



Epping Forest & Commons Committee

Date: MONDAY, 10 MARCH 2014
Time: 11.00 am
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members: Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg (Deputy Chairman)
George Abrahams
Deputy John Barker
Deputy Alex Deane (Ex-Officio Member)
Alderman Jeffrey Evans
Alderman Ian Luder
Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Sylvia Moys
Barbara Newman
Virginia Rounding
Ian Seaton

For consideration of Business Relating to Epping Forest Only

Verderer Peter Adams
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Richard Morris
Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas

Enquiries: Natasha Dogra 0207 332 1434
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Lunch will be served in the Guildhall Club at 1pm

**John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive**

AGENDA

Agenda

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

3. **MINUTES**

To agree the public minutes and summary of the previous meeting.

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 18)

4. **MINUTES OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES OF THE EPPING FOREST AND COMMONS COMMITTEE**

To receive the minutes of the Consultative Committees of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee.

For Information
(Pages 19 - 42)

Epping Forest

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent of Epping Forest to be heard.

For Information

6. **EPPING FOREST ENFORCEMENT OF ACTIVITY REPORT**

Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

For Decision
(Pages 43 - 50)

7. **EPPING FOREST OPERATIONS PROGRAMME FOR 2014-2015**

Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

For Decision
(Pages 51 - 76)

8. HIGHAMS PARK LAKE PROGRESS REPORT

Report of the City Surveyor.

For Decision
(Pages 77 - 84)

Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and the City Commons

9. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Superintendent of Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common to be heard.

For Information

10. INTRODUCTION OF DOG CONTROL ORDERS AT BURNHAM BEECHES

Report of the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons.

For Decision
(Pages 85 - 130)

11. BURNHAM BEECHES, STOKE COMMON AND CITY COMMONS MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES FOR 2014-15

Report of the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons.

For Decision
(Pages 131 - 136)

12. SPORTS AND MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

The Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and the City Commons.

For Decision
(Pages 137 - 140)

13. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Part 2 - Non-Public Agenda

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

MOTION: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

To Approve

16. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

To agree the non-public minutes of the previous meeting.

For Decision
(Pages 141 - 144)

17. EAGLE POND RESERVOIR

Report of the City Surveyor and Director of Open Spaces

For Decision
(Pages 145 - 150)

18. AMENDED LEASE RENEWAL TERMS - LOUGHTON GOLF CLUB, CLAYS LANE

Report of the City Surveyor.

For Decision
(Pages 151 - 154)

19. NON PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Monday, 13 January 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 13 January 2014 at
11.00 am

Present

Members:

Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy John Barker
Deputy Alex Deane
Alderman Jeffrey Evans
Sylvia Moys
Barbara Newman
Virginia Rounding
Ian Seaton
Verderer Peter Adams
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Richard Morris

In Attendance:

Adrian Liddle
Denise Dillon

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent, City Commons
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Roger Adams	- Senior Principal Surveyor, City Surveyor's Department
Paul Monaghan	- City Surveyor's Department
Julian Kverndal	- City Surveyor's Department
Jo Hurst	- Open Spaces

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy McGuinness and Verderer Thomas.

**2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN
RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were none.

3. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record, subject to items 12 and 13 being agreed by Members via email.

Matters arising:

The Town Clerk informed Members that the figures listed under item 4 in the minutes should be altered as follows:

Original budget 2014/15 = £4,788,000

Expenditure increase = £326,000

Increase in City Surveyor's Additional Works Programme of £337,000 for Epping Forest and £253,000 for Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons.

It was noted that 2014/15 Open Spaces Work Programme would be circulated to Members and Verderers in March 2014.

In response to a query regarding bovine TB, Officers informed Members that regular tests were carried out with no issue yet.

4. **WEST WICKHAM AND COMMONS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING DRAFT MINUTES**

The minutes were noted.

5. **BURNHAM BEECHES CONSULTATION GROUP MINUTES OF 11TH DECEMBER 2013**

Members asked Officers to list attendance at the meeting in the minutes in the future.

6. **TERMS OF REFERENCE UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk which informed Members that as part of the post-implementation review of the changes made to the governance arrangements in 2011 it was agreed that all Committees should review their terms of reference annually. This would enable any proposed changes to be considered in time for the reappointment of Committees by the Court of Common Council.

Members noted the Terms of Reference with one change made to clarify the quorum of the Committee with the following sentence being added to:

"For the purpose of non-Epping Forest related business the quorum must consist of five Committee Members who must be Members of the Court of Common Council."

Resolved: That Members agreed the Terms of Reference for the Committee, with one vote against the recommendation to approve the Terms of Reference.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received an update from the Superintendent of Epping Forest and noted the following points:

Staff changes

Football Development Officer has left to head up a public health initiative in a North London Borough. Visitor Services have successfully appointed a six month Internship with funding from (TBA while a new Volunteer Assistant Publications Officer is working at The Warren.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Policing and Bill - Changes in Dog Sentencing

Following the consultation last summer, new laws will be introduced in England and Wales raising the maximum jail sentence for the owner of a dog that kills someone from two to 14 years. In the consultation Epping Forest sought this parity with current sentencing guidance on motoring offences.

Environment Agency Flood Maps

On 12th December, the Environment Agency published new Flood Maps covering properties at risk from sea, river and surface water flooding.

Department of Environment, Farming & Rural Affairs - CAP Modulation

DEFRA have announced a 12% transfer from Pillar 1 (direct payments to farmers that previously replaced price supports) to Pillar 2 (rural development). DEFRA had previously argued for the full EU figure of 15%, but have responded to a NFU campaign for 9%. 87% Of payments will be through Natural England/RPA Agri-Environment Schemes with a review of schemes in 2016.

Local Government Information Unit Research on the Green Belt

National Trust sponsored research by the Local Government Information Unit shows 51% of LPAs likely or very likely to allocate GB for development purposes. Recent proposals in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement may encourage the release of Green Belt Land.

St Jude's Day Storm

A team of 12 staff have worked for four weeks to remove more than 250 trees and branches which have fallen close to roads, homes and paths. Costs are estimated at £45,000 and rising.

Christmas Storms

Continued stormy weather with winds gusting over 60mph has brought down further trees and branches, with four further road closures on Christmas Eve alone. Wind-driven rain has also damaged the western elevation of the Hunting Lodge removing the lime 'paint' and render. Epping Forest also received over twice the average rainfall in December and the trend is continuing for January. Sections of the Forest have been again flooding onto the local roads system. It was reported that the localised flooding at Pillow Mounds has been solved by the installation of drains.

Fisheries Management

Cuts at the Environment Agency have led to a loss of £10,000 funding to support our work with free public fishing on 25 ponds and lakes in Epping Forest.

Joint patrols with Fishery Enforcement Officers

Forest Keepers have jointly patrolled with Fisheries Enforcement Officers to address deliberate fishing without licenses and removing fish that were being caught. Five anglers were prosecuted across 2013 with fines totalling £2,600.

Horse fatality at Rangers Road

Forest Keepers and Operations staff worked closely with the Emergency Services following an incident involving a runaway horse which collided with a vehicle on Rangers Road. After sedation, the injured horse was successfully retrieved from a roadside ditch, but had to be destroyed due to the extent of its injuries.

Quad Bike Incident

8 Keepers were involved with the arrest of a Quad Bike rider who assaulted 2 Forest Keepers in early January. Essex Police provided timely and welcome support and both rider and passenger were arrested.

Fly tipping

Total fly tipping incidents were down 24.8% or 181 incidents from 731 in 2012 to 550 for the whole of 2013. This welcome return to pre- 2005 fly tipping levels shows a 39.3% overall fall from the record 2011 figure of 907 incidents. The impact of the economic downturn seems to continue with less household waste and an increasing element of commercial waste. National coverage of fly tipping issues at Epping Forest was achieved on the back of a Tweet involving an image of a dumped 'big cat' soft toy.

Rough Sleepers

Forest Keepers attended a record 51 rough sleeper camps across the year, largely in the south of the Forest. For the first time Keepers were asked to participate in the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) rough sleeper count which informs the national estimate. The official figure will be released in Spring, but early indications suggest levels in local boroughs close to the Forest are high for Outer London borough, a trend which is particularly reflected at Wanstead Flats.

Year of the Dog Initiative

The London Borough of Waltham Forest Dog Control Orders (DCOs) were advertised 16th December and came into force on 6th January 2014. In light of the new DCOs at Epping District and Waltham Forest and the increase in dog incidents, Epping Forest will be launching 10 public talks with a Forest Keeper and Animal Behaviourist to help dog walkers, two 'Paws' dog fun days at Wanstead Park and The View in addition to training with LBWF and hopefully the London Borough of Redbridge on DCO Fixed Penalty Notices.

Great Gregories Outwintering Facility

Cattle were taken off the Forest on TBA. Following planning and procurement delays the project is now running behind schedule. Adverse weather has delayed the temporary straw bale housing which will be used to accommodate the cattle during the winter.

The Grotto, Wanstead Park

Further damage to the Grade II Listed Building by self-seeded trees within the fenced area has changed the previous policy of 'camouflaging' The Grotto with scrub. As discussed on the November Committee visit clearance of the building has been initiated with dramatic results.

Cattle Grids – Meeting with Horse Riding interests

A series of meetings have been held including Natural England and British Horse Society in which help suggestions were made on surfaces and gate locations. Similar meetings were held with the Epping Forest Riders Association regarding both grids and fencing gates.

Staff Conference

Staff from Epping Forest and Cemetery and Crematorium jointly organised a very successful Departmental staff conference in December for TBA staff.

Gifford Wood

Forest Keepers from the North Team supported a community planting event for a series of local schools, ahead of a well-attended public planting event on 14th December with over 120 planters planting some TBA trees.

Family Learning Events

600 children visited Father Christmas at the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge over the weekend of 14/15th December complete with a craft fair and reindeer.

Highams Park Lake Large Raised Reservoir

The City Surveyor has appointed Royal Haskoning DHV as design contractors for the dam project. A construction contractor will be appointed shortly. Walthamstow Scouts have been asked to sign a Tenancy-at-Will covering their occupation to the start of works. Pre-Application meetings with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) have indicated that an Environmental Impact Assessment will not be required. The LPA have yet to determine the development status of the project.

City of London Contract Partner – MITIE – Moratorium on Works

The City Surveyor has announced a 4 month moratorium in December on all but Health and Safety critical works.

GLA 'Mini-Holland' Proposals

The London Boroughs of Newham and Waltham Forest have both been short-listed for the final round of the GLA's cycling awards. Both Boroughs have been informed that they cannot rely on Forest Land for Mini-Holland schemes without the approval of your Committee.

Friends of Bush Wood

Forest Keepers have worked closely with the Bush Wood Area Residents Association (BARA) to develop a series of conservation tasks delivered by a new Friends Group which has cleared Bush Wood's only pond and improved a series of woodland paths.

Outreach – Rokeby School and Kids Company

The Community Outreach Officer, Forest Keepers and Kids Company have supported practical conservation tasks for children from Rokeby School during November and December.

Gifford and Rowan Trails

Two new waymarked trails have been completed at Epping Forest, the Gifford Trail in Upsire and the Rowan Trail at Lords Bushes and Knighton Wood. This brings the number of waymarked trails at Epping Forest to nine.

Epping Forest Visitor Survey

Staff and volunteers have completed 1083 completed visitor questionnaires. The contract with Alison Millward Associates is now complete and Epping Forest is now fully responsible for the survey. Survey data has recently been cross-matched with the Hazardous Tree Review to ensure areas of high visitor density coincide with the most regular survey thresholds.

Landscaping at Jubilee Pond

The landscaping works at Jubilee Pond are now complete following the resurfacing of the car park which opened on 9th December. Two planting tasks have been completed ahead of the main spring planting together with adjustments to the natural play area.

Volunteer Conservation Tasks

Volunteers have been clearing paths at Wanstead Park and clearing holly and associated scrub at Leyton Flats. Since April we have recruited 20 new volunteers working in five different roles.

Cloister - T E Lawrence Hut

The death of Peter O'Toole, famous for his portrayal of T E Lawrence, has renewed interest in the Cloister, the hut on Pole Hill shared by T E Lawrence and Viv Richards which is now located in The Warren Yard. The Superintendent is working with Lawrence's biographer to research the history of the hut. The City Surveyor is awaiting the outcome of this research before potentially commissioning a Conservation Management Plan for the building.

A Verderer asked if we could allocate resources to ditch clearing to improve flooding onto roads. Officer said City Surveyors were assessing ditches, culverts and bridges to clarify condition and responsibility. Officers were also working closely with Local Authorities in problem areas being included into works programme. Bridges were the responsibility of City Surveyors, ditches, however the responsibility of Epping Forest culverts was yet to be undecided.

In response to a query regarding the 'mini Holland' scheme Officers informed Members that it was a series of cycle ways with extension of public rental bikes. The London Borough of Newham had been shortlisted but City Corporation Officers had made it clear that Forest land was not available without the full consent of this Committee.

A query was raised regarding how Highams Park Lake was coping with the recent rain. Officers said the rain had been prolonged and continuous but not heavy. The dams had all coped as they should

In response to a query regarding the limewash on Hunting Lodge Officers said decisions were made and agreed on the limewash previously by this Committee as the most authentic and beneficial treatment for the exterior. Officers would be re-rendering where the rain has caused damage.

A Verderer raised a query regarding whether there would be further pressure throughout the Forest if this cycle scheme went ahead. Officers said the Management Plan was addressing this issue.

8. PROGRESS REPORT - BRANCHING OUT (HERITAGE LOTTERY PROJECT) UPDATE NUMBER 10

The Committee received the report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest informing Members that the Branching Out projects were broadly on track, with capital elements largely complete: Jubilee Pond landscaping and car park works were finished and all four cattle grids had been installed with minor snags being addressed by Essex County Council.

Three new apprentice arborists had been recruited for the final year of the scheme. The spend profile matches the programme. The focus for the next six months was on the design of Gateways and a standard approach to Forest furniture, now that the Open Spaces branding exercise was nearing completion.

The Director informed Members that the report had been considered by the Finance Committee, where the Chairman had asked for the following information to be added to the report for clarity:

“Budget variances reflect a contingency claim from HLF to cover a £22,747 increase in the arborist salary and training budget. Apprentices were older with higher salaries than estimated due in part to the requirement for them to have a driving licence. The City and Guilds Land Based Services Assessments are now paid by the Corporation, rather than the training college, as originally planned.

Other changes are minimal or reflect transfers of miscoded items from revenue to capital, which balance out. They include £1,200 for the vehicle crossover to access the rear of Butler’s Retreat adjusted from fees to works; the transfer of £4,000 from works to fees for a Highways Deed of Easement at High Beach, and; virement of £1,400 to balance the budget lines for the project manager’s salary, which is split between two projects. There is no change to the overall budget allocation, which includes a contingency sum.”

Members noted that new volunteer roles comprised cattle warden and publication assistant, alongside a renewed recruitment drive for the Forest Centres. A drop-in volunteering day was held in October specifically for young people.

Members were informed that three new apprentices have been appointed. Two of the apprentices completed the full programme in 2012/13 but one was asked to leave, although he may complete the Capel Manor course.

An additional page that included VAT charges was circulated to Members with clarification on financial data by request of Chamberlain.

Officers informed Members that the Lottery had been very understanding in delays to Keystone Tree work due to conditions and had permitted carry-over of targets to after project end.

A Verderer raised the point in relation to the Gateways and Signage. These were to be completed by spring 2014 but Members had not yet seen designs. Officers said Member approval would be sought for the gateway design before commissioning.

Members also noted that the Heritage Lottery Fund had a very clear formula on calculation on how to express volunteer stats for matched funding and Officers reported volunteer stats according to that.

Resolved: That Members approved the overall budget total, subject to Heritage Lottery approval.

9. **EPPING FOREST VISITOR SERVICES ACTIVITIES**

The Committee received the report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest informing Members of Visitor Services' objectives and operational priorities for the coming financial year.

Members were informed that there were seven areas the Visitor Services Department focus on and they were as follows:

- i) Delivering an information service to Epping Forest visitors primarily through the flagship Visitor Centre at The View and Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge and also at The Temple and High Beach Visitor Centre.
- ii) Providing memorable visits and income through complimentary retail activity.
- iii) Delivering Life Long Learning sessions concentrating on Tudor History and provide support to three external Learning Partners that provide ecological learning sessions.
- iv) Entertaining visitors to Epping Forest through the management and hosting of Forest Events.
- v) Interpreting the significance of Epping Forest through exhibitions and publications such as Forest Focus and the Events Diary.
- vi) Developing a communications presence for Epping Forest through publications, the City of London Website, Press statements and social networking platforms such as Twitter.
- vii) Developing wider public participation in formal sport, especially football at Wanstead Flats and golf at Chingford.

Visitor Services Priorities were set out as follows:

- i) Health and Safety of all
- ii) Visitor Experience
- iii) Heritage, Education and Learning
- iv) High Quality Events
- v) Positive P.R. (both internal and external)
- vi) Income Generation
- vii) Sustainability

A point was raised by a Verderer regarding the income generated by High Beech Visitor Centre and the high level of visits Centre, making it clear that High Beach was an essential site and must be retained.

Officers said the Centre remained an attraction, but there was a sure and steady increase on visits and sales at The View. Officers were still searching for volunteers and partners suitable for High Beach and wished to retain all three.

Verderers said it would be useful to have High Beech Visitor Centre run by volunteers and queried whether this was the case at the Temple and whether we increase corporate and private hire there.

Officers said they were trying to improve volunteer involvement at all sites. The Temple was manned by two staff during opening hours and these were supported by volunteers. Illyria income was included in these budgets. Corporate hospitality was also increasing at the Hunting Lodge and The View

Officers agreed to present Members with a broken down summary of income and expenditure in Visitor Services to the next meeting.

The reference to works to be carried out to the Capel Road changing rooms during 2014 was removed.

10. PROPOSED EPPING FOREST LICENCE AND PRODUCE CHARGES 2014

The Committee received the report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest updating Members on the charges levied for the management of various Forest licences and produce sales at Epping Forest and sought approval for the proposed charges for 2014/15.

The licencing of activity on Forest Land had raised a total so far in 2013/14 of £9,898. Produce sales had generated £1,132 and Horse Riding Licences a further £10,524. Charges for licences had been raised by a figure of 3% with the exception of Horse Licences charges, which remained fixed since their introduction in 2003.

The additional byelaws for the regulation of Horse Riding were introduced at Epping Forest on 20 June 2003. The fees that could be charged for horse rising licences are set out in the byelaws, and were the only charges that have remained static since introduction. Prices for licences were set having regard to matters set out in the byelaws, could be reviewed from time to time, and can

only rise by the Retail Price Index from the period that the prices were last reviewed. Based on the Bank of England inflation calculator a full year Riding School licence would now cost in the £54.73 £56.32 range (based on the precise RPI indexation).

In response to a query from Members it was noted that the charges levied under Horse Riding licence scheme were designed to realise 50% of the costs of maintaining surfaced and posted rides which were the only available access for horses during the closed riding season.

Officers informed the Committee that Horse licences had not changed and neither had model aircraft – although the latter were fixed under the byelaws. Officers wanted to have a wider conversation with users on fishing, football, golf, horse riding and other activities widely subsidised by us, to foster a greater understanding of this issue. A formula did exist for the calculation of horse licence fees, directly related to the maintenance costs of the rides, but this was drawn up on estimates of thousands of riders rather than hundreds.

A Verderer raised the point that the amount of VAT had risen since these charges were first set so practical income had decreased. There had been rumours that riders may not be paying until they are made to pay. Officers responded saying that they did have ‘stop days’ for Golf, riding etc where they check licences and had made two prosecutions recently. Most riders do have licences and Officers also double check when holders cancel or fail to renew.

In response to a Verderer query regarding livery yards Officers said a change was made to the scheme regarding schools as they effectively rent out horses to different students for lessons. However, this was not the case at livery yards so licencing was still the responsibility of the owner. Officers would like to make it easy for yards to collect fees on our behalf (not currently possible) particularly as the reduced opening at High Beach has made it more difficult for some riders to pay.

Officers informed Members that the record income for horse-riding licences was three years ago, and the lowest was only £1000 lower so the amounts are reasonably constant.

Officers informed Members that fees for filming in the forest would be dealt with under a separate report to be considered by Committee in the future.

In response to a query regarding fitness training in the forest there had been a noticeable growth of this style of organisation. Officers agreed that using the area around the war memorial for fitness training was not an appropriate activity and agreed to investigate the matter further.

Resolved: That Members:

- Approved the proposed charges for 2014/15
- Approved the delegation to the Superintendent of discretionary powers to set terms and conditions and impose deposit arrangements for licences, and to set charges in the case of unusual licence requests.

11. **EPPING FOREST DOG INCIDENTS 2013**

The Committee received the report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest informing Members of the level of dog-related incidents, which occurred on Epping Forest and the Buffer lands that had been reported to the Conservators from January to November 2013 and the number of prosecutions for dog related offences. The report showed that there was a varied degree of increase or decline in the figures shown for the five types of incidents monitored and that further monitoring was necessary to pick up any trends.

There had been 482 reported incidents from 1 January 2013 to 31 November 2013 compared with 396 for the same period in 2012, an overall increase of 21.7%.

Members noted that the report indicated the estimated dog visits per year; the percentage of reported incidents which included fouling was very low and not a major discussion point for the Committee.

12. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received an update from the Director of Open Spaces on behalf of the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, and Members noted the following:

Christmas Storms

- The Burnham Beeches site was closed fully for 1 day (Christmas eve) and partially on two further occasions. No major damage was done in the area but some clearance was required on each occasion. The Christmas period saw limited staff on duty which made this a particularly challenging period for those on rota.

Events – 1300 participants attended the following events:

- Christmas carols at the Café and lantern making - 100 people attended
- Hosted school 9 visits– 540 students attended
- Guided walks x 2 – 45 people attended
- Health walks x 4 – 40people attended

The total number of volunteer hours was 1331 (366 hours were accrued by under 18s)

Ongoing projects included:

- Heathland restoration
- Post storm clear up
- Ancient tree survey
- Office support work.

Stoke Common

- Continuation of heathland restoration works at SC – 1.5 Ha of Mulching – stumps and young birch
- Additional 0.5Ha of secondary woodland cleared on the north common.

Burnham Beeches

- Work on pollards with MEWP (Mobile elevated work platform) + tree safety following storms Joint work with NLOS to cable brace a pollard.
- Narrowing of Lord mayors drive undertaken – included the complete re-modelling of one side of the entrance apron, provision of a pedestrian access path, drainage and tarmac works.
- Additional Works Programme (City Surveyor) - 350sqm of tarmac repair were carried out on Lord Mayor's Drive

Staff Changes

The Assistant information Ranger/Conservation Officer was due to leave her post at the end of January and the recruitment process had begun.

13. INTRODUCTION OF DOG CONTROL ORDERS AT BURNHAM BEECHES

The Committee received the report of the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, which sought Member approval to proceed to the statutory consultation phase for the introduction of Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve, using the powers provided under Secondary Authority status.

The Director of Open Spaces had recently received a lengthy response from the Kennel Club which required further investigation by Members. The Committee agreed that in order to make a decision on the matter Members must address the points raised in the Kennel Club response. The following Members agreed to attend a two hour meeting in the beginning of February with the Director, Superintendent and a Member of the Burnham Beeches Consultative Committee:

- Deputy Deane
- Ian Seaton
- Stanley Ginsburg
- Verderer Adams

The Chairman also suggested that George Abrahams may wish to take part in the meeting. It was noted that although the Verderers could take part in the discussions on this matter they would not be able to vote on the decision.

Resolved: Members agreed that the decision would be deferred until the March Committee meeting.

14. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received an update from the Superintendent of City Commons, and Members noted the following points:

Storms

Christmas storms caused damage to trees across City Commons, consequently, the Rangers on duty were very busy making the sites safe and clearing fallen trees. The Ranger team should be congratulated for their commitment over this period having to do a series of zone 1 tree safety inspections each time the wind exceed 45MPH.

Byelaw Enforcement

A prosecution under the byelaws in relation to a dog not under effective control on Riddlesdown is progressing. The court hearing has been deferred and we are waiting for a new date to be announced.

Bridleway 38 – Ashtead Common

The surfacing of Bridleway 38 from Craddock's Avenue to Lady Howards Crossing has been successfully completed taking advantage of a very dry spell of weather in late November early December.

