

**MINUTES of the 578<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BANSTEAD COMMONS CONSERVATORS  
held on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017 at Banstead Library, The Horseshoe, Banstead.**

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

Also present were Alan Higgs (Banstead Downs Golf Club) and David Gradidge, BVRA.

The Banstead Centre not being open Cllr Mantle quickly arranged for the meeting to be held at Banstead Library.

**Part 1**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

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.** Having previously reported good results on Park Downs by cutting & collecting and then grazing it was now evident that plant species were much more abundant within the penned areas than without. With this in mind sheep were already in the pens for the forthcoming winter. There are 2 pens on Park Downs and then the sheep will be moved to Banstead Downs where the 2 pens next to Sutton Lane will be combined into one for grazing. The experiment of cutting strips of Peacock's Field once, twice or three times would continue. The strips cut three times are showing better surface results but would also benefit from grazing.
- 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 been pursuing this with Travis Perkins and reported that whereas Travis Perkins accepted that they had gone over the boundary they did not accept that they had entered onto the Common. It was not known what view the council might take of an intrusion onto their land but further maps were being sought to further identify the extent of the common at this location. It was also thought

that Travis Perkins should provide evidence to support their claim rather than the other way round. The Clerk will try to find details of an agreement with Travis Perkins for them to use the turning circle on the Common, which may also be relevant.

- iii. **Summer Walks** – The process for the Conservators summer walks appeared to work well last year with good numbers of the public accompanying the Conservators on the walks. The dates and locations for walks next year will be published at the January meeting so they are available to RA representatives at an early stage. The practise of submitting a written report for the information of members unable to attend should be resurrected and one member will volunteer to write up each walk. The Warden did not attend the walks as when he did so previously there was a spurious suggestion that he may direct them to more favourable parts of the common rather than the not so good areas.

#### 4. **125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Banstead Commons Conservators**

John Peacock is due another visit to the archives, hopefully with Ralph Maciejewski who will photograph the remaining minutes and items of interest.

#### 5. **Warden's Report**

The Warden reported that seasonal grass cutting has taken place and is now slowly coming to an end. The sheep are back on Park Downs and, although we have not experienced problems with dog attacks, other sites have, so, for the short time the sheep are there we will not have gates allowing the public to cross the pens. Tree inspections have revealed 3 trees near roads that need to come down and will be felled by a contractor whilst others, away from roads, will be dealt with by our staff. Fly tipping, mainly garden refuse, is on the increase and may be the dumpings of a particular garden contractor. Cut and collect is well under way. In the short term small area clearance work will take place on Park Downs together with some coppicing on both Park Downs and Banstead Heath. Brian Thomas, a contractor, has been instructed to again spray areas of Japanese Knotweed on the commons. He is well into a long term programme which is showing continually improved results.

#### 6. **Forthcoming Events**

None reported.

#### 7. **Any Other Business**

- i. **A footpath** has been cut out of the common by Chinthurst School staff. It consists of a membrane covered with wood chippings and no authority had been given for it. The common will be re-instated by the school removing the footpath and laying turf and, where necessary, grass seed, during the week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> November.
- ii. **The Siting of Walton Heath Golf Club new club house** was a topic under discussion around the village and there was a thought that we should object to it being built on Green Belt land. After lengthy discussion it was determined that we should remain neutral at this stage but pay attention to proceedings as we may wish to resurrect the issue at a later stage.

- iii. **Relaxation of section 38 of the Commons Act** has been mooted by a Guildford Borough Councillor who had written to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs requesting relaxation of section 38, in particular to Newlands Corner. Following the same rationale as the above item it was decided that we would wait until the 'Consultation' stage before becoming involved but that the Clerk will write to the Secretary of State to note our request to be involved if the matter reaches consultation.
- iv. **Burgh Heath had been the home of Diana Garner** who had moved away from the area in 1963. She had recently returned for a visit and had written her thoughts on the heath, some good, some not so good. Inevitably an area will change over a 50 year period and trees will grow on heathland if it is not used as a working heath and not grazed. John Peacock will write to Diana thanking her for her comments and explaining the change in the heath over 50 years.
- v. **John McRea had been interviewed on a BBC Radio Surrey** roadshow in Banstead and John Peacock thanked him for representing the Conservators on that occasion.
- vi. **The Mere Pond** was low on water and did not seem to have the flow of previous years. Cllr Broad said some work was being done in the area which may affect the flow through the ditch which was part of the common. The gullies towards The Bell and the old BT Police Training School appeared to be blocked and the areas around them sodden with water. It was hoped that by cleaning out the gullies the flow to the pond would be increased to everyone's benefit.
- vii. **Notice Boards on Banstead Downs** required attention. David Gradidge said that there were no notices on one and another (the one closest to Royal Marsden Hospital) was surrounded by large weeds and no-one could get near it. Nick Cull will deal with the first matter and The Warden with the second.

## 8.

### **Date of the Next Meetings**

20<sup>th</sup> January 2018

21<sup>st</sup> April 2018

21<sup>st</sup> July 2018

20<sup>th</sup> October 2018