

**MINUTES of the 583rd Meeting of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS
held on Saturday 19th January 2019 at The Banstead Centre, The Horseshoe, Banstead.**

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

Also present were;
Alan Higgs – Banstead Downs Golf Club
Gillian Hein – Tadworth & Walton RA
George Hinton – Nork RA
Ralph Maciejewski – Nork RA
Ben Clark – Horley Piscatorial Society
Matt Pipe – Horley Piscatorial Society
Roger Ponsford
David Gradidge – Banstead Village RA

Part 1

1. Apologies for Absence

Mr. J McCrea
Mr. N Cull
Warden

2. Minutes of last Meeting

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

3. Matters Arising

i. Environmental Stewardship

- a) **Grazing/Cut & Collect.** The sheep are now on Park Downs having finished on Banstead Downs. They are on the second pen on Park Downs and a third pen is currently being fenced. John Peacock said that the grazing was successful and beginning to show benefits, particularly on the butterfly transepts. There is now a total of 32 different species of butterfly on Banstead Downs and Park Downs. Jill Hall to be thanked for her work on Park Downs butterfly transepts.
 - b) **Natural England.** There has been no specific contact with Natural England during the last three months in respect of Higher Level Stewardship Agreement.
- ii. **Travis Perkins** –Steve McLeod (RBBC) had emailed to say that the Landlord's consent to the works has been obtained and Travis Perkins are now awaiting a quote for the works.

- iii. **Summer Walks** – It was agreed that at least one Conservator with knowledge of the common be in attendance at each walk and if the nominated Conservator has to withdraw he should find a replacement. Suggested dates for 2019 are:

7th May – Banstead Downs

4th June - -Park Downs – nominated Conservator John Peacock

2nd July – Banstead Heath – nominated Conservator – David Atkins

6th August – Burgh Heath

All walks starting at 6.00pm

4. 125th Anniversary of Banstead Commons Conservators

It was found that the current work replicated a previous history of the commons by Maurice Thompson which had not been officially published and a copy of which had recently come to hand. It was thought that that book should be updated with selected excerpts from it going onto the new web site.

5. Burgh Heath Pond

RBBC have issued fishing rights on Burgh Heath Pond, along with other ponds within the borough, to Horley Piscatorial Society. The Clerk had met with officers of the fishing society who were also present today to talk about their views on the way forward. Local residents would be contacted, probably through the Residents Association, to be kept informed of the intentions and progress of the club. Members would be recruited from the area as would the bailiffs to give some ownership to the project. There would be no fishing until late spring or summer of 2020 during which time the pond would be assessed for plant life, electrofished and then restocked.

Horley Piscatorial Society is a non-profit making group and any excess funds is spent on fishing or the immediate area of the fishing waters. Their ideals include teaching youngsters how to fish responsibly and not throw hooks and line into the pond or even abandon it if it happens accidentally. It is hoped through their presence that the social disorder of rowdyism, litter, noise and nuisance, all of which have been experienced in the past, will be eliminated to the satisfaction of the local residents.

6. Warden's Report

The Warden reported that staff had spent time erecting fences for the sheep to graze. One pen had been used on Banstead Heath and three on Park Downs all of which had to be erected and then taken down when the sheep finished grazing.

When conditions allowed scrub on the Sportsman Field had been cut and removed and when dry it was burned.

Over the Christmas holiday there was an increase in fly tipping which has now been removed; this is probably due to a combination of dark evenings and local tips not opening as regularly as they were. Motor bikes and quad bikes have been evident on the Heath and one occasion caused a rider to lose her horse which was later recovered. Although staff were on the Heath quickly the bikes had gone and, as usual, they had no number plates.

Roadside trees in need of attention have mostly been taken down. A lot of them are known as 'pussy willow' trees and tend to grow fast then start to lean and rot at the base so, if they are near property or roads they are taken down.

7. Forthcoming Events

None reported.

8. Any Other Business

- i. **Mere Pond** – Correspondence had been received from Withybed Corner Residents concerning increasing the level of water in Mere Pond, with which we would help wherever possible but the only pond in this area for which we are responsible is that next to The Bell Public House which does not form part of the watercourse to Mere Pond. In respect of clearing the nearby woodland (which is not Banstead Woods as stated in the correspondence) our policy will remain to ensure that the area is safe and thereafter non-intervention unless we consider it necessary. Intervention has taken place at Banstead Woods which appears to have been turned into a park rather than a nature reserve, whereas our areas are important habitat for wildlife and we do not wish to create a precedent by changing one of them. The Clerk will also check our boundaries in this area.
- ii. **David Gradidge** stated that this had been one of the driest Januarys' on record and we could expect repercussions later in the year. Although the reservoirs may be full the ground water level will be well below average.
- iii. **Gillian Hein** asked if the Tadworth & Walton Tree Wardens Group could manage the area between the end of the south side of Shelveys Way and the A217 and she was asked to itemise what they wished to do in a detailed work plan for further consideration. Gillian also said that the notices on the Notice Boards were in need of attention, to which was added the usefulness of a QR code for quick response.
- iv. **Alan Higgs** said there was still fly tipping taking place on the west side of the mad mile in areas where it may be difficult to get in to clear it.

9. Dates of the Next Meetings

27th April 2019 – note this is the 4th Saturday of the month as the 3rd is Easter week end.