Holmefield Road – Coulsdon Common

Posts have been installed successfully alongside Holmefield Road, the intension of these posts is to prevent vehicles encroaching onto the Common.

Cattle

The last of our breeding cattle left Farthing Downs in December. Some were sold and 16 have moved to Epping Forest for over wintering. The 13 one-year old calves are grazing Lower Woodplace Farm Field on the west side of the Downs, having moved there from Kenley Common on New Year's Eve. The two-year old cows are in our barn at Merlewood and have been blood tested before being moved to Epping Forest in late January. This will allow space to house the one-year old calves in February & March.

Sheep

Some of our sheep are grazing Tollers Field on the east side of New Hill where they are likely to be joined by sheep from Kenley Common and Riddlesdown later in January.

Volunteer numbers

By the end of December volunteers have contributed 8019 hours this is 5% up on the same point last year.

Events

The Rangers organised 13 guided walks during November & December and I pleased to report a big increase in participation in the Health Walking Scheme in the first week of January.

Kenley Air show

The organisers of the Kenley Charity Air Show have postponed the event for 2014 and have indicated their intension to apply for a licence to hold an air show in September 2015.

Kenley Revival Project – Kenley Common

The part time, fixed term contract Project Development Officer has been appointed final arrangements are in hand and late January start date is expected. The first Project Board meeting has been booked for the 20th January 2014.

Staff Changes

On the 6th January 2014, the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common took on responsibility for the seven Commons in Surrey and South London. Bob Warnock has started a two month period shadowing the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath and will take on responsibility for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park on the 1st March 2014.

A Ranger based in the Coulsdon Commons team left at the end of December to dedicate her time to her young family. In addition, a Ranger will leave at the end of January to take up a new position with the National Trust as an Area Ranger in the Lake District, based in Coniston.

Restructure

The Superintendents are consulting staff on the restructure at City Commons. This will conclude tomorrow and a final report will be presented to the Director of Open Spaces and the Human Resources Business Partner as the proposals fall within the Directors delegations.

The structure aligns and clarifies the roles and responsibilities for the three Head Rangers, together with a supporting Senior Ranger to the tree charities Ashtead Common, Coulsdon Commons and West Wickham Commons.

The proposed structure creates four specialist Ranger posts the focus of these posts will be woodland, livestock, conservation and information to help ensure consistency across the Division.

The proposals include changing five job titles, updating job descriptions and person specifications across the Division and include the position of an Apprentice Ranger based in the Ashtead team.

The proposals are cost neutral and the aim is to implement the new structure on the 1st April 2014.

Budget 2013/14

We have completed the budget monitoring for end of December based on 75% of the fiscal year lapsed. At this point the Ashtead Budget shows 83.50% spent and the combined Coulsdon Commons and West Wickham Commons 77.50% spent.

Work Programmes

Work programmes for 2013/14 are on track.

The Management Priorities and work programmes for 2014/15 have been prepared and are being presented to the three Consultative Committees in January & February 2014. These will then be presented to the Epping Forest & Commons Committee in March 2014.

Green Flag and Green Heritage Applications for 2014 were being progressed and the deadline for submission was the end of January 2014.

On behalf of the Committee the Chairman thanked the staff at all of the sites for their hard work in such difficult conditions.

15. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were none.

16. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were three matters considered urgent by the Chairman:

1. Management and secondment arrangements following the resignation of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath

Following the resignation of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park, Members were informed on the details of the secondment arrangements, to ensure the effective management of North London Open Spaces is maintained and in particular, the "Ponds Project", continues to be delivered. Members thanked the Superintendents for all of their hard work and their readiness to add new areas to their remits. Members offered their continued support to the Officers.

2. Highams Park Conservation Management Plan – Progress Report

On 8 July 2013 in a joint report of the City Surveyor and the Superintendent of Epping Forest regarding the dam at Highams Park, there was reference to the need for a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the park to support the Planning Permission process for the dam project. Members agreed that the draft consultation required more work and offered to email their comments to the City Surveyor to incorporate into the current draft and present at the Committee meeting in March.

The Superintendent agreed to send the City Surveyor notes of local meetings.

3. Schedule of Committee visits 2014

The Town Clerk presented the following schedule to Committee Members:

Epping Forest & Commons
8 March (Epping Forest)
10 May (Epping Forest)
14 June (City Commons)
5 July (Burnham Beeches)
11 June Ladies Day, EF
*6 September (Epping Forest)
<i>To Be Confirmed</i> October Dorneywood LM visit
1 November (Epping Forest)

Resolved: That Members agreed the Schedule of Visits.

17. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

18. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

Resolved: That Members agreed the minutes as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

19. **'VERBAL UPDATE BY THE CITY SURVEYOR & SUPERINTENDENT OF EPPING FOREST ON HIGHAMS PARK LAKE DAM PROPOSALS FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The Committee received the report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest and the City Surveyor.

20. **OPTIONS APPRAISAL - JUBILEE RETREAT**

The Committee received the report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

21. PROPOSED HIGHWAYS DEDICATION OF FOREST LAND (HAWKSMOUTH)

The Committee received the report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

22. NON PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were none.

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chairman

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ASHTEAD COMMON CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE Tuesday, 18 February 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Ashtead Common Consultative Committee held at Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 18 February 2014 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg (Deputy Chairman)
Barbara Newman
Douglas Mobsby
Bob Eberhard (CTC Local Rights of Way)
Professor David Hawksworth (Ashtead Residents' Association)
Wyn James (Ashtead Common Volunteers)
Councillor John Northcott (Mole Valley District Council)
Councillor Chris Townsend (Surrey County Council)

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan - Town Clerk's Department
Andy Barnard - Superintendent, Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common & City Commons
Andrew Thwaites - Head Ranger, City Commons
Shaun Waddell - Senior Ranger, City Commons

In attendance:

George Gillon - Chief Commoner

1. APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Commoner to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Joseph Byllam-Barnes, David Baker, Councillor Helen Cocker, Paul Krause and Pippa Woodall. The Town Clerk noted that David Baker was represented at the meeting by Professor David Hawksworth.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on Monday 1 July 2013 be approved as a correct record, subject to the last two bullet points on item 5, page 5 being deleted.

Matters Arising

Committee Membership

The Head Ranger noted that a local youth worker had put himself forward as a candidate to be a member of the Committee. The Chairman welcomed this potential addition to the Committee's membership and expressed the hope that it would lead to greater youth involvement in Ashtead Common.

Newton Wood

The Head Ranger noted that he had contacted the new owners of Newton Wood and would be meeting with them shortly. Members suggested that the new owners be invited to Committee's July site visit to the Common.

4. ASHTEAD COMMON CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Town Clerk invited the Committee to approve their draft Terms of Reference, noting that some minor amendments had been made to them since they were last considered by the Committee in July 2013.

RESOLVED –

- That the Ashtead Common Consultative Committee Terms of Reference be approved.

5. INTRODUCTION TO STRUCTURAL CHANGES

The Chairman introduced the item on structural changes by informing the Committee that the City of London had made major changes to its management structure following the appointment of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath as Chief Executive of Wimbledon and Putney Commons. As a result the Superintendent of City Commons Bob Warnock had moved to Hampstead Heath to take up the interim position of Superintendent of Hampstead Heath. The Chairman placed on record his thanks to Bob for his work across the City Commons and at Ashtead Common in particular, which the members endorsed.

The Chairman went on to introduce the Andy Barnard, the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons, noting that he had worked closely with Andy in Andy's previous capacity as Superintendent of Burnham Beeches. He added that Andy was a very talented conservator and manager, and that whilst the logistics involved in covering Stoke Common, Burnham Beeches and the City Commons were enormous, he was confident that City Commons staff would find they had a good leader and manager.

Wyn James noted that the Ashtead Common Volunteers wished to place on record their thanks to Bob Warnock.

The Superintendent noted that he was aware of the strong legacy that Bob Warnock had left across the City Commons. He went on to introduce himself, noting that he had been involved in the management of Open Spaces since the 1970s, beginning as a volunteer. He had moved to Burnham Beeches in 1996. He added that he was passionate about the environment, biodiversity and sustainability. On a personal level he had been married 24 years and had a 34 year old daughter, and he was a keen kayaker and cyclist. He concluded by noting that the current management arrangements were for 14 months and therefore were not necessarily permanent.

The Superintendent then went on to outline the structural changes to staffing across the City Commons, noting that the process had begun under his predecessor in 2011 and was now nearing completion. He highlighted the fact that a new position of Head Ranger had been created for West Wickham Common and Spring Park.

In response to a question from Cllr Townsend regarding how often he would be visiting each site, the Superintendent replied that he would remain based at Burnham Beeches, and aimed to spend one day per week at each of the Commons, with a

further day spent at Guildhall. He added that he planned to set aside one day per month for a dedicated site visit to each site.

In response to a question from Barbara Newman regarding staffing changes at each of the Commons, the Superintendent replied that a balance would be struck between maintaining continuity and allocating staff where they were best suited.

6. **SUMMARY REPORT OF THE VISITOR SURVEY 2012**

The Head Ranger introduced a report of the Superintendent on the Volunteer Survey 2012, noting that it had been an observational survey by volunteers walking set routes across the City Commons and recording persons and activities. In general terms 40% of users had been walkers, 30% dog walkers and 20% cyclists. He acknowledged that the methodology of the survey had made it difficult to accurately assess the use of the Commons by disabled members of the public.

The Committee went on to discuss the report, with the following comments being made:

- The Chairman noted that there was a desire to conduct further research into patterns of use upon the City Commons and therefore feedback from members of the Committee was welcomed.
- Councillor Northcott suggested that disparities in the data may have arisen from the survey being conducted upon different days of the week.
- The Senior Ranger commented that, anecdotally, Sundays were indeed busier than Saturdays upon Ashted Common and that activity tended to be concentrated on 'honey pot' areas of the Common.
- As part of a general discussion on cycling:
 - Bob Eberhard commented that it would be interesting to research how many cyclists were family groups.
 - Wyn James commented that it would be useful if cyclists could be educated to give adequate warning when approaching those on foot from behind.
 - Bob Eberhard noted that there was sometimes conflict between cyclists and loose dogs.
 - Members discussed the potential for cycling signage but felt that, given the nature of Ashted Common, that an addition to the City of London entrance sign, any further signage on the site would be inappropriate.
 - The Superintendent commented that educating different user groups was one of the functions of the site rangers.
- In response to a question from the Deputy Chairman regarding the report's conclusions regarding Ashted Common, namely that visitor numbers were lower than at comparable sites; there being few observations of children at play; and there being few observations of people with visible disabilities, the Head Ranger replied that similar issues had been discussed at the meeting of the Coulsdon Common Consultative Committee on 12 February 2014, and that

one of the priorities arising from the Visitor Survey was to establish how such issues could be addressed.

- Wyn James commented that he knew of one regular user of the Common who was disabled.
- The Senior Ranger commented that it was less common for children to use the Common by themselves as it had been, arguably, a generation ago.
- Councillor Northcott commented that the visitor numbers to Coulsdon Common –5,000 persons – seemed low by comparison to other sites.
- In response to a query from Douglas Mobsby regarding the disparity in the way information was presented between Coulsdon Common and Farthing Downs, the Head Ranger replied that this was likely due to the summary nature of the report and that further details explaining patterns of site-use was available within the overall Visitor Survey.

7. **VOLUNTEER IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2013**

The Head Ranger introduced a report of the Superintendent on the Volunteer Improvement Plan 2013. He noted that volunteers made a huge contribution to the City Commons and that Ashted Common, in particular, would not be what it was without it. He added that rangers were keen to develop volunteer leaders and assisting external partners from doing the same. He highlighted the Volunteer Tree Warden scheme as one of the successful outcomes of the plan during 2013 and that a further plan would be developed next year.

In response to a question from Professor Hawksworth over whether volunteers were trained in understanding the ecology of sites, the Senior Ranger replied that training on ecological matters tended to take place on a task-by-task basis as part of the task briefing.

Barbara Newman welcomed the effort that rangers were putting into developing volunteer roles and the news that voluntary attendance at Ashted Common was popular.

In response to a question from Councillor Townsend regarding the continuation of the Volunteer Tree Warden Scheme continuing now that a member of staff had left, the Head Ranger confirmed that it would be continued.

In response to a question from the Chief Commoner whether any Freedoms of the City had been awarded to City Commons volunteers, the Chairman confirmed that these had taken place, and furthermore volunteers were also invited to an annual reception at Epping Forest to thank them for their contributions.

In response to the observation from Wyn James that high numbers of volunteers were coming forward at Ashted Commons, the Senior Ranger confirmed that, to maximise efficient task allocation and volunteer satisfaction, tasks were designed for a maximum group size of 20-24 persons which inevitably meant that a small waiting list was maintained of persons wishing to volunteer some time on the Common.

8. **KEY PROJECTS AND ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14**

The Head Ranger introduced a presentation on Key Projects and the Annual Work Programme during 2013/14. He summarised achievements under the City Commons management priorities as follows:

Visitor Experience

Ashtead Common had received top marks in the Green Flag inspection, and the Green Flag judges had taken the opportunity to meet with volunteers during the course of their inspection.

Consultation

New arrangements for the Ashtead Common Consultative Committee had been introduced during 2013 and a format of a Winter meeting and Summer site visit had been established.

Conservation Grazing

A Grazing Business Plan was being developed.

Tree Health

Trees had continued to be monitored for tree disease, both by rangers and Volunteer Tree Wardens.

Kenley Revival Project

The application for the first round of Heritage Lottery Funding had been successful and a project officer appointed to develop the application for the second round appointed.

In response to a question from Councillor Townsend over whether concerns over cattle safely grazing on the Common had been dealt with, the Senior Ranger replied that the cause of the cattle deaths was still unexplained and consequently we will need to think carefully before developing any plans to graze the affected area again.

The Senior Ranger then updated members on key projects for 2014/15, noting:

Veteran Tree Survey

It was year 4 of the programme and officers were developing a condition assessment to establish how effective the work conducted to date had been. Rangers were currently up to date with their halo relief programme. Overall the veteran tree programme was absorbing a significant amount of the Ashtead Common grounds maintenance budget.

Conservation Grazing

Five cattle currently overwintering with Pippa Woodall would be returned to the Common once ground conditions improved.

In response to concerns from Professor Hawksworth over whether cattle dung had a negative ecological impact upon the Common, the Senior Ranger replied that a baseline ecological survey of Phoenix Field had been undertaken to assess its impact. Moreover, rangers were not particularly concerned given they tended to undergraze areas across the Common in accordance with the Environmental Stewardship Scheme agreement – for example, the City was required to allow a six week flowering period each year uninterrupted by grazing.

Welcoming Site

Two volunteers had carried out an audit of the entrances to the Common and their findings had contributed to the development of a programme of signage improvements

and reorganisation of access points. Phase 2 of works would continue in 2014 and would include replacement of more signage.

Halo Release

As per the Veteran Tree Survey, halo release works would continue this year. Once completed, the works carried out would require ongoing grounds maintenance.

Bracken Control

This was a particular problem at Ashtead Common and presented a fire risk. As of Summer 2013 bracken clearance was up to date and rangers hoped to maintain progress into 2014. The bracken was cut and collected with the piles of cuttings provided good shelter for grass snakes.

Successional Areas

Work would continue to maintain scrub/grassland mix to encourage breeding birds. Material cleared during maintenance work would be burnt on altar fires to avoid permanent damage to soils. Wood and ash arising from these works was allocated to local volunteers and allotments.

Barbara Newman left at this point of the meeting.

Roman Villa

Excavations had now been completed and it remained for Surrey Archaeological Society to publish their findings academically, as well as providing the City of London with material that could be used for education and interpretation purposes.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Senior Ranger replied that further excavation would only be carried out if the Surrey Archaeological Society identified specific interpretative issues arising from their earlier excavations.

Amenity Areas

Contractor strimming, sign maintenance and work to maintain boundaries would continue during 2014 to ensure amenity areas remained suitable. In response to a question from the Chairman, the Senior Ranger replied that horse chestnut trees were not an issue for Ashtead Common.

In response to a question from Councillor Northcott, the Head Ranger replied that a water supply to the north of the Common had not yet been established.

Bob Eberhard commented that access to the north of the Common had affected the path and caused compaction, and he expressed concern this would affect future Green Flag inspections.

In response to a question from Professor Hawksworth regarding whether wider surveys in addition to birds and butterflies were being carried out, the Senior Ranger replied that each Autumn a 'Fungi Foray' was conducted and that the Common had been given a National Vegetation Classification assessment recently. Moreover, the Woodfield area of the Common had arguably improved towards achieving SSSI-quality. He concluded by noting that a report on the newt population was also available.

Wyn James added that a beetle survey had been conducted.

Bob Eberhard expressed his thanks for the resurfacing of Bridleway 38.

Councillor Northcott thanked Bob Warnock for his work in implementing the river restoration project which had arguably contributed to prevented flooding downstream of the Common.

The Senior Ranger added that he had been approached by persons from Broadhurst expressing thanks for the flow control structure on the Common and its contribution to preventing more serious flooding following recent weather.

9. MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES AND ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Chairman introduced a report of the Superintendent on Management Priorities and the Annual Work Programme 2014/15, noting that many of the issues had been discussed as part of the previous item.

10. QUESTIONS

Site of Special Scientific Interest Boundary

Professor Hawsworth noted that he had been involved in the survey of the Green Belt around Ashted for the Ashted Boundary Review and had noted that neither Newton Wood nor the block of woodland bounded by the Epsom/Dorking Road and Newton Wood Road/Craddocks Avenue were indicated as SSSI on the MVDC maps. He suggested the matter be raised with Natural England. The Head Ranger agreed and noted that it would be worth raising the designation of Woodfield too as part of such an approach.

Farewell to Wyn James

The Chairman noted this was the final meeting at which Wyn James would be representing the Ashted Common Volunteers, as he had indicated his intention to stand down. He thanked Mr James for his amazing service on the Common since 1991, when the City of London had taken over as the body responsible for Ashted Common. He added that it was apt for volunteering to have been an agenda item at the meeting that day, given that in Mr James the committee had an exemplar in voluntary service to the Common. On behalf of the Committee, he informed Mr James that his contribution to the Common was hugely appreciated, and it was hoped he would remain involved in the Common in some capacity. The Chairman suggested that Mr James' successor attends the July site visit, and emphasised the thanks of the Committee for his incredible service over so many years.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman noted that the summer site visit would take place on the evening of either Tuesday 15 or Wednesday 16 July, and invited members to advise their preferred date in advance.

The meeting ended at 1.07 pm

Chairman

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DRAFT

COULSDON COMMONS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12 February 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Coulsdon Commons Consultative Committee held at the Merlewood Estate Office, Ninehams Road, Caterham, Surrey at 7.00pm

Present

Members:

Sylvia Moys (In the Chair)	Graham Lomas (Friends of Farthing Downs)
Alderman Gordon Haines	Sarah Lovatt (New Hillbillies)
Deputy Catherine McGuinness	Dr Jane McLauchlin (Croydon Natural & Scientific Society)
Sylvia Moys	Phil Rathbone (Croydon Conservation Volunteers)
Rachel Adams (Croydon Conservation Volunteers)	Councillor Hilary Turner (Tandridge District Council)
Alan Clifford (Old Coulsdon Residents' Association)	Councillor Chris Wright (London Borough of Croydon)
Malcolm Jennings (Association of Croydon Conservation Societies)	

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerk's Department
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent of Stoke Common, Burnham Beeches and City Commons
Allan Cameron	- Head Ranger, Coulsdon Commons
Andrew Thwaites	- Head Ranger, Ashted Commons
Steve Wise	- Senior Ranger, Coulsdon Commons
Steve Bruce	- Ranger
David Wraith	- Ranger
Zuza Kukielka	- Ranger
Maria Traynor	- Support Services Officer, City Commons

1. APOLOGIES

Due to Alderman Gordon Haines being delayed in traffic the meeting commenced at 7.00pm with Mrs Sylvia Moys in the Chair.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting and introduced Andy Barnard, the new Superintendent of Stoke Common, Burnham Beeches and City Commons. She noted that Andy Barnard had replaced Bob Warnock, who had moved over to a new role as Superintendent of Hampstead Heath following the departure of Simon Lee to take up the appointment of Chief Executive of Wimbledon & Putney Commons.

Apologies were received from Deputy Stanley Ginsburg, Chris Baguley (Kenley Airfield Friends' Group), Richard Carter (South London Harriers), Gwyneth

Fookes (Bourne Society), Councillor Stephen O'Connell (London Borough of Croydon), Dr Jane Sidell (English Heritage) and Avril Sleeman (British Horse Society).

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 26 June 2013 be agreed as an accurate record, subject to Ian Payne being listed as present.

Matters Arising

Terms of Reference

The Superintendent noted that his predecessor's commitment to considering the inclusion of local parish council representatives on the Committee would be dealt with under Item 4 on the current agenda. Graham Lomas added that it would be worthwhile considering including a representative from the village of Netherne given its proximity to Farthing Downs.

4. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered its draft Terms of Reference. The Town Clerk noted that, whilst these had been approved at the previous meeting, they had come before the Committee once more given some minor amendments had been made to them since the last meeting. Furthermore, both the West Wickham Commons and Ashted Common Consultative Committees had or were shortly to be considering their respective draft Terms of Reference once more and therefore it was felt appropriate for the current Committee to be afforded the same opportunity.

Alderman Haines joined the meeting at this point. It was agreed that Mrs Moys remain in the Chair.

The Superintendent noted the fact that officers would consider including representatives from local parish councils as per the minutes of the previous meeting, and they would be considering Graham Lomas' suggestion that a representative of the village of Netherne be considered also.

RESOLVED –

- that the Committee's decision at the meeting on 26 June 2013 to approve the draft Terms of Reference be endorsed, subject to the minor amendments that had been made;
- that the Superintendent be authorised to invite further representatives to join the Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

5. **INTRODUCTION TO STRUCTURAL CHANGES**

The Committee received a verbal report of the Superintendent on structural changes within the City Commons.

The Superintendent first took the opportunity to introduce himself, noting that he had been a member of staff at the City of London since 2001 and was taking responsibility for the City Commons in addition to his existing role as Superintendent of Stoke Common and Burnham Beeches. He noted that his background and experience was in business administration and countryside management, and he was particularly passionate about promoting sustainability.

He went on to explain that the staffing restructure had commenced in 2011 under his predecessor and he was now involved in completing the process. He added that whilst the overall team organisation and structure had been mapped out, each role remained to have a named member of staff allocated to it. He concluded by noting that the new organisational structure would be fully populated and in operation within 12 months.

Alderman Haines intervened to note that he had worked closely, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee, with both Bob Warnock and Andy Barnard. He placed on record his personal thanks and thanks on behalf of the Committee to Bob Warnock for the fabulous work he had performed as Superintendent of City Commons, and the superb support his team had given him. Similarly he had been privileged to work with Andy Barnard at Burnham Beeches and had witnessed the superb team that Andy had led there. He noted that he was really comfortable with the decision to allocate Stoke Common, Burnham Beeches and City Commons to Andy Barnard now that Bob Warnock had moved to Hampstead Heath and he wished to reassure both the Committee and the staff at the City Commons that change in this instance was for the best. He concluded by wishing both Andy Barnard and Bob Warnock every success in their new roles.

In response to a suggestion from Graham Lomas, the Superintendent committed to circulating an updated team structure document to members of the Committee once the new structure had been finalised.

6. **SUMMARY REPORT OF THE VISITOR SURVEY 2012**

The Head Ranger introduced a report of the Superintendent of Stoke Common, Burnham Beeches and City Commons on the Visitor Survey 2012. He noted that the survey had been conducted throughout 2011-12 using a recognised survey methodology and that highlights among the results included:

- Over 1 million visits to the City Commons, with 189,000 to Farthing Downs, 58,000 to Coulsdon Common, and 145,000 to Kenley Common. Riddlesdown was the most popular site, with 227,000 visits.

- Farthing Downs had a greater density of visits to the amenity areas of the site, e.g. the mown areas, and had an even proportion of male and female visitors to the site.
- 60% of visitors to Coulsdon Common brought a dog.
- Kenley Common had twice as many visitors at the weekends compared to weekdays. By comparison, Riddlesdown had no great difference in visitor numbers between weekends and weekdays.
- Visitor patterns across each of the sites reflected a national picture of 'honeypot' sites that attracted intensive visitor numbers. Nevertheless the actual number of visits were below the national average when compared to similar sites nationwide.

