the notification of his appointment had only been received the day before and not opened until the morning of the meeting.

Victor Broad proposed and John Mill seconded John Peacock as Chairman for the next year and he was duly elected.

3. Minutes of last Meeting

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

4. Matters Arising

i. Environmental Stewardship

a.i.i.a. **Grazing/Cut & Collect.** Three pens on Park Downs and one on Banstead Downs have been grazed and the sheep ceded into the ownership of the shepherdess. This method was cheaper than previously and more efficient as we were able to graze several areas.

a.i.i.b. **Natural England.** There has been no specific contact with Natural England during the last three months. The area for Higher Level Stewardship had been re-mapped resulting in our losing £2,000 per annum for land which they had previously categorised wrongly.

ii. **Travis Perkins** – Jane Kostelnyk, RBBC Commercial Property Solicitor, emailed that attempts to resolve this matter by negotiation, and

subsequently via determination by Land Registry, have not resulted in the resolution of the issue. The file will now be passed to Alan Parr to ascertain whether the council should bring proceedings against Travis Perkins.

- iii. **Summer Walks** – Conservators Walks will commence at 6.30pm on the first Tuesday of the months June, July, August and September and members of local RA's and similar groups are invited to join them. The dates and locations will be:

Tuesday 7th Downs. Meet halfway along High Down Road.

Tuesday 5th July 2016 – Park Downs. Meet at Holly Lane Car Park.

Tuesday 2nd August 2016 – Banstead Heath. Meet at Mill Road Notice Board.

Tuesday 6th September 2016 – Burgh Heath. Meet at the Notice Board by the pond.

- iv. **Intrusion onto Burgh Heath** – Chief Superintendent Twiss was now on an extended course but his response to an email was that he has required that all police internal policies be updated to reflect the most up to date legislation and interpretations as given by the Home Office. He believes that the individual case which did not go as well as we all have liked, was based on the fact that the damage to property was not identified at the time, and when it was the borough council had already started proceedings. He will later clarify the point of the police position if proceedings have been started by another authority.

Cllr. Broad has discussed various matters surrounding this issue with Chris Grayling and other local authorities but it appears that action at the time of notification of intrusion is the best way forward.

- v. **North Downs National Park Proposals.**

A proposal had been received to form a North Downs National Park for which purpose an inventory of existing protected areas, including Banstead Commons, was being collated. It was determined that if an approach was made for us to be included the Chairman and Clerk would meet with the proponents to discuss the issue.

- vi. **Request for Exchange of Land.**

A site visit had been made to The Cutting, Brighton Road, Banstead, and to allay concerns of safety for traffic accessing and egressing the main road had determined that there should be a hard surface at the point where the track joins the A217 Brighton Road. The following email string gives full details of the concession and the agreement by Mr Fowler and is included here as a permanent record.. The site will be inspected to ensure that the works comply with the agreement, particularly the strict condition of the hard surface being no more than 12 yards from the kerb.

Dear Mr Milner,

Many thanks for your approval and we acknowledge the new surface dimensions permitted.

Kind regards

Adam Fowler

On 14 Mar 2016, at 09:25, bansteadcommons@aol.com wrote:

Dear Adam,

I confirm that the plans are satisfactory but as they do not show measurements I stress that the new surface commences from the extent of the current dropped kerb and the distance along the track is no longer than **12 yards** from the roadside kerb.

John Milner

Clerk to the Conservators

-----Original Message-----

From: Adam Fowler <adamjhfowler@gmail.com>

To: John Milner <bansteadcommons@aol.com>; Alison Peet <alison.peet@reigate-banstead.gov.uk>

CC: Dr john Peacock <bansteadcommonsconservators@gmail.com>

Sent: Fri, 4 Mar 2016 11:21

Subject: Re: Access Safety Improvements, The Cutting.

Dear Mr Milner,

Alison Peet has kindly approved the drive alterations on behalf of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.

We are now working with the council's engineering department to confirm the specifications and standard of the resurfacing.

In accordance with your request, please find attached a plan drawn up by our Highways Consultants, Mayer Brown, as to the changes we will make.

Please can you confirm if these plans are satisfactory and that we may proceed with the work?