He went on to note that conclusions to be drawn from the survey included:

- The profile of visitors reflected the communities that were local to the Commons.
- Visitors to the Commons did not include many children – this could be due to the perception of the high number of dogs across the different sites.
- Persons with disabilities appeared to be poorly represented among those persons visiting the Commons.

The Head Ranger finished his introduction by noting that the survey results would help inform future planning for the management of the various sites, and that the emphasis on future surveys would be to move away from a quantitative approach to a qualitative one.

In response to an observation from Phil Rathbone that there appeared to be a lack of public awareness over the number of paths around Kenley Common, the Head Ranger agreed that more effort could be made by rangers to educate the public, and for the potential for signage to be explored.

In response to an observation by Councillor Chris Wright that sports had not been included within the Visitor Survey, the Head Ranger agreed that this theme would be something to be included in any future survey work.

The Committee went on to discuss the use of Coulsdon Commons by children, noting that some use was made of football pitches at Riddlesdown but generally sites such as Farthing Downs were arguably too far for visits by children except in the case of exceptional events such as heavy snowfall.

RECEIVED

7. **VOLUNTEER IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2013**

The Head Ranger introduced a report of the Superintendent of Stoke Common, Burnham Beeches and City Commons on the Volunteer Improvement Plan 2013. He noted that:

- Good progress was being made in implementing the plan.
- A key emphasis of the plan was the development of volunteer leaders.
- There was a particular opportunity to train and develop livestock volunteers.
- A volunteer Tree Warden scheme had been launched during 2013 and was ongoing.
- Rangers carried out spot checks on the work of volunteers to maintain oversight of the work carried out across the Commons.
- Given the high number of volunteer hours of work on Coulsdon Common, rangers planned to encourage consistent volunteers to become volunteer leaders.

The Chairman noted the significant contribution of volunteers to the City Commons as a whole and suggested the City's appreciation for their hard work and dedication be reflected in the City Commons newsletter.

In response to a suggestion from Graham Lomas that the City provide guidance to local groups on how to identify and encourage volunteers from within their memberships, Phil Rathbone commented that often it was simply a case of talking to people and inviting interested persons along to voluntary activities to give them an idea of what was involved.

The Head Ranger noted that rangers had secured some corporate volunteers following a mailshot to local homes and businesses.

Sarah Lovatt commented that it would be worthwhile exploring the potential to involve Duke of Edinburgh students in voluntary activities on the Commons.

RECEIVED

8. **KEY PROJECTS AND ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14**

The Head Ranger and Senior Ranger delivered a presentation on Key Projects and Annual Work Programme activities carried out during 2013/14. The Head Ranger explained that the Annual Work Programme was underpinned by themes (a 'balanced score card') of *vision, service, open spaces, people* and *making connections*. The rationale behind these themes was to make corporate values explicit and to prevent an overemphasis on any one area at the expense of others. Each theme was measured using detailed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and, by being linked to the Annual Work Programme, helped management set overall priorities.

The Superintendent noted that the balanced scorecard was designed to provide a framework to how work across the Commons was planned and implemented. It therefore provided a useful benchmark and would be reviewed in a year's time. He stressed that the formulation of such themes did not detract rangers from their real, core focus, which was maintaining the City Commons.

Graham Lomas commented that it was difficult to relate the balanced scorecard to the projects listed in the Annual Work Programme – that whilst it may seem evident to City staff who had been involved in drafting both the scorecard and the Annual Work Programme this was arguably not the case to an outsider considering the documents for the first time. He added that, as a local stakeholder, he would welcome the information being presented in such a way as would help local groups and societies readily identify areas in which the City was – given the limits on available resources – in need of additional assistance in managing the Commons from local groups such as his.

The Head Ranger then went on to outline some of the key activities that has been carried out on the Coulsdon Commons during 2013. These included:

Rangering and Visitor Experience

- Preparation for, and securing of, 4 Green Flag and 2 Green Heritage Awards.

Marketing

- Development of the City Commons webpage and the planned appointment of an Information Ranger for 3-6 months.

Condition Assessments

- Two successful inspections by the Rural Payments Agency.

Conservation Grazing

- Development of a Grazing Business Plan
- Overwintering of livestock at Epping Forest
- Appointment of a Livestock Ranger in 2014

Tree Health

Volunteer monitoring of tree disease, particularly relevant given the presence of Oak Processionary Moth at a nearby site.

Kenley Revival

- Project Officer in place following successful application for phase one Heritage Lottery Funding

The Head Ranger of Ashted Common took the opportunity to provide more detail on the Kenley Revival Project. He explained that the successful bid for phase one Heritage Lottery Funding provided monies to help develop a more detailed application for phase 2 funding. The detailed application would consider aspects such as encouraging greater access to the Kenley site, given there was no existing car park or visitor toilets. The phase 2 application deadline was December 2014 which meant the City was bound by a tight-timescale given it was hoped the Kenley Revival Project would be completed by Summer 2015 in time for the Battle of Britain Anniversary.

The Chairman registered thanks on behalf of the Committee for all of the hard work rangers had put into making the Kenley Revival Project a success thus far.

The Head Ranger concluded his outline of key projects undertaken in 2013:

Consultation

- The formation of the Coulsdon Commons Consultative Committee.

Sustainability

- The use of Aspen chainsaw fuel and greener vehicles.

Finance

- Revenue income of £13,000 from the sale of cattle and £1,900 from timber.

The Senior Ranger then provided a brief update on some projects that had been undertaken across the Coulsdon Commons during the past year. These included works to Coulsdon verge; Grove extensions to restore wood pasture; boundary and grassland management at Whyteleafe Bank; and works to footpaths and fencing at Norfolk Bank on Riddlesdown.

A Ranger then updated the Committee on the restoration of open areas of grassland at Farthing Downs and New Hill. In reply, Malcolm Jennings voiced his concern over the total loss of woodland and its visual impact on the landscape. Councillor Hilary Turner added that it would be sensible for the City to carry out some publicity to raise awareness over why trees were being removed at a time when flooding was such a prominent issue in the national news.

The Senior Ranger concluded by noting that small branch debris and fallen trees from recent bad weather would be dealt with once ground conditions improved.

9. **MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES AND ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**
The Head Ranger introduced and summarised a report of the Superintendent of Stoke Common, Burnham Beeches and City Commons on Management Priorities for 2014/15. He noted that key issues would be grassland and scrub management; stock fencing; wood pasture; boundaries; drainage; and conservation. He added that the City Surveyor's Department would be carrying out works on a stormwater drain for Coulsdon Common.

RECEIVED

10. **FRIENDS' GROUPS UPDATES**

10.1 **Kenley Airfield Friends Group (Chris Baguley)**

The Chairman noted that it had been necessary for Chris Baguley to present his apologies for the meeting at short notice for personal reasons. She wished Mr Baguley and his wife all best wishes on behalf of the Committee.

10.2 **Friends of Farthing Downs (Graham Lomas)**

Graham Lomas provided an update on the work of the Friends of Farthing Downs, including:

- The Friends had been reviewing their role and contribution to the Downs over the past year;
- The Friends planned to evaluate the work of their counterpart organisation at South Downs National Park to identify best practice;
- Regular walks, meetings and events were planned for 2014, with a March-November 2014 programme being published recently;
- The Friends were in touch with Southern Rail to explore ways in which Farthing Downs could be promoted on the rail network – ideas included poster and signage at Coulsdon South Station; large promotional pictures within the station building; and the installation of a wildlife garden upon the station platform.
- A Friends website was being developed;
- The Friends were working to see whether QR-codes could be installed upon the trailposts across the Downs.

11. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Kenley Air Show

In response to a question from Phil Rathbone the Head Ranger confirmed that the next airshow at Kenley was planned for 2015.

City Commons Consultative Committee Minutes

In response to a question from Dr Jane McLauchlin the Town Clerk confirmed that the draft minutes from each of the City Commons Consultative Committees' early 2014 meetings would be circulated once the meeting of the Ashted Common Consultative Committee had taken place on 18 February 2014.

Farthing Downs Barn

Graham Lomas requested that the Friends of Farthing Downs be included in any consideration given to the disposal of potential surplus assets such as the barn at Farthing Downs.

Committee Dates

In response to a comment by Alan Clifford the Town Clerk agreed to circulate the next meeting date of the Committee to its membership by email. The Town Clerk reminded those present that future Committee dates were also available online on the City of London website.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

13. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the Summer visit was scheduled for Tuesday 8 July 2014. The Town Clerk agreed to circulate details on venue and timings once these had been agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.36pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Alistair MacLellan
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WEST WICKHAM COMMONS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 22 January 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the West Wickham Commons Consultative Committee held at the Metropolitan Police Sports Club, The Warren, Croydon Road, Bromley, BR2 7AL at 7.00pm

Present

Members:

Sylvia Moys (In the Chair)	Keith Harris (West Wickham Residents' Association)
Barbara Newman	Bridget Hogan (West Wickham and Spring Park Volunteer's Group)
Barbara Baker (Heartsease Girl Guide Camp)	John Matthews (West Wickham Residents' Association)
Gladys Edmonds Wickham Common Residents' Association)	Geoff Newton (West Wickham Police Community Advisory Panel)
Cllr Nicholas Bennett JP (West Wickham Ward, London Borough of Bromley)	Cllr Neil Reddin (London Borough of Bromley (Hayes & Coney Hall Ward)
Avril Glover (Bromley Bridleways Access Group)	Sam Wheatcroft (Wickham Common Residents' Association)

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerk's Department
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons
Paul Ritchie	- Head Ranger
Barry Gutteridge	- Senior Ranger
Luke Barley	- Ranger

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Gordon Haines, Deputy Stanley Ginsburg and Deputy Catherine McGuinness.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 12 June 2013 be agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Hartfield Crescent

The Head Ranger noted the issue of damage to the verge caused by recent works carried out by contractors from Thames Water. He confirmed that the City of London Corporation had the matter in hand and discussions had taken place with representatives of the contractors. It had been agreed that they will extend the kerb stones from the Croydon Road toward Hartfield Crescent, remove any tarmac on the common side, landscape the area with soil and replace the damaged wooden posts.

Draft Terms of Reference – Committee Membership

The Head Ranger welcomed Barbara Baker and Geoff Newton to their first meeting of the Committee and circulated a draft list of stakeholder groups. He asked those present to feedback any comments on the list to him after the meeting so that these could inform officers' recommendations to Members regarding other potential stakeholders in the management of West Wickham Common & Spring Park.

Volunteer Improvement Group

The Head Ranger noted this was addressed as part of Item 7 of the current Agenda.

Heritage Lottery Fund Bid

The Head Ranger updated members regarding the successful bid and the recruitment of a Project Development Officer Machel Bogues, who will be working from the Merlewood Estate Office in Caterham from Monday 3 February 2014. He would be working to develop a project to conserve and interpret the important historical features at Kenley Common associated with the WW2 Battle of Britain airfield and to prepare a grant application for the next stage of the grant process.

Management Priorities - Transport for London (TfL) Survey

The Head Ranger noted that there had been no further news regarding TfLs survey of road use at the location of a proposed pedestrian crossing A232 Croydon Road and therefore Councillor Phil Redmond had agreed to enquire with TfL directly to establish the level of progress. The Head Ranger concluded by emphasising that this was a project led by TfL and the Highways Authority and therefore the City of London was only able to actively monitor progress and respond to any impact upon its open space.

4. WEST WICKHAM COMMONS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chairman introduced the draft Terms of Reference and noted that 1(f) would be amended to read '*The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee, together with **up to three** other members appointed by the Committee*'.

RESOLVED –

That the draft Terms of Reference of the West Wickham Commons Consultative Committee be approved, subject the amendment noted by the Chairman.

5. INTRODUCTION TO STRUCTURAL CHANGES

The Chairman introduced the item by noting the structural changes to senior management team within the City of London's Open Spaces Department had been prompted by the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath accepting the position of Chief Executive of Wimbledon and Putney Commons from the end of February 2014. The Superintendent of City Commons had therefore been appointed interim Superintendent of Hampstead Heath, with the City Commons now being assigned to the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, who was present at the meeting this evening.

The Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons took the opportunity to introduce himself to the Committee. He noted that he had been Superintendent of Burnham Beeches since 2001 and had a background in business administration and countryside management. He added that he was passionate about and interested in promoting sustainability. He concluded by noting that Burnham

Beeches was a relatively small site so by taking responsibility for the City Commons he was taking on a big challenge.

He went on to outline the staff restructure across the City Commons, noting that this process had begun under his predecessor in 2011. The restructure had been subject to an informal consultation process to establish what improvements could be made to how the teams were organised. The new team structure was now fixed and work was underway to populate the different posts. He added that, given the City Commons were charities their management processes were similar to those that he was already familiar with at Burnham Beeches.

The Chairman commented that it would be useful for the Committee to be informed – by email or post - as soon as the new team structure was fully established rather than wait until the informal summer meeting.

A member commented that the Epping Forest & Commons Committee had been extremely pleased for both the new Superintendent of Hampstead Heath and for the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons when their new roles had been announced, and that she hoped the West Wickham Commons Consultative Committee would be equally supportive of them.

In response to a question from a member of the Committee, the Superintendent replied that the team restructuring had taken place in a bid to improve organisational efficiency rather than due to financial pressures.

In response to a request from a member of the Committee the Town Clerk agreed to circulate a brief explanation of how the different Open Spaces Committees were structured and organised.

In response to a question from a member of the Committee, the Head Ranger replied that the organisational changes would not have an effect on service levels, in that team processes, contact numbers etc. would all remain the same.

A member of the Committee commented that she felt that the new team structures would work well once they had been fully implemented.

6. **SUMMARY REPORT OF THE VISITOR SURVEY 2012**

The Head Ranger introduced a Summary Report of the Visitor Survey 2012, noting that the survey had been commissioned to better understand visitor numbers and patterns of use. He expressed thanks to the volunteers who had helped to carry out the survey. He commented that overall the survey had been a useful, interesting and informative exercise. For example, it demonstrated that whilst Spring Park was one of the smallest sites, it was the busiest. Therefore future budgeting would take account of this. He concluded by noting that the next step was to assess the quality of the data that had been collected.

In response to a question from a member he confirmed that the apparent absence of disabled users of West Wickham Common and Spring Park would be addressed as part of the team's forward planning.

In response to a comment by a member, the Head Ranger agreed to liaise with the London Borough of Bromley regarding the possible extension of the footpath in Spring Park to make disabled access easier.

7. **VOLUNTEER IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2013**

The Committee considered a report on the Volunteer Improvement Plan 2013. The Head Ranger noted that the Committee had been informed of the City of London's intention to draw up such a plan and the current report was the outcome of this. The Chairman concluded by noting that it was apparent that there was a considerable involvement of volunteers in the management of West Wickham Common and Spring Park.

8. **KEY PROJECTS AND ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14**

The Head Ranger introduced a presentation to the Committee on Key Projects and the Annual Work Plan 2013/14. He noted that Key Projects were those that were submitted for inclusion in the Departmental Business Plan, and included themes such as rangering, visitor experience, marketing and condition assessments.

He went on to explain in brief what the themes that underpinned the City Commons management priorities for 2013/14:

Visitor Experience

- Ensuring West Wickham Common and Spring Park meet Green Flag Award standards by carrying out internal pre-inspections with a City Commons colleague who was a recognised Green Flag inspector.

Marketing

- The use of the City of London website and Open Spaces webpages to promote initiatives such as the Small Leaved Lime Project, and the inclusion of material within the West Wickham Residents' Association newsletter.

Condition Assessments

- Facilitating inspections by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and responding to Environmental Stewardship Scheme issues arising from inspections that were subsequently reported to Natural England. The Head Ranger noted that the misunderstanding by the RPA Inspectors over whether conservation grazing was a requirement at West Wickham Common had been resolved between the City of London and Natural England.
- Inspecting and monitoring tree stock to identify tree disease, which was particularly pertinent given Oak Processionary Moth had been detected at a nearby site.

Consultation

- The establishment of, and ongoing engagement with, the West Wickham Commons Consultative Committee.

Education, Recreation and Events

- The Head Ranger noted that a policy covering these areas of activity was currently being developed by the Director of Open Spaces.

Furthermore the work of the staff at West Wickham and Spring Park had been informed throughout by commitment to organisational standards, namely:

Sustainability

- The use of Aspen chainsaw fuel, horse logging, and the use of fuel efficient vehicles.

Finance

- Efficiency savings achieved in part through the successful application for a £8,000 SITA grant for the Small Leaved Lime Project.

Health and Safety

- Carrying out fire safety audits across West Wickham and Spring Park.

Internal Communications

- The use of e-news to save on the amount of paper used by staff at West Wickham and Spring Park.

In response to a question from a member regarding recommendations made by the Green Flag judges, the Head Ranger replied that Spring Park had been marked down over issues with byelaw enforcement, dated signage, and hazardous pathways. The Head Ranger noted however that the judging panel was composed of urban park managers which affected their attitude towards Spring Park & West Wickham, which was rural common land. For example, whilst they described the pathways as hazardous, this was due to exposed tree roots that were arguably a common feature on rural common land. Their critique of West Wickham Common included the limited representation of different community groups among users of the Common. The Head Ranger noted however that the Visitor Survey 2012 demonstrated that the demographics of the persons using the Common reflected those of the local communities around all the City Commons.

The Senior Ranger then provided the Committee with an update on some activities that had been undertaken during 2013:

- **Small-leaved Lime Project**

Local volunteers had begun the project by clearing vegetation (mainly Sweet Chestnut trees) around the Small-Leaved Limes in order to increase light levels. This clearance generated timber that was moved using horses from a Dorking-based company. The time taken to clear the timber using horse-power was broadly equivalent in terms of time and finance compared to the use of machinery. The use of horses was covered by a SITA grant which, if forthcoming in 2014, would see the work-horses return in October. The Senior Ranger concluded by noting that members of the public had tended to avoid the areas of the common in which the horses had been employed and therefore if the horses did return in October 2014 it would be worth exploring advertising the project more widely and inviting members of the public to go and witness the horses in action.

- **Spring Park Coppicing**

The Senior Ranger noted that the coppicing project had now gone through a full cycle and was entering its second decade, with chestnut trees being coppiced the previous week.

- **West Wickham and Spring Park Volunteers (WWaSPs) Away Day**

The Senior Ranger had organised a WWaSPs Away Day to the Petts Wood and Hawkwood National Trust site as a way of expressing thanks for the hard work and commitment of the WWaSPs throughout the year. Both staff and volunteers had noted the similar management practices undertaken at Petts Wood.

9. **MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES & ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**

The Chairman introduced a report on Management Priorities and the Annual Work Programme for 2014/15, noting that it was a comprehensive report.

The Head Ranger added that the report format followed that adopted in previous years, and that key priorities for West Wickham Common and Spring Park remained oak pollarding, restoration and maintenance of heathland, monitoring the A232 pedestrian crossing and the monitoring of boundaries to ensure the site was protected, people kept safe and the landscape responsibly managed.

He added that the Annual Work Programme 2014 included further Small-leaved Lime project work near the site office; chestnut and hazel coppicing; the maintenance of sloe berry bushes given these were an important habitat; oak surveys and the maintenance of the wildflower meadow.

10. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

West Wickham and Spring Park Volunteers (WWaSPs)

In response to concerns expressed by a member of the Committee regarding the ageing demographic among existing WWaSPs, the Head Ranger agreed to consider this issue as part of the Volunteer Improvement Programme.

West Wickham Ranger's Lodge

In response to a question, the Head Ranger confirmed there were no plans by the City of London to put West Wickham Ranger's lodge up for sale and that it remained for the use of City of London Corporation staff.

St Jude's Storm Damage

In response to a question regarding storm damage, the Senior Ranger confirmed that Spring Park had lost a couple of trees due to storm damage, but most of the impact had been apparent through the high amount of small branch debris.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no other business.

12. **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Committee agreed that the proposed date of the summer visit could be set via email following the meeting, with the one caveat being that officers avoid scheduling it in early June 2014.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Alistair MacLellan
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Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest and Commons	10 March 2014
Subject: Epping Forest Enforcement of Activity: 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest	For Decision

Summary

This report informs your Committee of the byelaw enforcement activity undertaken by Epping Forest Keepers within Epping Forest during the period of 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013.

The report shows a similar level of Byelaw enforcement during the period of 2007 to 2013, with the exception of the 2010 peak which was as a result of a high level of prosecutions for fungi picking and lighting fires. The period of 2007 to date covers a conscious programme of informal education rather than formal prosecution or warning. This is evidenced by the 7,075 “Advisory conversations” conducted by Forest Keepers during the period under report, an increase of 2,828 or 66.6 % on the figure of 4,247 reported for 2012.

There were eight prosecutions undertaken during the period, two for dogs not under effective control, two for fly tipping, two for riding a quad bike on the Forest, one for riding a horse in a restricted area and not displaying a current licence and one for taking a vehicle more than forty five metres from the highway.

There have been eleven warning letters sent for various misuse of the Forest, including, Taking firewood, feeding wildfowl, dog not under effective control, metal detecting, obstructing an officer, and taking a vehicle onto Forest land.

The level of Court costs and charges for the disposal of fly tips has remained the same for three years. Your Committee approved a 50% increase in May 2011. It is proposed to increased charges by 10%, in line with the three year Retail Price Index (RPI) of 10.01%.

Members are asked to:

- Receive this report
- Approve the proposed increase in Court costs and fly tipping disposal charges.

Main Report

Background

1. Epping Forest Keepers possess constabulary powers under section 43 of the Epping Forest Act 1878, for both the Essex and Metropolitan Police Districts. Forest Keepers have the power to enforce both the Epping Forest byelaws and selected areas of relevant national legislation.
2. This annual report provides information on the number of prosecutions and warning letters that have been issued by the Superintendent of Epping Forest during 2013.

Current Position

3. There have been eight prosecutions for byelaw offences during the period under report; two were for a breach of byelaw 3(36) “any dog not kept under effective control”. Two more were for a breach of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 33, fly tipping on Forest land. Three further prosecutions were for breaches of byelaw 3(11) b “driving a vehicle more than 45 meters from the highway”, one was a 4x4 car and the others were quad bikes. The other prosecution was for a breach of byelaw 3(26) a “not displaying a current horse licence disc” and Section 7(a) of the Various Powers Act 1977, The Regulation of Public Access to Epping Forest. Details of the prosecutions are shown in Table 1 below.
4. There have been eleven warning letters sent for byelaw offences during the period under report; two were for excessive feeding of wildfowl, four were for taking a vehicle onto Forest land, one was for taking more than the prescribed amount of fire wood, byelaw 3(4) “collection in any one day of more than 12kgs of loose, dead or drift wood, of which no piece shall exceed 5cm. in diameter and 91cm in length”.
5. The four remaining warning letters were sent, one for metal detecting without a licence, one for obstructing a Forest Keeper, one for disorderly conduct and one for having a dog not under effective control.
6. The level of byelaw enforcement over the period 2005/2013 is shown in Tables 2 & 3. The tables show a clear fall, from 2005/2006, in both the number of prosecutions and warning letters. This decrease in part reflects the reduction in the number of Forest Keepers from 19 prior to the 2007 Resources Review to a level of 8, and finally 12 under the 2009 Mounted Officer Review. However, much of that steady downward trend is also the result of a conscious effort which is being made to educate those people found to be breaking the byelaws, rather than resorting to a more formal approach.
7. Prosecutions have averaged 9 per year since 2007 with a sharp rise in prosecutions for 2010 as a result of the withdrawal of the “fungi picking licence scheme” in November 2008 and the abundance of fungi in the Forest during the autumn of 2010. The low prosecution levels of three in 2009 and three in 2012

were as a result of very bad seasons for fungi, resulting in virtually no illegal picking.

8. To reflect the new focus on education Forest Keepers now record the number of “Advisory conversations” with Forest users as one of the Epping Forest Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) they are responsible for; details are shown in Table 4. Advisory conversations rose by 66.6% from 4,247 in 2012 to 7,075 for the current reporting period.
9. A prosecution will always be sought, where evidence allows, for all environmental crime and for any offences against a member of staff. All other offences are investigated on their own merit using the recommendations of the officers involved and the impact on the Forest.
10. At the meeting of 9 May 2011 your Committee approved a 50% increase in Court costs requested and the addition of a standard fly tipping disposal charge. Court costs are based on the average number of hours that Forest Keepers and administration staff spend on a case. The standard fly tipping disposal charge is calculated on the running costs, including staff costs, of the compactor lorry used to remove the waste plus the cost per tonne for disposal. The charges are shown in Table 5.
11. There has been no increase in Court costs requested or fly tipping disposal charges since 2011 whereas in that time the Retail Price Index (RPI) has risen by 10.01%, 4.5% in 2011, 2.8% in 2012 and 2.5% in 2013.

Options

12. There are two options available:
 - Costs remain the same as a result of the 50% increase agreed in 2011
 - or, a price rise in line with the RPI of 10% is added to the current figures

Proposals

13. It is proposed that the Court costs and fly tipping disposal charges are increased by 10%. This reflects the three year 9.8% rise in RPI. Figures shown in Table 5 below.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. The City Together Strategy is directly supported by the enforcement of byelaws within the City of London Open Spaces. In particular this strategy

matches the *City Together* theme of “a World Class City which – protects, promotes and enhances our environment:

- To promote and enhance safe access to the City Of London Open Spaces
- To improve people’s health, safety and welfare within the City Of London Open Spaces environment through proactive and reactive advice and enforcement activities.
- To protect and enhance the City of London Open Spaces environment and public realm
- To conserve and enhance biodiversity within the City of London Open Spaces
- To continue to ensure the City of London Open Spaces are a safe place in which to do business, work, visit and live.

Implications

15. **Financial-** The cost of taking a case to the local Magistrates’ Court is initially covered by the local risk budget of Epping Forest in the form of staff costs. These monies are then put to the Court as “case costs” and can be recovered at the magistrates’ discretion using section 18 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. The latest levels of costs put to the Court are as shown in Table 5 and are subject to review on a regular basis. If additional Court appearances are required then the costs are adjusted as necessary. Also shown in Table 5 is the level of costs requested for the disposal of dumped waste as a result of a byelaw offence.
16. These costs are not always awarded in full, and are often unpaid by the guilty parties. It is the responsibility of the Courts to recover these monies and pass them on to the City of London. Payments to the City of London currently broadly reflect the national average collection rate of 52%.
17. From 1 April 2007 the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (Surcharge) Order 2012 introduced a “Victims surcharge”, which is levied in addition to the fine and is aimed at helping improve services for victims of crime.
18. **Legal -** Byelaws have been made by the Conservators under section 36 of the Epping Forest Act 1878 (as amended). Any person convicted of an offence against the byelaws is liable to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale (currently £200). Prosecutions are also brought under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and other relevant national legislation where appropriate.
19. **HR -** Forest Keepers receive personal safety training together with professional witness and court training to support the enforcement of the Epping Forest byelaws.

Conclusion

20. The enforcement of the Epping Forest byelaws promotes the protection and enhancement of the Forest and assists with the safety and education of those who choose to use it. Byelaw enforcement is one of many tools available to manage the Forest, but is only used where appropriate and necessary, and increasingly as a last resort.
21. The level of costs and fly tipping disposal charges requested from the Courts should be reviewed and increased in line with the RPI.

Table 1: Epping Forest Byelaw Prosecutions 2013

Byelaw offence(s)	Court	Outcome
Environmental Protection Act 1990. Fly tipping	Thames Magistrates Bow.	Fine £100.00 Costs £340.00 Surcharge £20.00
Not displaying a current horse riding disc and riding in a restricted area.	Chelmsford	Fine £300.00 Costs £240.00 Surcharge £20.00
Dog not under effective control	Thames Magistrates Bow.	Fine £130.00 Costs £200.00 Surcharge £20.00
Environmental Protection Act 1990. Fly tipping	Chelmsford	Fine £150.00 Costs £240.00 Surcharge £20.00
Riding a quad bike on Forest land	Chelmsford	Fine £125.00 Costs £240.00 Surcharge £20.00
Riding a quad bike on Forest land	Chelmsford	Fine £125.00 Costs £240.00 Surcharge £20.00
Taking a vehicle more than 45 metres. from the highway	Chelmsford	Fine £65.00 Costs £240.00 Surcharge £20.00
Dog not under effective control	Harlow	12mnth conditional discharge. Costs £300.00 £129.58 compensation
		Total Fines £995 Total costs £2,040

Table 2: Epping Forest Byelaw Prosecutions:
Years 2005-2013

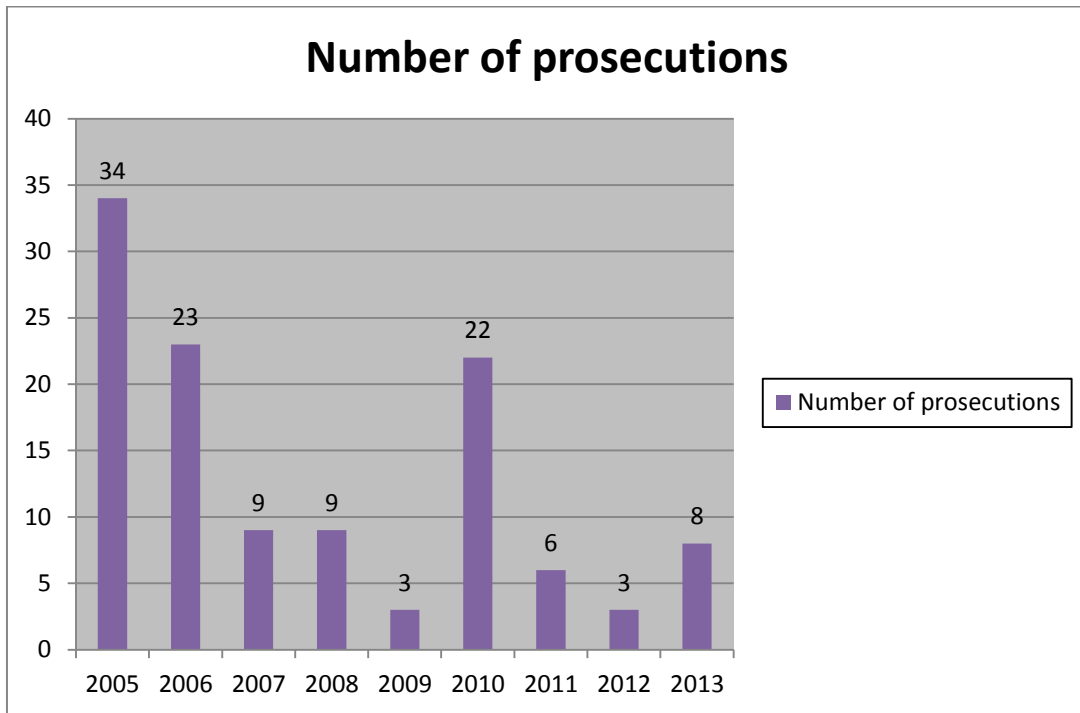


Table 3: Epping Forest Byelaw Warning letters:
Years 2005-2013

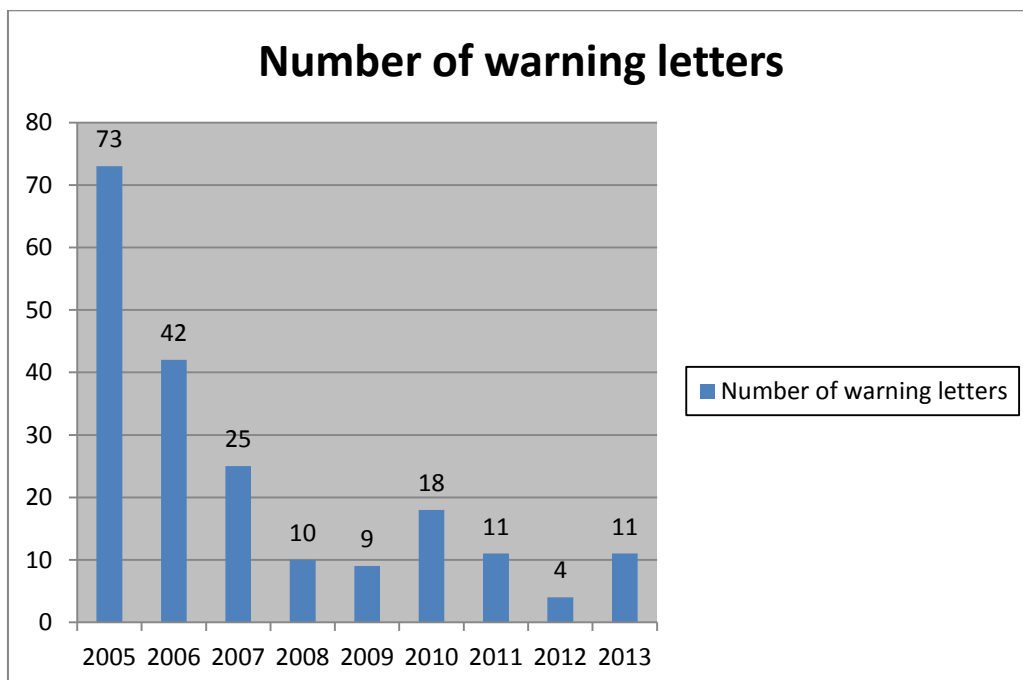


Table 4: Forest Keeper Advisory Conversations

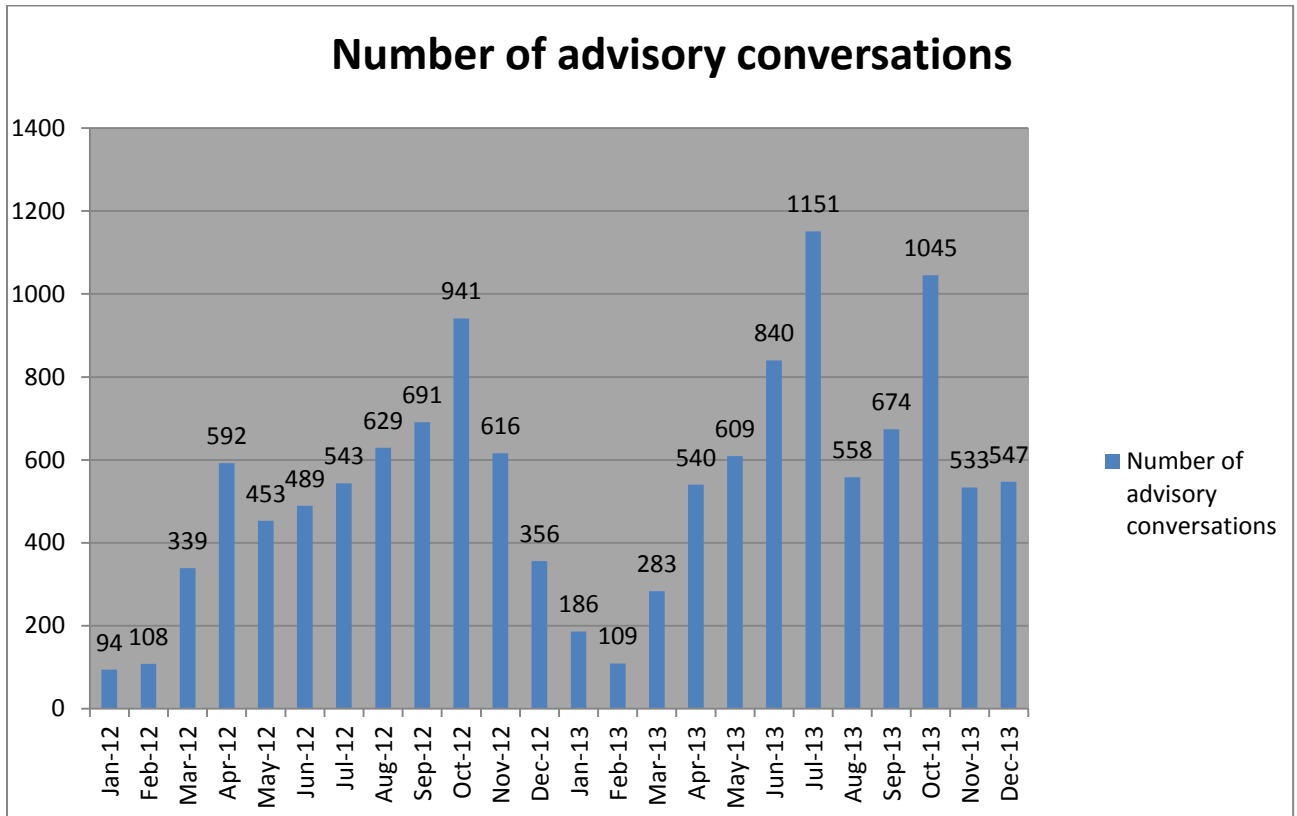


Table 5: Current and proposed 2014 Tariff of “Court Costs” requested at Magistrates Court

	2011/12/13	2014 (proposed tariff)
Forest Keeper’s initial involvement, reports etc.	£60	£66
Office Administration	£80	£88
Forest Keeper’s Court appearance	£80	£88
Other costs, travel etc.	£20	£22
	£240	£264
Costs requested for disposal of dumped waste (Minimum charge for up to 1 tonne)	£128	£141
+ each additional tonne	£97	£107
Flytipping Reward Scheme	Up to £500	Up to £500

Appendices

- None

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Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	10 th March 2014
Subject: Epping Forest Operations Programme for 2014-2015	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest	For Decision

Summary

This report outlines the visitor access, risk management and conservation projects proposed in the Forest for the year 2014-15.

Increased visitor access work is proposed at St Johns and Woodford Green with detailed proposals given in Appendix One. We will also be working with the Wanstead Park Steering Group to increase our management activity within this important parkland. We hope also to extend volunteer activity at Wanstead Park and Swaines Green to help us meet increased work needs in these areas.

Significant work is to be carried out on the dam at Highams Park Lake during 2014 which the Operations team will be supporting. A new area of risk management activity to be undertaken this year is the survey of highways vegetation as part of a new Highways vegetation management programme. Tree safety will continue to be a large aspect of the Operations teams work in 2014. The completion of the Forest structures survey by City Surveyors will provide an opportunity to develop the Constraints Management System for the Forest during 2014

Habitat management supported by the Stewardship Grant from Natural England to the value of over £160,000 annually, plus the Single Payment Scheme funding, will continue on the same basis as the previous 6 years with work concentrated in the core areas of Hornbeam and Oak pollards, especially Bury Wood and Walthamstow Forest, and around the heaths. The grassland mowing programme will encompass more work on cutting of the wood-pasture glades and restoration areas. The Keystone Tree programme will target 130 Beech and Oak pollards. Cattle grazing will be extended into new areas, such as Honey Lane Quarters, with the help of the new infrastructure including the invisible fence network.

We will be seeking to improve the value for money we achieve from the contract work we let each year. This will be done by preparing an Estates Maintenance Contract covering a comprehensive package of works and tendering it widely to appropriate contractors

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that:

- you approve the annual work programme as summarised in the main report and in **Appendix 1 and 2**

Main Report

Background

1. This report describes significant visitor access, risk management and conservation projects proposed in the Forest for the programme year 2014-15. An update on the Forest Operations Plan development process has also been described for information.
2. The 2014-15 work programme has been prepared drawing on the following resources:
 - a. Epping Forest Management Plan 2010, approved in 2004, and the additional site-specific conservation management plans for Barn Hoppitt, Lords Bushes & Knighton Woods and Wanstead Flats;
 - b. Conservation strategies included in the *Branching Out* Project Stage II Plan (Nov 2008) – the Grazing Strategy (and subsequent approved Grazing Expansion Plan) and the Keystone Trees Strategy;
 - c. Highams Park Dam improvement project and reports of the City of London's panel engineer;
 - d. Wanstead Park Conservation Statement (2011)
 - e. Consultations with the Epping Forest Centenary Trust (EFCT) and Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers (EFCV).

Current Position

3. The key areas of work in the proposed programme (below) are based on improving visitor access, continuing to enhance the condition of the established surfaced ride network for all users, landscape and visitor improvement works at Wanstead Park, managing amenity areas such as St John's and Woodford greens, managing risks - particularly those related to the Highams park dam and the Forest's other designated reservoirs and its trees.
4. The habitat priorities remain as in previous years: the maintenance of the grassland swards, the management of the veteran trees, particularly the identified Keystone Beeches and Oaks and the Hornbeam pollard coupes, and other habitats that contribute to the Forest's favourable condition. This work is supported by agri-environment payments from the Rural Payments Agency, Natural England, the Tubney Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund
5. The proposals have been developed in discussion with our key partners, EFCV and EFCT. Both organisations will be delivering important aspects of the habitat conservation programme.

Proposals

6. **Forest Operations Plan:** During 2014-15 the Head of Operations will revise the Operation planning process as outlined in the 13th May 2013 EFCC Report, Epping Forest Operations Programme 2013-14. This will involve the production of a comprehensive itemised work plan for 2015-16. Extensive consultation with key stakeholders will be undertaken to ensure the annual operations programme reflects the full spectrum of activity undertaken in the Forest. Procedures within the planned revised process are being piloted as part of ongoing activity so hopefully changes will be seen to be.
7. **Estates Maintenance Contract (EMC):** During 2014 we will seek to reduce the direct and indirect costs of external contracts for a range of works undertaken in the Forest. This will be done by preparing an EMC covering a comprehensive package of works and tendering it widely to appropriate contractors. It is hoped the letting of a larger contract will increase the attractiveness of the work to potential contractors. The letting and management of a single contract, rather than managing multiple contracts, will reduce staff and administration time to run the works involved. In this first year the EMC will focus on bringing previously contracted out works together and piloting contract work in some new activity areas for contractors at Epping Forest. For example, we will contract out at least one Wood Pasture creation area during 2014-15.
8. **Habitat Conservation Programme 2014 -2015:**

The key activities of the habitat conservation programme are described below with the location of much of these works shown on the Maps making up Appendix 2:

 - **Keystone Trees:** As a result of adverse weather conditions and also concerns over tree vitality at different times in the last 2 years, the HLF has accepted that an additional season of work will be required. In 2014-15, therefore, the work on Keystone Trees will continue over both the summer and winter months into 2015. A target of at least 130 Keystone Trees will be set this year with emphasis placed on catching up on the Oak pollards provided their condition remains as good as it was in 2013. This means we will have completed work on 1000 Keystone Trees and be on target to complete the 1200 tree target in 2015/16. Sites where work will be concentrated in 2014/15 will be in the Loughton Manor area (Compartments 19 and 20) south of the Clay Ride and Baldwins Hill.
 - **Wood-pasture Restoration:** We will continue restoring the pollarding cycle to the dense areas of Hornbeam pollards in **Bury Wood**. Areas where opening up around the old trees has begun in 2013 will be revisited to complete the pollarding work, particularly focusing on the Three Planks Ride and the previously pollarded Hornbeams of Cuckoo Pits. In **Walthamstow Forest**, work will continue around the central glades that have been created over the last 25 years. More emphasis will be placed on creating new pollards here where the conservation volunteers (EFCV) have already thinned the young trees.

- Hornbeam pollarding will also be carried out in Honey Lane Quarters, below Big View and continued at Pole Hill, Chingford. Other areas of new pollard creation will be around Debden Slade.
 - Elsewhere in the Forest, in the more Oak and Beech-dominated wood-pasture areas, we will continue to undertake ‘haloing’ of veteran pollards (the thinning out of competing trees around them). Haloing work is particularly important in **Bury Wood** in areas like Long Hills where many Oak pollards still survive but are declining in condition due to shading, as is their associated saproxylic fauna. These Oak pollards have now all been mapped and registered on the Forest Veteran Tree Register and volunteer tree wardens have been helping to assess condition of the trees.
 - **Grassland work:** the grassland work will continue across the Forest as in recent years using a similar programme but with some modifications (see below for St Johns & Woodford Greens). The work is supported by the Environmental Stewardship Scheme. The new arrangements with a contractor for green waste disposal will be continued as they proved effective and saved considerable time last summer.
 - **Grazing:** The areas covered by cattle grazing will be extended as a result of the cattle grid and fence infrastructure supported by the new invisible fence network. This will allow grazing across Honey Lane Quarters, Rushey Plain and Warren Wood Slope this year in addition to the main sites of Chingford Plain, Fairmead and Deershelter Plain.
9. **Wood-pasture Maintenance:** There are a number of areas in the Forest that have been opened up as part of the wood-pasture programme and have proved difficult to maintain. We will be revisiting many of these during 2014/15 to address difficulties such as frequent obstructions and poor access so that they can be more easily maintained in future years
 10. **Fernhills Livestock Fencing: Work** started in 2013/14 to repair or replace the livestock fences around Fernhills. Operations teams will continue to clear this fence line prior to it being made more fully stock proof. The fence improvement works will be undertaken as part the 2014 Scouts construction project.
 11. **Visitor Access Management Programme:** A developing project during 2014 will see the Maintenance team clearing paths in Swaines Green and the Volunteer Officer working with local community groups to encourage their involvement in the longer term care of this area. Specific Visitor Access works proposed to take place in the Forest during the year will be:
 - St Johns and Woodford Greens: Revised detailed management proposals for these two areas are given in Appendix One. The main development is the proposed expansion of the area of amenity grassland and increased frequency of path cuts. It is anticipated that much of this work will be contracted out;

- Wanstead Park: In liaison with the Wanstead Park Steering Group a programme of improvement works is to be undertaken. Vegetation management to restore historic views and to improve access will be the main activities. Key entrances will be reviewed to improve their welcoming aspect, eg through vegetation management and more sensitive use of signs. We will be working with local groups to increase the amount of practical volunteer support within Wanstead Park
 - Ride improvements will concentrate on the network within the Central Keeper area and will include vegetation management and reposting of the rides. This will mean that the rides for the South and Central keeper areas will have been completely reposted and cleared of encroaching vegetation over the period 2013-15. A ride maintenance survey programme is to be initiated during 2014 which will help to improve planned maintenance and to identify additional routes requiring surfacing. Routine maintenance of path edge vegetation and drainage will be continued across the whole network.
12. **Risk Management Activity:** A major area of Risk Management activity for this year will be the works to ensure Highams Park Dam can withstand very extreme flood events in accordance with the requirements of the Reservoirs Act 1975. Operations Teams will be undertaking aspects of these works alongside the contractors. The continued maintenance of the dams within the Forest is an expanding activity each year with, it seems, new works being identified following each inspection by the Panel Engineer.
 13. Trees identified for hazard removal will be a significant proportion of spring and summer programmes for the arboricultural teams. We anticipate increased work towards the South following our Massaria assessments of London Plane Trees. The relative lack of major incidents following the recent storms, we believe, indicates the success of the Tree Safety management work in reducing risks to the City.
 14. A new area of vegetation management for 2014 will be the initiation of a Highways vegetation survey. We presently have a reactive approach to managing these areas, waiting for requests from highways to come in before we work sites. By anticipating works at an earlier stage our aim is to undertake these at a more cost effective stage. In addition, we will be preparing mini-management plans for major road junctions that we have responsibility for the adjacent vegetation. Our aim will be to better plan for the safe and cost effective management of these areas at the same time as realising any wider conservation and amenity benefits. These will be brought to the EFCC Local Meeting for consultation.
 15. Wanstead Flats: As part of continuing works to discourage rough sleeping we will be extending the area of cleared holly on Wanstead Flats. Operations and Keeper staff will be compiling a plan of the areas of most concern and these will be cleared once the nesting season is over. Previously cleared areas will have at least a single cut with tractor flail to keep them open.