Kind regards

Adam Fowler

On 25 Feb 2016, at 11:24, bansteadcommons@aol.com wrote:

Dear Adam,

Many thanks for your proposals which have now been considered by the Conservators who are pleased to allay your fears. Accepting that there is a potential road safety problem if two vehicles are accessing and egressing the track at the same time the Conservators feel that there is a solution without the need for exchange of land. The kerb onto the A217 already has been dropped over a distance that would comfortably allow two vehicles to pass or a refuse lorry to enter; this appears to have been done a considerable time ago. If you took a line from the southern edge of the dropped kerb in a curve to the track adjacent to the Blackthorn bush, and took a yard off the northern side in

similar fashion then there would be space for two vehicles to stand side by side, off the road, and therefore being out of danger from other traffic.

Furthermore, we are agreeable to you tarmacking this area up to a maximum of 12 yards from the kerb so that there is a hard standing for vehicles both entering and leaving the track without the possibility of wheel spin on a loose surface at a crucial time. This would be conditional to you using a Reigate & Banstead Borough Council approved contractor to lay the surface. To accommodate this you would most likely have to remove the said Blackthorn and the gorse bushes on the northern side of the track which would also slightly improve lateral vision. As an additional safety factor you could also clear a passing place on the area of the track that you own so that if two vehicles meet on the track the one leaving can reverse to the passing place thus obviating any such manoeuvre close to the Brighton Road.

As owners of the land Reigate & Banstead Borough Council will need to agree to these alterations on the common and you may need to check with Surrey County Council Highways to see if they need to be involved.

We would need to see a copy of your plans before you go ahead but hope that this accommodation is sufficient to allay your fears of safety at this junction.

With Best Wishes,

John Milner

Clerk to the Conservators

vi. Blocked Culvert Winkworth Road.

SCC Highways claim they are not allowed to carry out any work on the commons. Clerk to contact and arrange for culvert to be cleared and possibly a ditch dug.

vii. Belmont Festival – 3rd July 2016

John Peacock will contact Nick Cull with a view to possible joint attendance.

5. Warden's Report

As well as the grazing mentioned above The Warden reported that some winter tasks had not been completed as the ground had been too wet to accept heavy machinery. Where possible they would be completed soon but some would wait until next winter. Staff were currently making sure that all road sides were secure from illegal intrusion by reshaping banks and ditches which have settled down through time and erosion and become less of a barrier, and replacing posts and installing new ones. Storms over Easter had caused trees to come down, all of which had been made safe and there are others which require attention. No damage had been caused to people or property. Coal tax posts are being cleaned and re-painted and are looking much better.

There has been some fly tipping, mostly garden waste (this is probably by one contractor and the Conservators authorised the use of a portable cctv to be used as necessary to collect evidence of such activities) and a car had been cut up and left on the common. A cable had been wire to a lamp post and ran 100 yards through the woods to an aerial up a tree to be used as a pirate radio station. This had been dismantled and was at the depot awaiting possible enquiry.

The new regulation introduced by Epsom Council that dogs being walked on Epsom Downs before 12 noon must be on a lead has led to a large increase in the number of

dogs being walked on Banstead Heath, This situation will be monitored to see if it is temporary or not and if it brings other issues with it.

6. Forthcoming Events

Burgh Heath Dog Show – Sunday 31st July 2016

7. Any Other Business

- i. RBBC were planning a Local Nature Reserve for the Banstead Woods, Chipstead Bottom area and had asked if we wished to include Park Downs in the planning. After considerable discussion it was considered that it would change the character of the commons and be more like a country park. With our own Act, SSSI and Stewardship grant there would be no benefit to Park Downs in LNR.
- ii. John Peacock said that we usually have about 50 – 100 views per month on our Facebook page but since he had put on an article about adders on Banstead Heath we had received 2,500 view and shares. He had also contacted vets in the area to ask them whether they carry anti venom serum. Most do not stock it as it is expensive and has a short shelf life but one vet in Dorking stocks it.
Victor Broad mentioned that there is a very useful App named Streetlife which breaks down information into very local areas which could be useful for this and other messages.
- iii. Richard Mantle apologised in advance for his absence from the July meeting and said that he missed the presence of Richard Knights at the meeting. It was explained that Richard had gone to Exmoor on invitation to view heather regeneration.

8. Date of the Next Meetings

16th July 2016

15th October 2016