16. During 2014 City Surveyors undertook a survey of structures across the Forest and Buffer lands. Once the results are available the Head of Operations, in discussion with CS Principal Engineers, will review the implications for developing the Constraints Management System for Epping Forest. The outcome of this will be brought to the EFCC Local Meeting for consultation.
17. **Other Forest Operations Activity:** In 2014 we successfully sold our woodchip to power stations and thereby reduced the costs of its disposal. We had hoped to sell the cordwood produced in the Forest for firewood but it was a frustrating year with long-term machinery breakdowns preventing timber extraction and with the wet weather adding a further delay. 2014-15 will see the extraction of timber and its sale by competitive tender being given priority once ground conditions permit. A timber sales point has been established at Black Barn to facilitate its marketing

Implications

Financial Implications

18. The work outlined in the proposed work programme is covered by the local risk budget of Epping Forest Division supplemented by the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) and the Environmental Stewardship Scheme grant awarded by Natural England. Grant income from these schemes in 2014 - 2015 will be more than £280,000 for habitat work, including a Stewardship grant element for Forest habitats of over £160,000.
19. The habitat conservation work attracts this substantial external grant-aid in a complex package of financial support with the main programmes being:
 - Entry Level Scheme (ELS): Most grassland in the forest and on the Buffer lands is covered by payments under this scheme.
 - Higher Level Scheme (HLS): The cattle grazing, wood-pasture restoration and 'Project Nightingale' scrub management work receive enhanced financial support
 - Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF): Our 'Keystone trees' project is 74% funded by HLF with match funding from the Tubney Charitable Trust. An important benefit of this funding is that it provides three apprentices and a Team Leader, enabling us to deploy an additional arborist team in the Forest.

Legal Implications

20. The habitats work programme is carried out in accordance with the Conservators' powers and duties under the Epping Forest Act 1878. Management of those parts of the Forest designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is also informed by statutory regimes relating to those designations. In this regard, the programmed work has received the necessary statutory written consent

from Natural England under Section 28E of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Property Implications

21. Works to the dam at Highams Park lake are being progressed and separately reported through the project gateway procedure, and presently generally on target.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

City Together

22. The work proposals above meet two of the key themes “A world class City that supports our communities” and “A World Class City which protects, promotes and enhances our environment”

Open Spaces Department Business Plan

23. The proposals follow from three of the Open Spaces Department’s Strategic aims of: providing high quality accessible open spaces, involving communities in site management and adopting sustainable working practices.

Epping Forest Management Plan

24. The proposals match a number of the Epping Forest Vision for the 21st Century’s key visions including:
 - Epping Forest’s position as a unique and ancient landscape for people and wildlife will be strengthened;
 - The Forest will retain its natural aspect with the diversity of wildlife habitats enhanced and the features of international importance protected.
 - Epping Forest will be highly valued as part of a larger and fully accessible protected landscape area.
25. Natural England Officers have been consulted about this work programme and issued formal consent under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981..
26. HLF Officers have been consulted at regular review meetings.

Conclusions

27. The work outlined above is drawn from the 2004-10 Epping Forest Management Plan and associated documents developed from that Plan. Most of the work is a continuation of projects, started in previous years. New areas of proposed activity include works at Wanstead Park and undertaking a Highways vegetation survey. We will extend the area under amenity management at St Johns and Woodford Greens. Improvement works along rides will focus on the Central Keeper area in 2014-15.
28. The habitat work which concentrates on opening up around the ancient pollards and pollarding of Hornbeams (wood-pasture restoration), heathland restoration and grazing is supported by Natural England, with a grant of over

£160,000 for Stewardship work last year Additional financial support will be received through the Single Payment Scheme and from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Tubney Charitable Trust.

29. During 2014/15 the Head of Operations will test an Estates Maintenance Contract process as a means of increasing value for money from our contracted out works and to reduce our contract management costs.
30. In-house teams will deliver much of the work detailed in the report. However, volunteers, coordinated by the Ecology Team with assistance from the Volunteer Development Officer, will also deliver significant parts of the habitat conservation programme.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1** – St Johns and Woodford Greens 2014 Management Proposals.
- **Appendix 2** – Habitat conservation proposals 2014-15

Background Papers:

The Epping Forest Management Plan 2004-2010

The Barn Hoppit Wood-pasture Restoration Plan 2006-2011

The Lords Bushes and Knighton Woods Integrated Site Plan 2004-2010

The Wanstead Flats Integrated Site Plan 2006-2011

Branching Out Stage II Project Plan (Nov 2008) – including the Keystone Trees and Grazing Strategies

SEF 01/13 Epping Forest & Commons Committee Report: Grazing Expansion Plan for Implementing the Epping Forest Grazing Strategy. 13th February 2013.

Wanstead Park Conservation (2011)

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Geoff Sinclair, Head of Operations

Dr Jeremy Dagley, Head of Conservation

-----oo00oo-----

St John's and Woodford Greens

2014 Work Proposals

Sinclair, Geoff

2/6/2014

Summary

The table following is an abstract from the developing Forest Operations Plan. It itemises the work proposed for St Johns and Woodford Greens. The main change is the proposed expansion of the area of short grass managed grassland and more frequently cut paths. It is proposed that we contract out the main grass cutting works as our equipment is not the most appropriate for cutting large areas.

Key to Table

Operational Activity:	A coding system that apportions activity to particular categories based on the nature of the activity, whether it is capital or maintenance works. The coding links back to the six forest duties.
CMPT:	The Compartment number where the activity is taking place.
EF Sub:	The Sub compartment number where the activity is taking place.
Location:	The location of the works being undertaken.
Map No:	The reference number of any map on file.
Month/Year:	The month and year when the activity takes place
Cycle:	Frequency of the activity. 0 = a one off activity, 1 = every year, 2= every two years etc
Description:	Work description.
Team:	Who will undertake the work. A= Arb, G= Grassland, M= Maintenance, Con = Contractor, HOP = Head of Operations, EFCV = Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers

St Johns and Woodford Green Work Proposals (2014)

Operational Activity	CMPT	EF Sub	Location	Map no	Month	Year	Cycle	Description	Team
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	May	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	July	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	Sept	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
LAW – Avenues	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	Jun	2014	1	Cut and leave the grass beneath the Chestnut trees. Trees along the A121 are managed by the LBR while the remaining Avenue trees are managed by EF.	G
LAW – Avenues	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	Oct	2014	1	Cut and leave the grass beneath the Chestnut trees. Trees along the A121 are managed by the LBR while the remaining Avenue trees are managed by EF.	G
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	May	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	July	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	Sept	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
LAW – Avenues	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	Jun	2014	1	Cut and leave the grass beneath the Chestnut trees. Trees along the A121 are managed by the LBR while the remaining Avenue trees are managed by EF.	G
LAW – Avenues	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	Oct	2014	1	Cut and leave the grass beneath the Chestnut trees. Trees along the A121 are managed by the LBR while the remaining Avenue trees are managed by EF.	G
LAW – grass cutting	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	May	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas north and south of Russell Road: Cut and leave the arisings so as to maintain the grass to a max 15cm high sward.	Con
LAW – grass cutting	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	July	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas north and south of Russell Road: Cut and leave the arisings so as to maintain the grass to a max 15cm high sward.	Con
LAW – grass cutting	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	Sept	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas north and south of Russell Road: Cut and leave the arisings so as to maintain the grass to a max 15cm high sward.	Con
NWH - Maintenance work	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	Feb	2014	0	Crown lift the clump of oak on the NE corner of the area south of Russell road. Lift to height that will allow tractor cutting of the ground beneath.	A
NWH - Maintenance work	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	July	2014	1	Cut and collect grass and regrowth. Collected material to be taken off the site to an agreed reception area	Con
LAW – grass cutting	28	13	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Pond	BH1	May	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas north and south of Russell Road: Cut and leave the arisings so as to maintain the grass to a max 15cm high sward.	Con
LAW – grass cutting	28	13	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Pond	BH1	July	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas north and south of Russell Road: Cut and leave the arisings so as to maintain the grass to a max 15cm high sward.	Con
LAW – grass cutting	28	13	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Pond	BH1	Sept	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas north and south of Russell Road: Cut and leave the arisings so as to maintain the grass to a max 15cm high sward.	Con
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	33	6	Woodford Green North	WG1	May	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	33	6	Woodford Green North	WG1	July	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	33	6	Woodford Green North	WG1	Sept	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	33	6	Woodford Green North	WG1	Jun	2014	1	Cut the verge vegetation to a depth of 1m along mapped pathways.	M
LAW – grass cutting	33	6	Woodford Green North:	WG1	July	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures.	M
LAW - grass cutting	33	6	Woodford Green North:	WG2	May	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures.	M
LAW – grass cutting	33	6	Woodford Green North: Short grass areas	WG1	May	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas to maintain a max 15cm high sward, NE corner by the church and midway down the green.	Con
LAW – grass cutting	33	6	Woodford Green North: Short grass areas	WG1	July	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas to maintain a max 15cm high sward, NE corner by the church and midway down the green.	Con
LAW – grass cutting	33	6	Woodford Green North: Short grass areas	WG1	Sept	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas to maintain a max 15cm high sward, NE corner by the church and midway down the green.	Con
LAW – Avenues	33	6	Woodford Green North: Chestnut Avenue on Woodford High road	WG1	Jun	2014	1	Cut and leave the grass beneath the Chestnut trees. The Avenue of mainly Horse Chestnut with occasional new planted European Lime is maintained by LBR. The understory beneath the avenue is maintained by EF and it is proposed that this retained as a screen against the road	G
LAW – Avenues	33	6	Woodford Green North: Chestnut Avenue on Woodford High road	WG1	Oct	2014	1	Cut and leave the grass beneath the Chestnut trees. The Avenue of mainly Horse Chestnut with occasional new planted European Lime is maintained by LBR. The understory beneath the avenue is maintained by EF and it is proposed that this retained as a screen against the road	G
NWH - Maintenance work	33	6	Woodford Green North: Conservation grass areas	WG1	Jul	2014	1	Cut and collect grass and regrowth. Collected material to be taken off the site to an agreed reception area	Con

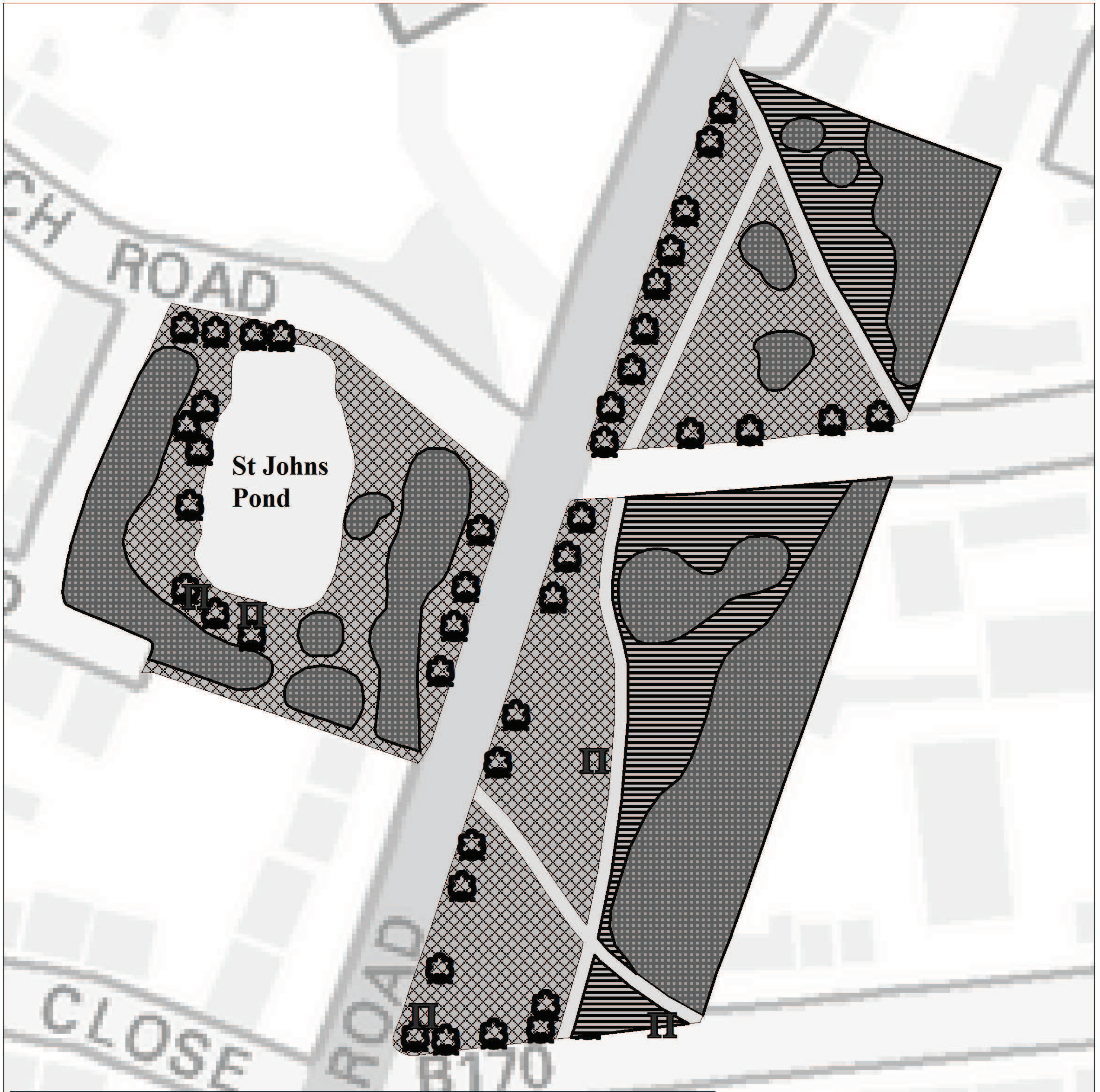
St Johns and Woodford Green Work Proposals (2014)

Operational Activity	CMPT	EF Sub	Location	Map no	Month	Year	Cycle	Description	Team
LAW – grass cutting	33	9	Woodford Green North: Johnstons Pond	WG1	May	2014	1	Grass cut to maintain a max 15cm high sward. Area includes both the Pond section and the land behind the toilets	Con
LAW – grass cutting	33	9	Woodford Green North: Johnstons Pond	WG1	May	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures. Area includes both the Pond section and the land behind the toilets	M
LAW – grass cutting	33	9	Woodford Green North: Johnstons Pond	WG1	July	2014	1	Grass cut to maintain a max 15cm high sward. Area includes both the Pond section and the land behind the toilets	Con
LAW – grass cutting	33	9	Woodford Green North: Johnstons Pond	WG1	July	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures. Area includes both the Pond section and the land behind the toilets	M
LAW – grass cutting	33	9	Woodford Green North: Johnstons Pond	WG1	Sept	2014	1	Grass cut to maintain a max 15cm high sward. Area includes both the Pond section and the land behind the toilets	Con
NWH - Maintenance work	33	9	Woodford Green North: Johnstons Pond		June	2014	0	Reinforce the pond edge where it is overflowing onto the adjacent green.	M
LAW – grass cutting	33	8	Woodford Green North: Potato Pond	WG1	May	2014	1	Grass cut to maintain a max 15cm high sward. Leave the verge uncut to form a natural fence. In 2015 the southern section across the road will also need to be cut at the same time.	Con
LAW – grass cutting	33	8	Woodford Green North: Potato Pond	WG1	May	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures.	M
LAW – grass cutting	33	8	Woodford Green North: Potato Pond	WG1	July	2014	1	Grass cut to maintain a max 15cm high sward. Strim seats, bins and other structures. Leave the verge uncut to form a natural fence. In 2015 the southern section across the road will also need to be cut at the same time.	Con
LAW – grass cutting	33	8	Woodford Green North: Potato Pond	WG1	July	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures.	M
LAW – grass cutting	33	8	Woodford Green North: Potato Pond	WG1	Sept	2014	1	Grass cut to maintain a max 15cm high sward. Strim seats, bins and other structures. Leave the verge uncut to form a natural fence. In 2015 the southern section across the road will also need to be cut at the same time.	Con
LAW – grass cutting	33	8	Woodford Green North: Potato Pond	WG1	Nov	2014	0	Southern section of the Potato Pond that has been unmanaged for a few years. Works to restore it to regular management to include: Strim and rake off the vegetation. Level rough areas and Ant hills with digger to facilitate mowing works. Create a management entrance and close of with lockable bollards or a log.	M
LAW – Avenues	33	6	Woodford Green North: Warners Path	WG1	Nov	2014	0	Clear the scrub growth beneath the avenue to open up the path onto the Green. Cut material to be removed from the site and stumps to be cut flush with the ground. The Avenue trees are managed by LBR.	A
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	33	5	Woodford Green South:	WG2	May	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	33	5	Woodford Green South:	WG2	July	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
AW - Pedestrian access maintenance	33	5	Woodford Green South:	WG2	Sept	2014	1	3m wide path cut along the mapped routes. No need to collect cut material/	G
LAW – grass cutting	33	5	Woodford Green South:	WG2	May	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures.	M
LAW – grass cutting	33	5	Woodford Green South:	WG2	July	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures.	M
LAW – grass cutting	33	5	Woodford Green South: Short grass areas	WG2	May	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas: small area adjacent to the Cricket ground car park and larger section on the SE of the site. Cut and leave the arisings so as to maintain the grass to a max 15cm high sward. Strim seats, bins and other structures	Con
LAW – grass cutting	33	5	Woodford Green South: Short grass areas	WG2	July	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas: small area adjacent to the Cricket ground car park and larger section on the SE of the site. Cut and leave the arisings so as to maintain the grass to a max 15cm high sward. Strim seats, bins and other structures	Con
LAW – grass cutting	33	5	Woodford Green South: Short grass areas	WG2	Sept	2014	1	Grass cut on two areas: small area adjacent to the Cricket ground car park and larger section on the SE of the site. Cut and leave the arisings so as to maintain the grass to a max 15cm high sward. Strim seats, bins and other structures	Con
LAW – Avenues	33	5	Woodford Green South: Broom Hill Avenue	WG2	July	2014	0	Tree by tree assessment undertaken to identify actions required to encourage the growth of the established London Plane so that it can eventually replace Poplar as the dominant species on the avenue.	A
LAW – Avenues	33	5	Woodford Green South: Chestnut Avenue on Woodford High road	WG2	Jun	2014	1	Cut and leave the grass beneath the Chestnut trees.	G
LAW - Avenues	33	5	Woodford Green South: Chestnut Avenue on Woodford High road	WG2	Oct	2014	1	Cut and leave the grass beneath the Chestnut trees.	G
NWH - Maintenance work	33	5	Woodford Green South: Conservation grass areas	WG2	July	2014	1	Cut and collect grass and regrowth. Collected material to be taken off the site to an agreed reception area	Con
NWH - Maintenance work	33	5	Woodford Green South: Spiny Restharrow	WG2	May	2014	2	Two yearly cut of the area with combined mini-mower cut and volunteer cut of the area. Arisings from the area removed. Work to be undertaken with volunteers from EFCV. Some minor tree removal will be required which needs LBR's permission	G/EFCV

St Johns and Woodford Green Work Proposals (2014)

Operational Activity	CMPT	EF Sub	Location	Map no	Month	Year	Cycle	Description	Team
LAW – grass cutting	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green and pond	BH1	May	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures.	M
LAW – grass cutting	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green and pond	BH1	July	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures.	C
OC-Internal Consultation	33	5	Woodford Green South: Chestnut Avenue on Woodford High road		May	2015	0	Complete an internal discussion on future management options for the Chestnut Avenues. Can we assume LBR will continue to manage, Will we need to replace the avenues and what species to use.	HOP
LAW – grass cutting	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	May	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures.	M
LAW – grass cutting	28	12	Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green	BH1	July	2014	1	Strim seats, bins and other structures.	M

Map 28.3: Buckhurst Hill: St Johns Green and Pond



II SEATS: Strim seats, bins and other structures.

PATH CUT: 3m wide path cut three times a year along the mapped routes.

SHORT GRASS AREAS: Short cut three times a year to maintain a max 15 cm high sward.

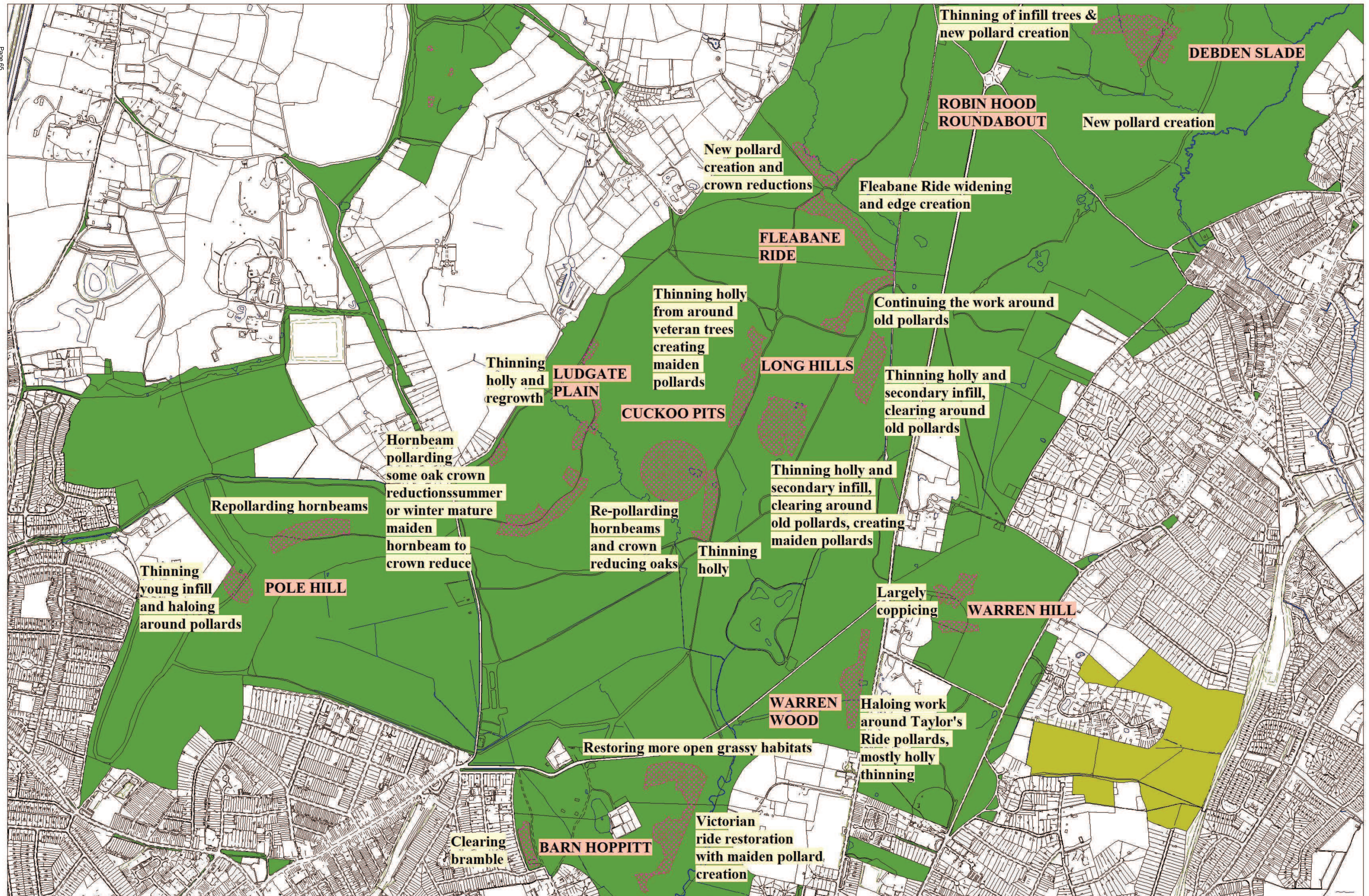
CONSERVATION GRASS AREAS: Cut and collect grass and regrowth in July each year.

EXISTING SCRUB / WOODLAND: No work proposed.

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HLS HABITAT WORK 2014-15

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HLS HABITAT WORK 2014-15



LORDS BUSHES

**Haloing around old pollards
and creating maiden pollards**

**Thin of
young infill**

**Opening up along the ride,
thinning young infill and holly
creating maiden pollards**

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HLS HABITAT WORK 2014-15

Page 59



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HLS HABITAT WORK 2014-15

**Wood-pasture restoration
with hornbeam pollarding
along paths and rides**

**Create new pollards,
remove some birch and holly
around edge of glade**

WALTHAMSTOW FOREST

CANADA PLAIN

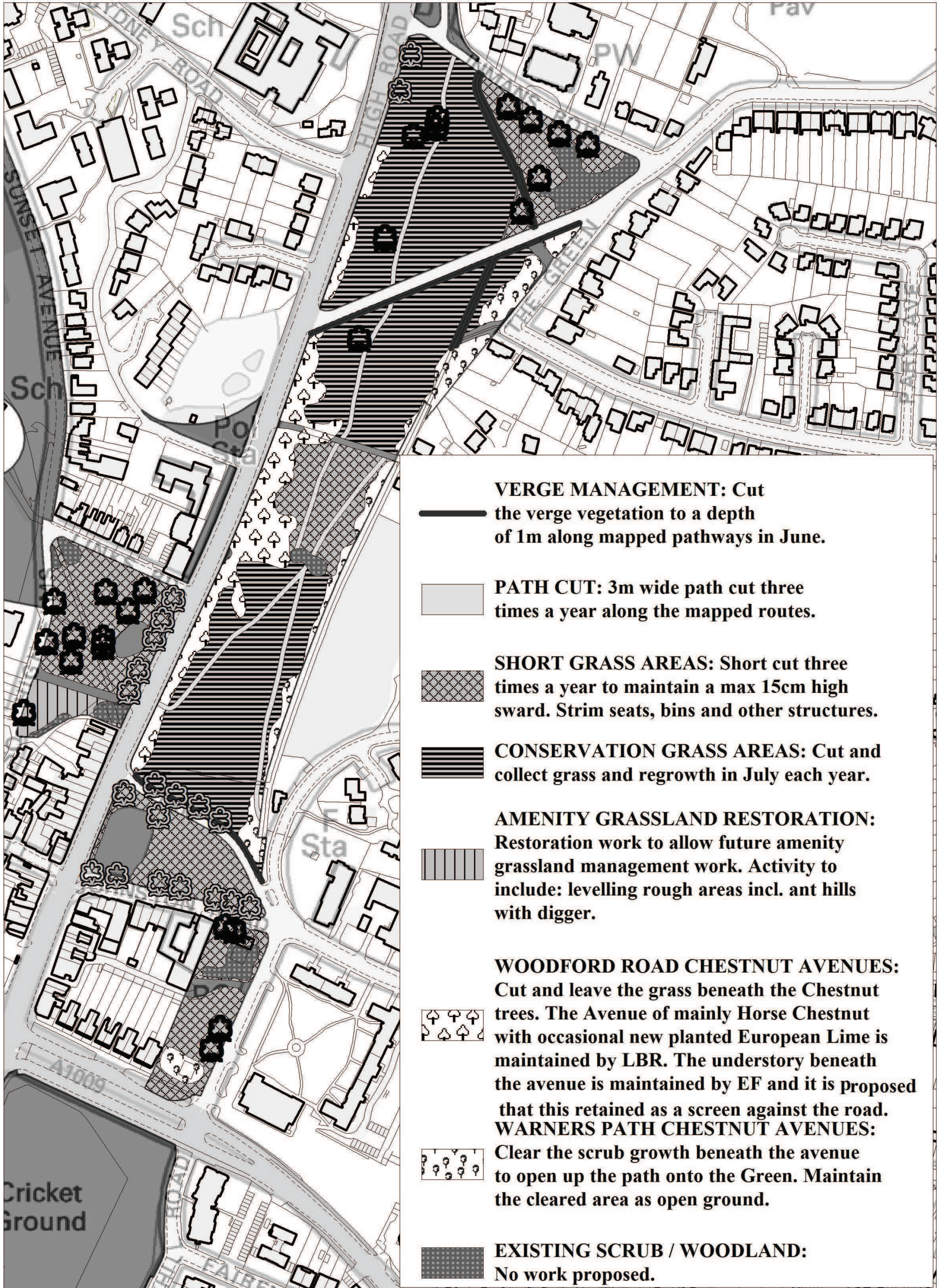
**Holly thinning around
old pollards**


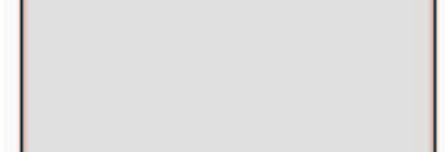
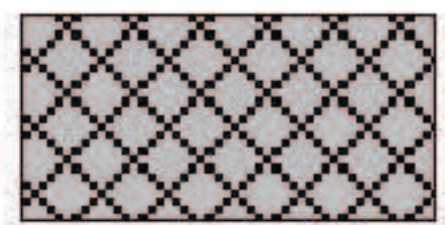


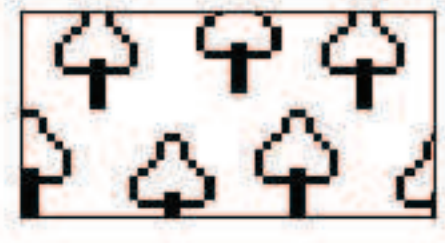

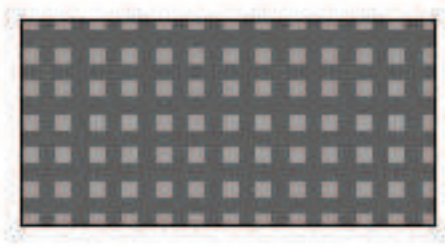
Holly clearance

GILBERTS SLADE

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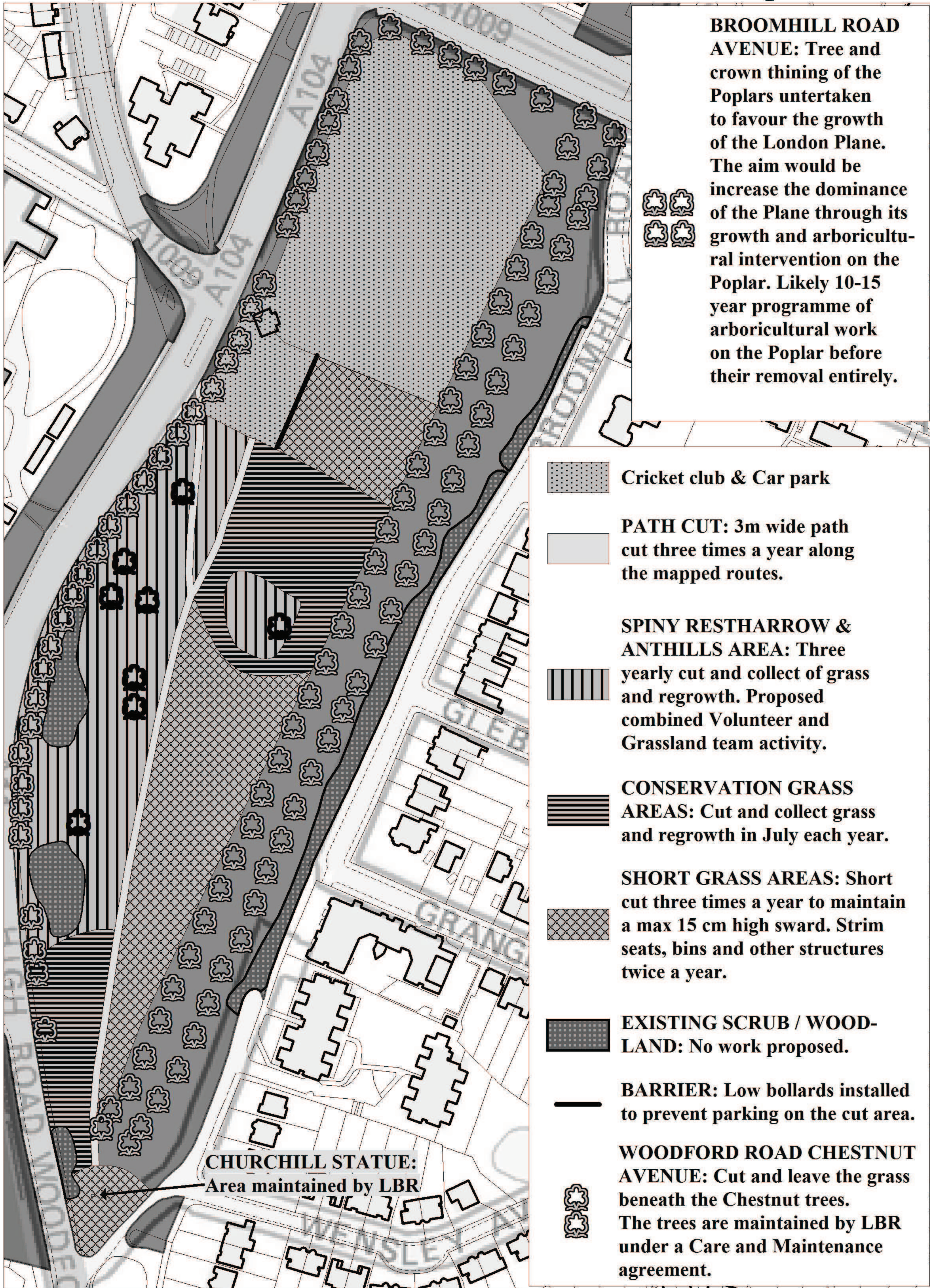
(MAP WG1) Woodford Green North: 2014 Work Proposals



- 
VERGE MANAGEMENT: Cut the verge vegetation to a depth of 1m along mapped pathways in June.
- 
PATH CUT: 3m wide path cut three times a year along the mapped routes.
- 
SHORT GRASS AREAS: Short cut three times a year to maintain a max 15cm high sward. Strim seats, bins and other structures.
- 
CONSERVATION GRASS AREAS: Cut and collect grass and regrowth in July each year.
- 
AMENITY GRASSLAND RESTORATION: Restoration work to allow future amenity grassland management work. Activity to include: levelling rough areas incl. ant hills with digger.
- 
WOODFORD ROAD CHESTNUT AVENUES: Cut and leave the grass beneath the Chestnut trees. The Avenue of mainly Horse Chestnut with occasional new planted European Lime is maintained by LBR. The understory beneath the avenue is maintained by EF and it is proposed that this retained as a screen against the road.
- 
WARNERS PATH CHESTNUT AVENUES: Clear the scrub growth beneath the avenue to open up the path onto the Green. Maintain the cleared area as open ground.
- 
EXISTING SCRUB / WOODLAND: No work proposed.

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(MAP WG2) Woodford Green South: Work Proposals



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Agenda Item 8

-Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest & Commons Committee Projects Sub Committee	10 March 2014 02 April 2014	CS 064/14
Subject: Progress Report – Highams Park Lake	Public	
Report of: The City Surveyor	For Decision	
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p><u>Dashboard</u></p> <p>Project Status – Green Stage – Detailed Design Total Estimated Cost - £1,865,000 Spend to Date - £52,720 Overall Project Risk - Green</p> <p><u>Brief description of project</u></p> <p>Following the last Section 10 Inspection at Highams Park Lake it is necessary to comply with the Inspecting Engineers Recommendations for Safety and reinforce the Dam, to allow overtopping and the passage of the design flood.</p> <p>In January 2012, members approved, with regret, the option of proceeding with a solution which involved removing the Michael Mallinson Watersports Centre; something which was thought to be unavoidable at Detailed Options Appraisal.</p> <p>Following further discussions with members and local groups, the project team were asked to look at ways in which the watersports facility could be retained. After further design development, an option was produced where the watersports facility would be protected by a flood wall; negating the need for its demolition as part of the works.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That members approve the new option of reinforcing the dam whilst retaining the Michael Mallinson Watersports Centre.2. That member agree that, subject to planning and the project remaining within the approved budget, the appointment of the contractor for the main project works and Gateway 5 (Authority to Start Work) remains under the Delegated Authority of the City Surveyor so that works can proceed on site within the statutory deadline. <p><u>Next report</u> The next report will be submitted once work has started on site.</p>		

Overview

<p>1. Success Criteria</p>	<p>The aim of this project is for the dam of this Category A reservoir to safely pass the design flood and therefore reduce the LLoL and damage to property.</p> <p>This will be confirmed by our Panel Engineer when he issues a certificate to the Environment Agency on completion of the works. These works must be commenced within three years of the S10 Inspection to avoid enforcement by the Environment Agency (EA), by 8 April 2014.</p>														
<p>2. Project Scope and Exclusions</p>	<p>The project will include the construction of a new spillway to allow the reservoir to safely pass the probable maximum flood. The works will also include a new drawdown facility to allow the water level in the reservoir to be reduced in the event of an emergency.</p>														
<p>3. Link to Strategic Aims</p>	<p>This project is to reduce the risks to the downstream community and therefore is linked to the City's strategic aim of "To Provide Valued Services to London and the Nation".</p>														
<p>4. Within which category does the project fit</p>	<p>This reservoir safety project fits the following three categories:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health and Safety 2. Statutory 7a Asset enhancement/improvement. 														
<p>5. What is the priority of the project?</p>	<p>A. Essential</p>														
<p>6. Governance arrangements</p>	<p>The project is not large enough in scope to appoint a Project Board.</p> <p>Monthly progress meetings are held with the entire project team and Senior Responsible Officers from the City Surveyor's Department and Open Spaces.</p>														
<p>7. Resources Expended To Date</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="657 1581 1362 1890"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="657 1581 1032 1730"></th> <th data-bbox="1032 1581 1187 1730">Approved Budget £000's</th> <th data-bbox="1187 1581 1362 1730">Spend to Date £000's</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="657 1730 1032 1791">Works and investigations</td> <td data-bbox="1032 1730 1187 1791">1,400</td> <td data-bbox="1187 1730 1362 1791">21</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="657 1791 1032 1841">Emergency plan</td> <td data-bbox="1032 1791 1187 1841">10</td> <td data-bbox="1187 1791 1362 1841">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="657 1841 1032 1890">Designers Fee</td> <td data-bbox="1032 1841 1187 1890">210</td> <td data-bbox="1187 1841 1362 1890">30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Approved Budget £000's	Spend to Date £000's	Works and investigations	1,400	21	Emergency plan	10	0	Designers Fee	210	30
	Approved Budget £000's	Spend to Date £000's													
Works and investigations	1,400	21													
Emergency plan	10	0													
Designers Fee	210	30													

	Consultation	35	0
	Panel Engineer Fees	60	2
	Risk money for silt disposal	150	0
	Total	1,865	53

Progress

8. Reporting Period	October 2013 to March 2014
9. Summary of progress since last report	<p>The last report for this project was submitted in January 2012. Since then the following significant milestones have been achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Royal Haskoning DHV have been appointed as designers for the scheme. They will also provide site supervision services and administer the contract with the Principal Contractor - Capita have been appointed as Cost Consultants and will also adopt the role of the CDM Coordinator - Balfour Beatty have been appointed as Principal Contractor. They have initially been appointed for pre-construction services. The contract for the works will be awarded following an open book costing exercise of the final design. Balfour Beatty will also become responsible for emergency response flood management for the duration of the contract <p>In December 2013, a local drop in session was held where local groups were invited to make comments about the scheme so that issues could be formally recorded and fed into the design process. The bulk of comments received throughout this process related to the proposed removal of the Michael Mallinson Watersports Centre on the dam and their opposition to such a proposal.</p> <p>Following discussion with members and in light of this feedback, the project team were asked to look at the feasibility of retaining the facility whilst meeting the requirements of the Section 10 Inspection; something which was not initially thought possible due to the width of spillway required.</p> <p>Following further hydraulic calculations, the designers have developed an option where by the watersports facility would be protected by a flood wall; negating the need for its demolition as part of the works. Adopting this</p>

solution would avoid the risk that the re-provision of this facility is imposed upon the City as a condition of the planning approval from the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

To allow this design to work, the new spillway would have to extend further along the dam to the west which may result in increased loss of trees. It would also result in the back slope of the dam becoming less steep which is likely to result in the loss of the four car parking spaces currently on the site.

A planning application reflecting this design development was submitted on 7th February 2014. Planning Permission should be obtained in early April 2014. The general arrangement included within the planning application is included in Appendix 1.

10. Programme	The outline project programme is as follows:	
	Appointment of Consultants	Completed
	Appointment of Contractor (Pre construction Services)	Completed
	Outline Design	Commenced January 2014
	Submit Planning	07 February 2014
	Planning Approval	April 2014
	Gateway 5 – Authority to Start Works (delegated)	April 2014
	Pre-Works (Epping Forest Staff)	March 2014 to April 2014
	Main works	April 2014 to November 2014

11. Budget

An allowance of £150,000 was previously identified for the demolition costs of the Watersports Centre. This budget will now be used to construct the mitigating measures required to allow the facility to be retained, notably the new flood wall.

The total budget approved at Detailed Options Appraisal is £1.865m. Until the detailed design has been costed, there is no change in the anticipated final cost of the project.

<p>12. Risk</p>	<p>Following the appointment of the design team, a Risk Register has been developed. This register is a live document and is constantly evolving with the design</p> <p>A significant number of the higher risk items have been mitigated by the design avoiding the need to remove the Michael Mallinson Watersports Centre.</p> <p>The previously identified contingency sum for silt removal should be retained until further investigations have been carried out.</p>
<p>13. Communications</p>	<p>Since the last report, officers have attended and presented at a number of local meetings, updating local groups with the progress and plans for the project.</p> <p>As mentioned in Section 9 of this report, a Local Insight Drop-in session was held to gather locals' knowledge of the area and inform the design.</p> <p>During the planning consultation process, further information sessions have been held to provide local users and stakeholders the opportunity to view the plans submitted for planning and ask questions directly to the design team.</p>
<p>14. Benefits achievement</p>	<p>Since the last report, an Emergency Action Plan has been developed and a telemetry system has been installed on the lake. This telemetry system allows officers to monitor the water levels and weather conditions remotely.</p>
<p>15. Lessons</p>	<p>This project includes an element of Early Contractor Involvement so that the designers have access to the knowledge and experience of the contractor to be carrying out the work. However, the scope of this work was not very clearly defined which led to significant variance in the contractors' interpretation of what was expected of them. This in turn, resulted in a wide range in the tenders received for pre-construction services, making the assessment of the tenders more difficult. A clearer scope of the pre-construction services would have left less up to interpretation and may have allowed the contractors to be appointed sooner.</p>

Appendices

Appendix 1	General Arrangement (Design for Planning)
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Contact

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Email Address	Thomas.creed@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Telephone Number	020 7332 3913



TREE NUMBER	SPECIES	TRUNK SIZE
1	ASH	0.45
2	ASH	0.40
3	HOLLY	0.20 x 2
4	YEW	0.70
5	TURKEY OAK	0.30
6	ASH	0.35
7	ASH	0.25
8	FIELD MARPLE	0.25
9	HORNBEAM	0.20
10	HORNBEAM	0.25
11	ASH	0.50
12	OAK	0.80
13	YEW	0.50
14	SYCAMORE	0.25
15	ALDER	0.20 X3
16	OAK	0.7
17	OAK	0.35

- NOTES**
- ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
 - ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES RELATIVE TO ORDNANCE DATUM NEWLYN.
 - ALL COORDINATES IN METRES RELATIVE TO ORDNANCE SURVEY NATIONAL GRID.
 - ALL MATERIALS AND WORKMANSHIP WILL BE DEFINED IN THE SPECIFICATION UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
 - THE SERVICES INFORMATION ON THIS DRAWING HAS BEEN OBTAINED FROM STATUTORY RECORDS PROVIDED BY THE RELEVANT SERVICE PROVIDER. THE ACCURACY OF THIS INFORMATION CANNOT BE GUARANTEED.

- LEGEND**
- NEW FOOTPATH
 - AREA TO BE GRASSED AS PART OF SPILLWAY WORKS
 - EXISTING TREES TO BE REMOVED
 - EXISTING TREES TO BE POTENTIALLY REMOVED
 - WILDFLOWER SEED MIX
 - NATIVE SHRUB BEDS (SLOW-GROWING LOW-LEVEL SPECIES)
 - NEW STANDARD TREES



REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	GG	BR	TB
P1	JAN'14	FOR PLANNING			

REVISIONS

CLIENT

CITY OF LONDON

PROJECT
HIGHAMS PARK LAKE RESERVOIR SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

TITLE
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT

Royal HaskoningDHV
 Enhancing Society Together

Rightwell House, Britton Peterborough, PE3 8DW
 Tel: 44(0)1733 334455
 Email: info.peterborough@rh-dhv.com
 Website: www.royalhaskoningdhv.com

DRAWN	GG	CHECKED	BR	APPROVED	TB		
DATE	JAN '14	SCALE	AT A1	1:200	SCALE	AT A3	1:400
DRAWING No.	9Y1197/ 1001				REVISION	P1	

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Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	10/3/2014
Subject: Introduction of Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches	Public
Report of: The Superintendent of Burnham Beeches and City Commons	For Decision

Summary

This report seeks member approval to proceed to the statutory consultation phase for the introduction of Dog Control Orders (DCO's) at Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve, using the powers provided under Secondary Authority status.

Recommendations

- Members note the outcome of the recently completed informal consultation process.
- Members consider the deliberations of the Dog Control Orders Working Group as part of their decision making process - Appendix 1
- Members give their approval to commence the statutory DCO consultation process in spring 2014 based on the proposals contained within this report.
- That the Superintendent provides a final report to this committee in July 2014 for Members to consider the representations received and to decide whether or not to make the proposed Dog Control Orders.

Main Report

Background

1. Burnham Beeches is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserve and Special Area of Conservation. In recent years it has become an increasingly popular area for dog walking due to its convenient location and because it remains one of the very few open spaces in the area that provides free car parking Monday to Friday each week (excluding bank holidays).
2. In 2010 Members of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee approved the Burnham Beeches management plan 2010 – 2020. That document sets out the detail by which the City intends to achieve a balance between the needs of recreation, including dog walking and conservation whilst meeting its legal obligations.

- 3.** The growing attraction of the site to dog walkers and the associated challenges this presents has been managed in a variety of ways. In 2004 and following extensive consultation with visitors, a 'Dog Behaviour Code' was introduced to set out the standards of dog behaviour expected of owners when visiting the site. More recently the Open Spaces Dog Policy and associated agreement with the Kennel Club have restated the City's commitment to healthy exercise and good behaviour for dogs and their owners.
- 4.** The Common Council of the City of London was designated as a Secondary Authority for the purposes of Chapter 1 of Part 6 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 from 31st May 2012. This enables the Common Council to make Dog Control Orders (DCO's) in its open spaces outside the City where the relevant Primary Authority has not already made an Order in respect of the same offence on the same land.
- 5.** South Bucks District Council (SBDC) is the Primary Authority for Burnham Beeches and has confirmed that it does not intend to exercise these powers in the foreseeable future.
- 6.** Given the sensitivity of Burnham Beeches and its national conservation designations it was agreed that Burnham Beeches should pilot on behalf of the Open Spaces Department, the approach to implementation of DCO's.
- 7.** Dog Control Orders will be among those abolished by the relevant provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill currently before Parliament.
- 8.** Discussions are taking place with officials about the extent to which the Corporation could be permitted to make use of the new powers for the protection of public spaces in respect of its open spaces outside of the City.
- 9.** The new powers will replace an array of existing powers, including anti-social behaviour orders and injunctions, drinking banning orders, individual support orders, litter clearing notices, defacement removal notices, 'Section 30' dispersal orders, premises closure orders, gating orders and dog control orders.
- 10.** The new powers are likely to be introduced in autumn 2014 and whilst they will alter the detail of how dog control issues are managed it is sensible to assume that the principle of greater control over dog behaviour on public open spaces will remain. In addition the preparation for the introduction of the new powers is likely to require a similar approach to that of DCO's particularly in terms of informing the visiting public, consulting on their implementation and achieving improvements through enforcement.
- 11.** On that basis it remains appropriate for Burnham Beeches to continue to pilot the introduction of DCO's to 'live test' the broad challenges presented by the use of enforcement tools to improve dog behaviour. This learning can then be

applied across the Open Spaces as required albeit this will need to be adapted to the legislations in force at the time.

12. The Remembrancer will continue to monitor progress of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill.
13. In 2010 the City entered into an agreement with the Kennel Club to guide the management of responsible dog ownership on the Open Spaces. In recognition of that agreement the Superintendent met (May 2013) with the Kennel Club to discuss and develop proposals to introduce DCO's at Burnham Beeches. The Director of Open Spaces and Superintendent attended a further meeting with the Kennel Club in December 2013.

Current Position

The Site Survey

14. Since the Superintendent's report of November 2013 the informal public consultation process, conducted by Footprint Ecology, has concluded. A total of 359 visitors were interviewed. The survey results are shown in Appendix 2. The 'headline' results are that:

Schedule 1. Failure to remove dog faeces. The large majority of interviewees supported the introduction of Schedule 1 across the whole site.

Schedule 2. Failure to keep a dog on a lead in an area so designated. The introduction of Schedule 2 was supported by the majority of interviewees across 50% of the site or less.

Schedule 3. Failure to put and keep a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer. The introduction of Schedule 3 was supported by a large majority of interviewees across 50% or more of the site.

Schedule 4. Permitting a dog to enter land from which dogs are excluded. This was supported by a minority (37%) of interviewees.

Schedule 5. Taking more than a specified number of dogs on to the land. This Schedule was supported by the large majority of interviewees with 3 being the favoured maximum number followed very closely by 4.

The Burnham Beeches Consultation Group (BBCG).

15. The full survey results were presented to the BBCG on December 11th 2013. Members were given the opportunity to recommend one of several options regarding the implementation of Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches. That recommendation is shown in paragraph 21 below.

The Kennel Club

16. The Kennel Club's formal response to the Superintendent's proposals was received on 9th January 2014. Such was the detail of their comments that members agreed to form a Working Group to consider the matters raised so that they may properly be considered. Therefore, the report of January 2014 was deferred for decision until March 2014.

Natural England

17. The Superintendent has ensured that Natural England (NE) is aware of the complexity, extent and nature of the issues at Burnham Beeches. NE do not have a policy covering the impact of dog walking and wildlife on Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI), nor is it felt that there is currently sufficient evidence to support such a policy. This 'evidence gap' remains a fundamental issue for the owners and managers of SSSI's and it may be many years before research is sufficient for their needs.
18. On that basis, NE have made the following comments with regard to the introduction of DCO's at Burnham Beeches:
- Based on the information supplied, Natural England cannot find sufficient evidence to support dog control orders being necessary to protect the features for which the SSSI is designated. However, NE recognises that the City has consulted widely on the matter of DCO's at Burnham Beeches and that this information has been used to inform the final recommendation (Option/Map A).*
19. NE has also confirmed that they are content for the City of London, as owners and managers of the NNR, to formulate a local policy and reflect this via the introduction of DCO's. Indeed they have adopted this approach on their own National Nature Reserves where in some instances dogs are required to be kept on leads at all times throughout the year 'to protect wildlife'.

Members Working Group

20. A members working Group was formed to review the comments submitted by the Kennel Club in January 2014. Membership consisted of the following:
- Verderer Peter Adams
 - Deputy Stanley Ginsburg
 - Sylvia Moys
 - Deputy Alexander Deane
21. Members discussed the KC's points in detail and challenged Officers on the key issues. Revisions to the final document were then undertaken. The outcome of the working group's deliberations is contained in Appendix 1 and is supported by three of the four working group members. Comments provided by Deputy Alexander Deane are shown in Appendix 4.

Proposals – See Map A.

22. The following proposal is based on the informal public consultation exercise and recommendation of the BBCG.
- Schedule 1.** This schedule will be applied across the whole site.
- Schedule 2.** To be applied to approximately 59% of the site.
- Schedule 3.** To be applied to approximately 41% of the site.
- Schedule 4.** No new dog exclusion zones will be created. Dogs will continue to be excluded from a small area around the café, as existing.

Schedule 5. The proposed maximum is 3 dogs per owner.

- 23.** It should be noted that the areas covered by Schedules 2 and 3 do not exactly match the findings from the visitor survey, albeit they are as close as practicable (within 10% (40acres) to that ideal.
- 24.** Other considerations not included in the survey include the City's duty under the NERC Act, 2006 to conserve biodiversity and DEFRA's requirement to ensure that DCO's are easily understood by visitors and can be reasonably and proportionately enforced on site. When all matters are considered 'in the round' the chosen proposal was favoured by the BBCG on the grounds that it:
- Provides a workable compromise in terms of a balance between recreation and nature conservation.
 - Ensures that all main access points either by car or foot are within Schedule 3. This greatly reduces the need for dog owners to have their pets on a lead as soon as they jump from the car or otherwise enter the site and thus greatly reduces enforcement difficulties.
 - Provides a very large area (222 acres) of the NNR for dogs to run free whilst remaining under effective control (definition previously agreed with the dog walking community).
 - Enhances the enjoyment and protection of children and other visitors to the site by including a large part of the most popular recreation area, including the easy access path network, within Schedule 2 i.e. 'the dogs on leads at all times' area.
 - Makes logical use of the internal roads to create a visible and easily understood boundary between Schedules 2 and 3. This will greatly facilitate visitor compliance and reduce the need for enforcement by Rangers.
 - The area for Schedule 3 is largely open in nature and owners whose dogs are not under effective control will be easily identified and approached.
 - Will deter regular dog walkers who park on the roadsides to the north of the site to avoid weekend car park charges.
- 25.** The next step, should members agree, is to proceed to the statutory consultation stage. The timetable for this stage is set out in Appendix 3. It is at this point that the City must advertise its proposal to introduce DCO's in a local newspaper. The consultation period will last for 28 days to allow members of the public and any interested bodies to comment on the detail of the proposals. Once the consultation is completed the DCO's may be made, advertised or amended if deemed appropriate. However, if the proposals are significantly amended the process must be started again. Once completed a further notice must be published in a local newspaper to confirm that the DCO's have been made and the date that they will come into force.
- 26.** The Superintendent will seek guidance from the Comptroller and City Solicitor to ensure that the statutory elements of this exercise are met.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- 27.** The proposals support the Strategic aims of the City and Open Spaces Department by:
- 1. Quality.** Providing, safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces and services on behalf of London and the nation.
 - 2. Inclusion.** Involving communities and partners in developing a sense of place through the care and management of our sites.
 - 3. Environment.** Delivering sustainable working practices to promote the variety of life and protect the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations.
 - 4. Promotion.** Promote opportunities to value and enjoy the outdoors for recreation, learning and healthy living
 - 5. People.** Manage, develop and empower a capable and motivated work force to achieve high standards of safety and performance.

Financial and Risk Implications

- 28.** The cost of the DCO consultation and enforcement design process is estimated at £21,000 including officer time, training, consultation costs and the provision of appropriate signage and other materials. These costs are being met from local risk budgets and are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Activity	Cost
Research and informal Consultation (Footprint Ecology)	£7000
Management time (estimated at 30 days)	£7500
Staff Training (est)	£2000
Administration (set up)	£4500
Total estimated costs	£21,000

- 29.** An income of around £2,000/annum is anticipated from Fixed Penalty Notice payments. It is estimated that the on-going cost to administer the scheme (staff time) will be approximately £2000/annum. Given the anticipated income the overall cost of the scheme should be cost neutral.
- 30.** The development of appropriate administration procedures is key to the success of the proposals. The Superintendent is considering this matter with the City Solicitor and District Enforcement who currently oversee the site's Parking Charge Notice administration.

HR Implications

31. Staff at Burnham Beeches have been consulted throughout this process and are aware of the implications on their roles. Minor adjustments to the staff structure have also been made.
32. The Rangers at Burnham Beeches currently issue parking tickets for failure to 'pay and display'. They will also enforce the DCO's (perhaps with the assistance of local PCSO's) and issue the FPN's. This will require additional 'appropriate training'.

Conclusion

33. Dog walking at Burnham Beeches has grown in popularity over recent years. Incidents related to dog walking are recorded by staff and remain high despite proactive management such as the site's Dog Behaviour Code, waste removal and other 'dog friendly' services.
34. The site's byelaws have not been effective in reducing repetitive, nuisance behaviour as set out in the previous report to this committee and the use of DCO's at Burnham Beeches is proposed as a complementary enforcement mechanism.
35. DCO's offer additional controls and a more flexible approach to enforcement compared to the byelaws. This provides a rare opportunity to establish a proper balance between the needs of the many site users and the statutory requirement to enhance biodiversity (NERC, 2006).
36. The Kennel Club's comments were considered by a member's working group and the outcome of their deliberations is shown as appendix 1. Three of the four working group members support the outcome of that meeting.
37. The Superintendent proposes to commence the statutory consultation process early in spring 2014 based on the proposals contained within this report. See Appendix 3 for timetable.
38. The Superintendent further proposes that, on satisfactory conclusion of that consultation process, he provides a final report to this committee in July 2014 to confirm the outcome.
39. The cost of implementation of DCO's at Burnham Beeches is currently estimated at £21,000.
40. Dog Control Orders will be among those abolished by the relevant provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill (ABCP). The Remembrancer will continue to monitor progress of the ABCP through parliament and advise officers of its implications.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Deliberations of the Dog Control Orders Working Group

- Appendix 2 - Summary results of the 2013 DCO informal consultation exercise.
- Appendix 3 – Delivery Timetable
- Appendix 4 – Comments on the proposal by Deputy Alexander Deane
- Map A – Specifying areas covered by each DCO.

Background Papers:

1. Report to EFCC of Sept 2012. Use of Secondary Authority Powers to introduce Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches.
2. Report to EFCC and Open Spaces Committee – November 2013. Review of Pilot Study - Use of Secondary Authority Powers to introduce Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches.

Andy Barnard

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Burnham Beeches



Volunteers play a vital role



Autumn in the Beeches



Mallards at Upper Pond

Page 93



Walking in the car-free zone

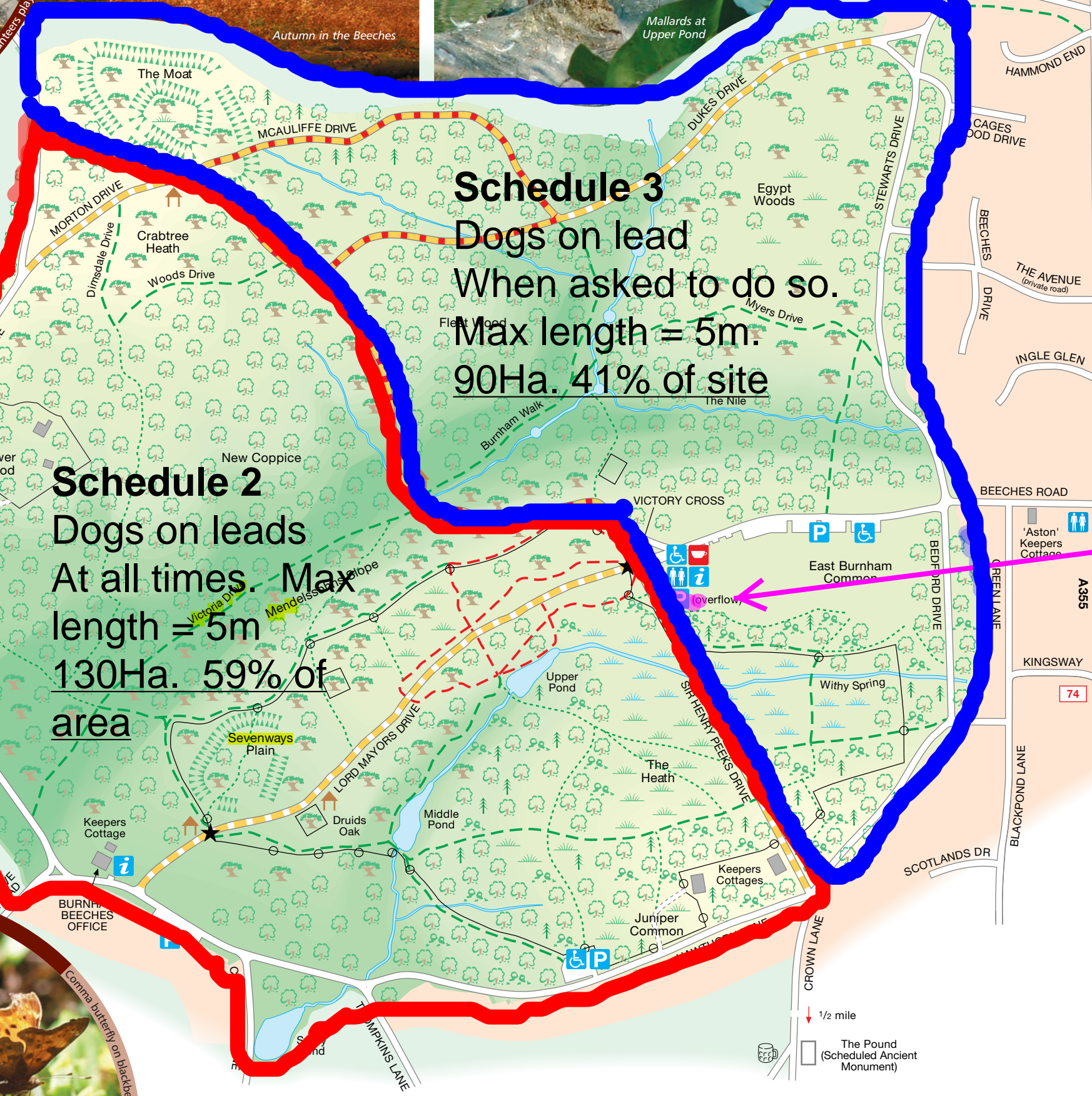
Schedules 1 & 2 apply to whole site. I.E. remove faeces and max of 4 dogs per owner.



The Ballerina pollard



Comma butterfly on blackberries



Schedule 3
Dogs on lead
When asked to do so.
Max length = 5m.
90Ha. 41% of site

Schedule 2
Dogs on leads
At all times. Max length = 5m
130Ha. 59% of area

Schedule 4
Exclusion zone at cafe - as existing

- Roads
- Roads closed to all vehicles
- Roads closed to traffic (except disabled badge holders)
- Track
- Main footpath
- Other path
- Easy access path
- Horse and cycle riding also allowed
- Walkers only
- Approximate height above sea level in metres (50m to 85m)
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Stream (seasonal)
- Swallow hole
- Shelter
- Information point
- Car park - pay and display
- Disabled parking
- Café
- Public convenience
- Bus stop
- Pub
- Gate
- Fence. Caution: grazing animals may be found within the fenced areas
- Easy access gate and cycle grid
- Ancient woodland
- Area with ancient pollards
- Dry heath
- Wet heath/mire
- Other open land
- Built-up areas

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Dog Control Orders

Members Working Group 3rd February 2014

Officer response to comments provided by the Kennel Club 9th January 2014.

Introduction

The Dog Control Working Group met on the 3rd February 2014 to consider the Kennel Club's response to the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches and City Commons report to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on January 9th 2014.

As preparation for that meeting the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches provided working group members with a response to the points raised by the Kennel Club. The following report is the product of that meeting and is supported by 3 of the 4 working group members. It deals in turn with each matter raised and provides useful background information to assist members in their deliberations.

Superintendents Background notes

For the last two decades the principle aim of the site management plan has been to protect Burnham Beeches from the growing impact of urbanisation at its fringes. Major steps along that path have included the closure of private roads to traffic, the introduction of conservation grazing to enhance biodiversity, control of mountain biking activities, introduction of the 'honey pot' access policy and partnership work with planning and transport authorities to ameliorate the impact of population growth.

In many ways the growth in dog walking on the site is the most obvious sign of this challenge with the site being increasingly used as an urban green space rather than a truly rural open space that is also an internationally recognised and protected conservation area. Improved control over poor dog behaviour is perhaps the last obvious step along the path to protecting the site for future generations of people and wildlife to enjoy.

The explicit purpose of introducing controls at Burnham Beeches is to help reduce some of the many conflicts apparent at Burnham Beeches, on a daily basis. Data on such issues and other helpful documents were provided prior to the working group meeting.

The Superintendent's proposal is seeking to introduce an appropriate balance between those who walk dogs and those who wish to enjoy the nature reserve for other reasons. Officers are proposing to provide 220 acres of ancient woodland and grassland for dogs to run free and maintain their health and fitness. Site visitors with dogs will have access to the remainder of the site but here they will be required to simply put their pets on a lead. This approach ensures that:

- The City continues to meet its obligations under the City of London's Open Spaces Act of 1878.
- Visitors and their dogs can continue to use 100% of the site for exercise and benefit from the sense of wellbeing associated with being in a natural environment.
- Visitors (i.e. non dog walkers) will gain benefit from dogs being on leads in clearly understood and enforceable parts of the site.
- Wildlife making use of the proportion of the site where dogs must be kept on leads at all times will benefit from dogs being restrained in that part of the Nature Reserve.

Furthermore, the local population is set to increase over the next 15 years by 15.7% in the South Bucks District. Major infrastructure projects in the locality will also serve to further increase this estimate. The impact of Crossrail on the central London areas it serves has been much examined, but at the outer edges of the line there are towns and villages which will 'benefit' by proximity. Research by Savills indicates that for each minute saved on a journey to work, the value of a property rises by £1,937. This will further encourage development in the Maidenhead and Burnham Area. The expansion of Heathrow and recent consideration of the area around Gerrard's Cross and Stoke Poges for the development of a new town are also important when considering the long term welfare of Burnham Beeches.

The KC's comments are now dealt with in turn:

1. We thank the Committee for the opportunity for our views to be heard; we are very willing to elaborate on the following and attend any future meetings. For now, we trust the following summary comments clarify both our support and concerns regarding the proposed Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches. The Kennel Club will support restrictions where they are evidence-based, proportionate and consistently and credibly applied. While some aspects of the proposal meet this standard, some aspects do not.

Response

1.1. The desire to have evidence is understandable and this was the initial *modus operandi* with the Kennel Club. However, after several weeks of discussion it was concluded that robust scientific evidence to guide our approach to DCO's on a sensitive site of high conservation value (in terms of impacts on dog walking on either wildlife, habitats or other site users) is nationally scant at best. That which does exist is generally specific to particular habitats and/or wildlife not found at Burnham Beeches. This means that scientific evidence to support either view on this particular site cannot be reliably used. It is for this reason that Natural England (NE) has had difficulty in developing a scientific argument to support your Officers views.

1.2 Over the last 9 months the Superintendent has suggested to the KC and NE that there is an opportunity to develop their thoughts on the matter i.e. to carefully consider how and when a more prescriptive control of dogs could be justified on sensitive nature conservation sites. Neither organisation has acknowledged this opportunity.

1.3 Understandably the KC's views are mainly concerned with a single issue i.e. the availability of a local open space amenity to enable dog walkers to exercise their pet(s) 'off lead'. To their credit they acknowledge that there should be some level of control employed and that dogs on leads may be appropriate under certain circumstances. Again understandably, the threshold for those circumstances reflects the narrow focus of their business. The City is obliged to take a broader view and reflect the needs of a much wider audience. It must ensure a balanced approach that, as far as is reasonably practicable, takes into consideration:

- Its detailed knowledge of the site
- The needs of all its visitors and their sensitivities and expectations
- The way in which people access and move/spread through the site
- Its duties under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act of 2005 to enhance biodiversity and the obligation to provide access to visitors under the Open Spaces Act, 1878.

Schedule 1: Picking up fouling across the whole site

2. We support this proposal to aid national consistency about picking up in rural areas, and to reduce problems caused to a wide range of interests when dog faeces are not picked up, or left behind in bags.

Response

2.1. This matches the approach advocated by your Officers and is supported by the Burnham Beeches Consultation Group.

Schedule 2: Dogs on lead all year round across 59% of the site.

3. We oppose this proposal in the strongest possible terms, for reasons including:

The proposal is more extensive and restrictive than any Dog Control Order, national law or local bylaw, that we have seen anywhere else in the UK, including on sites with much higher levels of nature conservation designation than Burnham Beeches.

Response

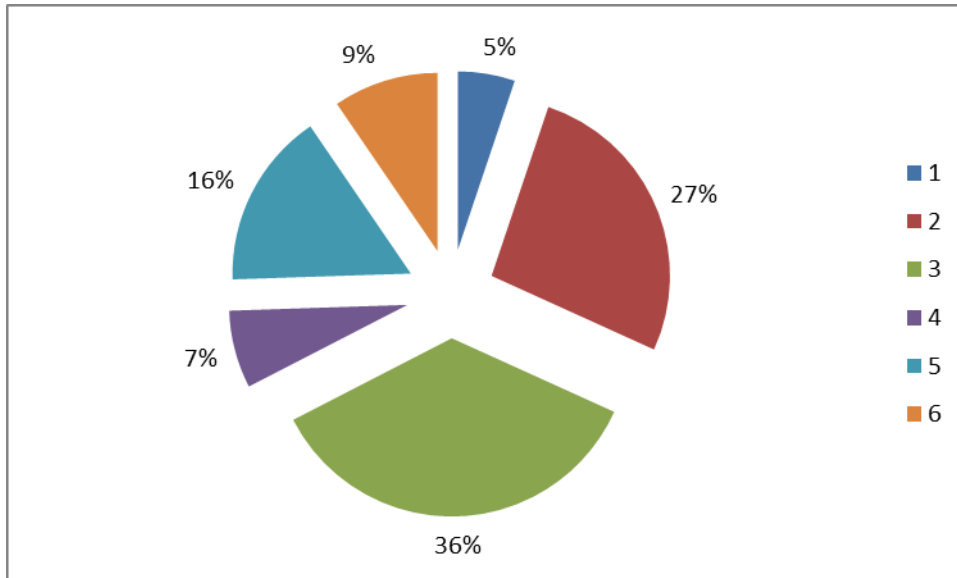
3.1 The proposed Schedule 2 area is designed to further enhance opportunities for enjoyment, relaxation and appreciation of nature and the special environment that the Beeches provides. This is particularly important for those visitors who wish to avoid interactions with dogs as far as is possible, given the limits that high dog visitor activity on the site brings. It is also designed to provide an area for biodiversity, in all its forms or degree of abundance or scarcity, to cope with these same high levels of dog related access.

3.2 Dogs chasing wildlife either inadvertently or deliberately, is an all too common sight at BB, as too are complaints about unwanted interactions with other visitors. These incidents form part of the monthly ‘incident recording process with records stretching back to the early 1990’s. These records rely on incidents being reported to the Rangers or being directly witnessed by them and this greatly reduces their accuracy in terms of the total number of incidents per annum. As an example; over the last 3 years the number of recorded dog related incidents has averaged over 200 per annum. However, if just 1% of all dogs were allowed to behave poorly on the site then the true number of incidents would be expected to be in the region of 2,000 per annum. Based on the 2003 site survey 20% visitors have reported having had the quality of their visit reduced by witnessing or experiencing unwanted interactions with dogs. This indicates that at around 20% of dog walkers have inadequate levels of control over their pets. As such a more accurate representation of the number of incidents at the Beeches is in the region of 10,000 per annum. The number would increase dramatically again if there was an accurate mechanism to report disturbance to wildlife. The following tables provide data concerning reported dog incidents for the period 2009 – 2014. It should be noted that the 2013/14 figures represent a 9 month period.

Table 1. Total number of incidents – by type

	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)	Total
2009 10	9	33	50	6	13	21	132
2010 11	11	81	88	17	28	29	254
2011 12	8	57	70	14	26	22	197
2012 13	15	56	78	18	72	13	252
2013 14	9	41	73	16	22	11	172
Total	52	268	359	71	161	96	1007

Incident by Type - all periods	%
1) Dogs reported missing	5.2
2) Dogs running loose with no owner in sight	26.6
3) Owners who do not have dogs under effective control	35.7
4) Dogs running up to other visitors who unhappy with the approach	7.1
5) Fouling and not picking up	16.0
6) Dogs without collars and tags	9.5



3.3 As has been repeatedly stated, there are no other sites in the UK with higher levels of nature conservation status than Burnham Beeches. Burnham Beeches is unusual in that it not only is of extremely high conservation value but is thought to be the most highly visited Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in the country.

Visitors per hectare per day (in ranked order)

1. Burnham Beeches 8.01
2. Richmond Park 6.3
3. Sherwood Forest 5.3
4. Windsor Great Park 3.4
5. The New Forest National Park 1.2

Number of houses per hectare within 5km of its boundary (in ranked order).

1. Wimbledon Common 500 houses per ha
2. Richmond Park 350 houses per ha
3. Burnham Beeches 260 houses per ha
4. Epping Forest 225 houses per ha
8. Cannock Chase 50 houses per ha
10. Windsor great Park 45 houses per ha

This high level of visitor pressure makes Burnham Beeches very unusual and thus, the balance more difficult to achieve. The issue of seasonal use of DCO's was also carefully considered at Burnham Beeches. Seasonality is a useful tool when reducing the impact of dogs on, for example, breeding birds. However, this is not the case at Burnham Beeches where the impacts of irresponsible dog walking upon other site users and wildlife are spread across the calendar.

3.4 There are many UK sites where dogs are banned such as beaches, children's play areas and grazed areas. The RSPB has many sites where dogs are banned. Queen Elizabeth's Country Park (Hampshire) has a substantial 'dogs on leads at all times' area in operation throughout the year and substantially larger area of 'dogs on leads at all times' when grazing occurs. See also 12.3.

3.5 The Scottish Wildlife Trust recognises the issue and has published the following statement in its Dogs and Wildlife policy document:

SWT believes that the current Scottish Outdoor Access Code is weak with respect to dogs and wildlife and urges Scottish Natural Heritage and Scottish Ministers to undertake a review of the Code at an early date to allow conservation bodies such as the Scottish Wildlife Trust to require that dogs should be on a lead (rather than under "close control") in certain areas or at certain times of the year and to allow for the exclusion of dogs from particularly sensitive areas'.

The same can be said of the Countryside Code that applies to England and of Natural England's 'You and your Dog in the countryside' booklet both of which simply advocate 'best practice'.

3.6 NE do not have a policy on the issue of dog walking and impact on wildlife and this is an area of work that is urgently needed.

4. From research jointly-funded by Natural England, off-lead access close to home and away from traffic, is by far the most important amenity for most dog owners, who make up a very significant proportion of your visitors. These are mainly dog walkers. The recent Burnham Beeches visitor survey also endorses this fact. And yet this proposal seeks to deny this amenity – which has been enjoyed for many decades - over almost 60% of the Beeches.

Response

4.1 We are not proposing to deny amenity, simply asking for dogs to be kept on leads across an agreed proportion of the site. Whilst we must always remain aware that dog walkers make up a significant proportion of all visits they are not the majority of those using the site, simply the most evident due to the extremely regular nature and frequency of their visits.

4.2 Detailed visitor counts over the last 10 years indicate that dog walkers make up around 35% – 44% of all visits at BB. '**Visits**' is the important word here as dog walkers tend to be regular visitors and in real terms make up a smaller % of total number of annual visitors than they do of actual visits.

4.3 As an example. Out of 100 people visiting the site each day for a week we could have 35 dog walkers, who visit us every day each week, and 65 people each day who only visit once a year. At the end of the week we have had 700 visits 35% of which have been by dog walkers. However, if you look at individual visitors we have had 35 dog walkers and (7x65) 455 'others' so in terms of total number of visitors, dog walkers make up a much smaller percentage; just 7.69 % in this very simplistic example.

4.4 Officers also understand that dog walkers may prefer to exercise their pets 'off lead'. The recent consultation survey was carefully designed to indicate the size of area required by a typical, regular dog walker to the Beeches. The results show that for 75% of dog walkers an area of 32ha was sufficient. The area proposed where dogs can be exercised off lead (Schedule 3) is 90ha and thereby provides almost 3 times that requirement. Importantly, this allows dog walkers the choice of remaining within the Schedule 3 area for the totality of their visit or to cross into the Schedule 2 (dogs on leads at all times) area.

Either way the Superintendent's proposal more than meets the basic dog walking amenity requirements of the majority of dog walkers. The use of the private roads as clear boundaries between Schedules 2 and 3 should help to ensure that leads are used at the appropriate time.

5. The proposal, and the related visitor survey, has perpetuated what we submit to be a false premise, namely that a crude percentage-based approach to restrictions is a valid way to approach the issue.

Response

5.1 As Officers are dealing with a specific area of land it is very difficult to view the final result in anything other than percentage terms be it crude or otherwise.

5.2 Having accepted that there was little scientific research available to support either view Officers set about obtaining a useful dataset via public consultation and by considering the larger management issues with the BBCG and EFCC.

5.3 An early consultation event with the BBCG dealt with the matter as an individual 'pen and map' based exercise i.e. an opportunity for each member to draw their own preferred option. This served only to demonstrate that each member had their own specific views on the best solution based on their personal expectations and visiting habits. Individual opinion was both complex and polarised.

5.4 Officers took lessons from this early experience and developed the final (and recently concluded) public consultation exercise as a 'broad percentage of the site' based exercise. This had the advantage of helping to disengage 'place from concept'. As such the recent public consultation exercise was an innovative and largely helpful attempt to provide some clarity (percentages) to the issues and has provided a sensible starting point for discussion and decision.

5.5 It is unrealistic to expect that the survey would provide a definitive solution and an element of 'interpretation of results' was inevitable as too were any differences of opinion that would arise. In the final analysis Officers worked hard to consider the bigger picture and used the data available to help form the current proposals.

5.6 Visitor access at Burnham Beeches is carefully influenced by the 'honey pot' strategy introduced in 2007. This approach has the benefit of concentrating visitors onto those parts of the site that are most capable of withstanding the pressure. This approach helps to protect the most sensitive features, particularly the majority of ancient beech woodland. The honey pot strategy has been achieved by focussing infrastructure such as major car parks, highway signage, café toilets and information point, easy access paths and cycleways in a central area. This maintains availability of the site to visitors but ensures that they have to make a small effort to reach certain parts i.e. walk, jog, cycle etc. The introduction of DCOs should remain sensitive to the needs of this larger strategy. The circular easy access paths are central to this principle and every effort should be made to ensure that these routes stay within the Schedule 3 Area i.e. 'Dogs on leads when requested'.

5.7 Additionally, there is a statutory requirement to ensure that the DCO's can be easily understood and followed by dog walkers, other visitors and staff in their enforcement role. As large parts of Burnham Beeches consist of dense woodland with few easily recognised features (particularly for those who are new to the site or visit infrequently) it is in everyone's interests to ensure that any boundaries between parts of the site with different DCO's are easily seen, understood and remembered.

5.8 Add to this the need to accommodate the differing expectations of a wide range of site users and the requirement to enhance biodiversity and it can be seen that Officers have taken a more nuanced approach than is recognised by the Kennel Club.

It is timely to consider the wider enforcement issues and the impact upon staff resources and visitors.

5.9 Officers have considered the impact of DCO's upon staff resources. Based on experience gained when car park charges were introduced it is expected that the enforcement of DCO's will form a focus of Ranger Patrol work according to existing rotas for the first 3-6 months. Thereafter the focus will be relaxed. In the longer term it is hoped that DCO's will encourage a change in dog walking culture at the site so that irresponsible behaviour is seen as an exceptional occurrence. Eventually the issue of dog walking, as with mountain bike riding in the past, will become less of a focus.

5.10 It is also important to stress that staff will not adopt a constabulary style approach to enforcement rather they will continue to patrol as rangers using their training and experience in this area to ensure that DCO's are discussed and enforced openly, fairly and proportionally. They will work to agreed and understood guidelines that will also be available to site visitors. In this manner visitors are more likely to view DCO's as a benefit to the site its users and wildlife, than an annoyance. This approach ensured that Car Park Charges were introduced on the site in 2012 without major incident or complaint.

6. Focussing any restrictions on specific issues, features and sensitivities is a far more valid and credible way forward, which is why it is used elsewhere throughout UK.

Response

6.1 That is what Officers and BBCG members have done. See section 5

7. The proposed off-lead area includes land where cattle are or – as we understand will be grazed, at a time when great efforts are being made nationally to have dogs on lead around livestock, to reduce the human fatalities that happen each year from dog walkers being trampled by cows. We suggest the Committee needs to consider its moral responsibilities and legal liabilities, if a potentially fatal incident occurs when they have concentrated off-lead access in a grazed area.

Response

7.1 National mortality figures for the UK indicate the following annual statistics:

- Around three members of the public are killed by livestock
- Around three people each year are killed by dogs
- Around 7 people die from bee and wasp stings

7.2 The Kennel Club is perhaps unaware of the City's management experience when dealing with such matters. Officers have carefully considered these issues and have appropriate Risk Assessments, Safe Systems of Work and information provision for the public. This is based on over 20 years of conservation grazing at the site (amongst the first to introduce this type of management in the UK). If we were to use the 'grazed area' rule of thumb for Schedule 2, then it would apply to up to 95% of the site by 2015, something we consider to be disproportionate. The risk of adopting this approach has been previously discussed with the KC.

8. We suggest the Committee similarly needs to consider its liabilities, as this proposal will also mean more off-lead access is taken nearer to unfenced public

roads, with thus an increased danger of injuries for all road users if a dog-related accident occurs.

Response

8.1 From local knowledge and experience, officers do not consider that the proposals will lead to more off lead access nearer to unfenced public roads. The site is roughly circular with public roads defining its boundaries. To avoid proximity to roads may restrict dog walkers more than the existing proposals i.e. to a central portion of the site. The KC's suggestion could also be used to justify 'dogs on leads at all times' for their own safety.

8.2 The City has no obligation to provide fenced areas for dogs. The responsibility for accidents remains with the dog owner and the car driver not the owner of the land.

9. If walkers with dogs come to the Beeches in the same numbers after this DCO is imposed, it will concentrate existing alleged problems from off-lead access into 41% of the site that is also the busiest areas for visitors.

9.1 There is no evidence to suggest that dog walkers will behave as the Kennel Club have suggested. Based on experience of managing the site it is the Officers' view that many dog walkers will continue in their habits and use the larger site as before. Should some dog walkers prefer to stay within the Schedule 3 Area where their pets may be exercised 'off lead' then point 4.4 provides evidence to suggest that they may do so without loss of amenity.

9.2 The problems experienced at BB are not 'alleged' they are an everyday experience for staff and visitors alike. Officers have previously provided the KC with data concerning dog related problems at the site. See section 3.2.

9.3 The Superintendent's proposal neatly splits the areas of highest visitor activity between Schedules 2 and 3 zones. Visitors will simply migrate across the border as and when they wish. The Main Common will continue to be used as the starting point for the large majority of visitors and dog walkers will continue to spread out across the site without the need for their pets to be on a lead.

10. While the justification given to us for this restriction is to protect wildlife, the Government's nature conservation agency, Natural England (NE) explicitly does not support this proposal.

Response

10.1 The Superintendent has ensured that Natural England (NE) is aware of the complexity, extent and nature of the issues at Burnham Beeches. NE do not have a policy covering the impact of dog walking and wildlife on Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI), nor is it felt that there is currently sufficient evidence to support such a policy. This 'evidence gap' remains a fundamental issue for the owners and managers of SSSI's and it may be many years before research is sufficient for NE's needs.

On that basis, NE have made the following comments with regard to the introduction of DCO's at Burnham Beeches:

Based on the information supplied, Natural England cannot find sufficient evidence to support dog control orders being necessary to protect the features for which the SSSI is designated. However, NE recognises that the City has consulted widely on the matter of DCO's at Burnham Beeches and that this

information has been used to inform the final recommendation (Option/Map A).

10.2 As the Government's advisor NE has to take great care not to create precedent in the absence of research and policy. Under these circumstances it is understandable that NE has adopted this position. This is clearly not the same as denying that problems exist at Burnham Beeches, nor does it argue against Officer experience or, the need to properly manage the issues. It simply reflects the gaps in research that must be filled, before NE can form a considered policy that can be applied across England as a whole.

10.3 A brief search of NE's website reveals NNR's owned and managed by them where dogs must be kept on leads at all times. Clearly the formal comment provided by NE to the KC and COL concerning Burnham Beeches NNR is inconsistent with its own practice.

11. Given that NE supports restrictions on dogs for wildlife protection on their own and other land, we submit that this Committee must give great weight to its decision not to support this proposal.

Response

11.1 This would appear to be a reference to dog restrictions under law such as on grouse moors, certain types of grazed areas (sheep etc) certain coastal paths and in some circumstance, CROW land. Clearly these situations are not pertinent at Burnham Beeches. NE does not have a general policy on wildlife and dogs and this remains a weakness.

12. Officers at Burnham have used the site's wildlife designation to justify this restriction. However, unlike many other sites, the Beeches are not designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) area under the EU Birds Directive, which would be the case if the site was important for rare ground nesting birds; the site is primarily designated for its ancient trees, which we do not believe are threatened by off-lead dogs.

Response

12.1 Burnham Beeches is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and this designation provides the same level of protection as an SPA. The difference is that in the UK SPA's generally relate to sites important for birdlife whilst, SAC's are specific to rare or sensitive habitats. The EU law that governs both is closely entwined.

12.2 Burnham Beeches is not designated as either an SSSI or SAC for its ancient trees, its designation is for Beech woodland, including specific types of understory and epiphytes. Research carried out by the City of London at both Epping Forest and Burnham Beeches indicates that the general health of the City's beech woodland is already in decline due to a number of factors including visitor pressure and a decline in air, water and soil quality. Many of these issues are linked and it is here that the knowledge gaps and research needs exist.

12.3 Burnham Beeches is also a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and it is of note that many other owners/managers including the RSPB, Wildlife Trust, County Wildlife sites and Natural England ban dogs from their reserves or require dogs to be on a lead at all times

12.4 However, because of the current difficulty of disentangling these matters and in showing the precise impact of dog walking on the health of our beech trees (it is reasonable to assume that there must be some in the form of increased soil compaction and the introduction of nutrients from dog waste), we have had to consider the proposals with a wider remit i.e. that of 'quality of visitor experience and biodiversity in general'.

13. Even on sites that are designated as SPAs, restrictions are timed to coincide with the nesting season, and not year-round as proposed here. We can and do support such targeted, proportionate restrictions elsewhere.

Response

13.1 This is not relevant at Burnham Beeches. Here we are dealing with a high number of visits (currently 585,000 visits per annum) and uncommonly large numbers of dogs (220,000 dog visits per annum). The problems exist all year round and control measures must reflect this.

14. Burnham Beeches staff have stated that the amount of dog urine is a problem, and a reason to impose such restrictions. If that was true, this proposal would concentrate existing levels of urine deposition into 41% of the site.

Response

14.1 Based on observation and management experience of the issues visitors are unlikely to restrict their access across the site in this manner. As such the suggested outcome is unlikely and no evidence has been provided to support this view.

15. If actively enforced, this proposal is also likely to displace off-lead access onto other land in the vicinity, in both private and public ownership. It is also likely to mean people will use their cars more to get to such places on a daily basis. These environmental consequences have not, to our knowledge, been discussed with partners, the people likely to be affected.

Response

15.1 Visits to Open Spaces are highly price sensitive and Burnham Beeches offers good value in this respect. As a consequence the site has, for many years suffered from the impact of displacement from other sites i.e. the reverse of the KC's comment. Many dog walkers come to the site simply because car parking is free or cheaper than at other nearby open spaces. The DCO's will give dog owners a further matter to consider when planning their walks. Experience suggests that Burnham Beeches provides a high quality experience that cannot be replicated locally elsewhere and visitors will gravitate towards the site in the longer term as long as economic and enforcement issues are dealt with fairly. Neighbouring open space managers are aware of the issues.

16. Reductions in income from car parking and the café due to dog walkers going elsewhere is also likely, affecting income for site management. We feel it a missed opportunity that the recent visitor survey did not investigate the likelihood and impact of such displacement effects to give us better data on this.

Response

16.1 Experience shows that there is unlikely to be a negative impact. The projected rate of population growth over the next 15 years and beyond means that visitor numbers will continue to grow irrespective of DCO's, car park charges etc. Officers are regularly made aware by members of the public that some visitors refuse to come to the Beeches because of the number of dogs present. The return of these visitors may also have an impact on income. Experience with car park charges, road closures etc have shown that an issue is often overstated by those who are against the proposal. Visitor numbers continue to increase. In 2007 the total number of visitors was estimated at 555,000 per annum. This figure had increased to 585,000 visits in 2012 with a consequent and demonstrable increase in income.

17. The proposal has unduly dismissed more needs-based, least-restrictive approaches to restrictions widely used elsewhere in the UK, by bodies including local councils, Wildlife Trusts and Natural England. These include targeting sensitive areas, restricting off-lead access by time of year or day; having off-lead access in areas where livestock are not grazing.

Response

17.1 There are also many examples to contradict this view. Officers have considered these issues (referenced in earlier comments) and it can be reasonably argued that they would not help resolve the issues at Burnham Beeches. As an example the option to use Schedule 2 to ensure dogs are on leads at all times in grazed areas was dismissed by Officers at an early juncture as it would have meant that this would apply to 95% of the site. Members should strive to avoid complexity if officers are to reasonably enforce DCO's. See also comments in 12.3

18. The recent visitor survey missed a great opportunity to identify the best approach by only exploring a year-round by proportion of site of land option.

Response

18.1 The KC was given an opportunity to comment on the survey at the design stage and did not raise this as an issue. Officers considered many enforcement models and survey methodologies and the circumstances that apply at Burnham Beeches dictated the adopted approach. The survey was independently designed and delivered by a consultancy that is recognised as an authority on access and recreation issues on sensitive sites.

Schedule 3: Dogs on lead by direction

19. We support the principle of having such powers, as out of control dogs can cause problems for other visitors with and without dogs. Targeting restrictions at the people causing problems, as Schedule 3 can do, is the fairest way to do this.

Response

19.1 This does not solve the very common problem of dog walkers not concentrating on their animals and being unaware or unconcerned by their interactions with other site visitors or, wildlife. In practice, a significant number of dog walkers do not behave in a reasonable manner (surveys suggest 1:5) nor do they have effective control of their pets for sufficient time during their visits to Burnham Beeches.

19.2 The Rangers team can only cover part of the site at any given time and some dog walkers would continue to take advantage of this; thus the improvements we are seeking would not be achieved. This is a particular problem in the more wooded areas of the site, where dogs need only be a few metres from the owner before they are out of sight. This is why the proposed Schedule 3 area includes the less wooded areas i.e. where poor behaviour can be most easily seen and tackled by the site's Rangers.

20. However, as there seems to be no defined policy stating when and how this option is to be used, neither the Committee nor ourselves, can know what it means in practice. Until such a policy is defined in writing, we cannot support this proposal, as it has potential to be applied inconsistently and unfairly.

Response

20.1 We have previously informed the KC and its consultant that the guidance already exists i.e. the Burnham Beeches Dog Code. This is a 'voluntary' code which was drawn up in consultation with our dog walking community about 10 years ago. There will be no

change for visitors in this respect, as the voluntary agreement will simply become mandatory via Schedule 3. A little like the experience with voluntary car park charges at Burnham Beeches only a few visitors act positively in support of a voluntary principle. The introduction of DCO's will allow Officers to 'manage' those that have consistently chosen, are unable or otherwise need to be encouraged, to abide by the code.

20.2 This matter has been made clear to the public via our newsletters and "What's New" articles as well as when queried on site. The Superintendent has previously met with the KC's consultant at Burnham Beeches, to demonstrate how the Dog Walking Code works in practice on the site.

20.3 The Kennel Club's consultant visited Burnham Beeches in 2010 as preparation for the Concordat. It was explained that despite following theoretical best practice and use of the Dog Code for 6 years it was difficult not to conclude that the problems at Burnham Beeches had grown worse despite an extremely proactive marketing campaign. Herein rests the fundamental difference of opinion between the KC and Officers at Burnham Beeches. The former remains convinced by the effectiveness of voluntary 'best practice' approach and the latter that there is now clear evidence that this type of approach is ineffective in the longer term on sites such as Burnham Beeches.

Schedule 4: No dogs area

21. While there is no legal or health and safety requirement to exclude dogs from where food is being consumed, we recognise and support choice being given to people who, for social or cultural reasons, like to eat in dog-free areas.

While the scale of the proposal plan supplied makes it hard to be certain, if Schedule 4 is just proposing to formalise the no dogs area that already informally covers part of the café seating area, we are willing to support this. However, we do not know of any other indoor or outdoor café that has needed to impose a Dog Control Order to provide a dog-free area; normally good management by staff will readily deal with this.

Response

21.1 The proposal is to introduce Schedule 4, only in the immediate area around the café that currently controls the presence of dogs in this manner, albeit voluntarily. The move to introduce this DCO in that particular area rather than continue to rely on the voluntary position is to better control those visitors who wilfully and repeatedly bring their pets into that area.

21.2 Whilst the number of reported incidents of this type are low, perhaps as few as 6 per annum, it is frequent enough to have an impact on staff resources, leads to extremely difficult discussions with the visitors concerned and, as it is a voluntary agreement, can and does lead to an unhelpful standoff that encourages likeminded visitors to behave in a similar manner. This proposal is also supported by the BBCG.

Schedule 5: Maximum number of dogs

22. We believe that taking action against those dog owners who are causing actual problems (irrespective of how many dogs they have) is a better way forward than an arbitrary limit on the number of dogs one person can walk. Three out of control off-lead Labradors can be more of a problem than 6 Chihuahuas on leads.

Indeed, Schedule 3 above, if implemented, will allow control on people with any number of dogs by having them put on leads.

However, if a maximum number is to be imposed, we support the Defra recommended number of 6 dogs, which is clearly stated in its 2006 guidance for Dog Control Orders.

Response

22.1 Members should be aware that there is no obligation to follow DEFRA's generic guidelines that simply states 'expert advice is that this should not exceed six' as this does not consider the 'place' only the general concept. The guidance talks about the maximum number of dogs a person can control and is silent on whether or not that person is the owner of the dogs. This allows an interpretation best suited to the site. In terms of numbers of dogs, Members have previously stated that they wish the limit to be 4 dogs and this policy was in force at the time that the concordat was agreed with the KC. BBCG members favours a maximum of 3 dogs. Members may wish to compromise on this element of the DCO's.

23. We do not believe that there is a need to for example, universally ban someone from visiting the Beeches all year round if they come with, eg, 6 dogs on-lead.

Response

23.1 Equally, members might consider it reasonable for visitors to walk as two groups with a friend thus avoiding even the very slight likelihood of this ever being a problem.

24. Imposing a limit of less than six dogs will also severely limit the Corporation's potential to gain some income from responsible Commercial Dog Walkers serving the local community.

Response

24.1 Professional Dog walking is not a social service it is private enterprise. Use of the site by commercial dog walkers is low and generally Officers do not wish to encourage this business activity at Burnham Beeches. Professional dog walkers will simply move to the place of least resistance helping to reduce pressures at Burnham Beeches.

Public relations

25. The Committee also need to be mindful that even just consulting on the proposals suggested here by officers, is certain to be contentious. Coverage in newspapers and campaigns in social media are highly likely. We suggest the Committee carefully considers whether they wish to provoke such a situation, given all the other challenges facing it, the resources at its disposal, and relationships with its neighbours, visitors, partners and local politicians.

Response

25.1 This could become a reality but Officers have ensured that visitors are aware of the issues via the sites' newsletters and monthly updates. Having adopted a similarly consultative and informative approach with road closures, café changes, car park charges and the expansion of grazing, experience suggests that matters will quickly settle down, as the majority of the visitors begin to realise the benefits of the change.

25.2 There is a possibility KC may decide to campaign against the City's specific proposals to reflect not only the needs of all visitors to the site but also its particular obligation to enhance biodiversity. Their capacity for such a campaign is difficult to judge but it would be sensible to prepare for that eventuality with colleagues in public relations.

25.3 The recent consultation exercise indicated that around 5% of all visitors to Burnham Beeches were members of the Kennel Club. This compares to 13% for the Dogs Trust, 14% for the RSPB and 42% for the National Trust.

25.4 The KC's own 'Walkies Code' gives the following advice:

There are places and times where you must keep your dog on a lead or avoid altogether - signs and rangers will tell you where. These can include: children's' playgrounds, parks, gardens and picnic areas, roads, car parks and places, where there are lots of people, land where protected animals and birds live and raise their young on the ground, especially between 1 March and 31 July.

Responsible, caring dog owners heed these requests; even the friendliest dog can injure or scare other people and animals. Not complying can mean a fine and even more restrictions on dogs. If you think a restriction is excessive or unlawful (e.g. banning dogs from public rights of way) please contact KC Dog and we'll investigate.

26. While officers rightly state that there has been consultation and support for the principle of DCOs, it is disingenuous to suggest this in any way means acceptance of the detail of what is now proposed. This is especially so as the most frequent response in visitor survey was that Schedule 2 should apply to, at most, 25%, of the site. Here the Committee is being asked to support an on-lead, year-round restriction on 59% of the site.

Response

26.1 Both sides have firm views and as with all data, it is open to interpretation and sensitive to aggregation. Using the same data '50% of the site' is the most common survey response and therefore much closer to the final proposal being considered by this Working Group than the KC is suggesting. In terms of physical implementation of the data 59% is the closest to that response that the site can be sensibly split using the major boundaries (internal roads) as visual markers. Officers believe that, taken in the round, the data accrued over many years and more recently is a helpful support to the proposals agreed by the BBCG and currently presented to the EFCC.

27. If Schedule 3 was also imposed as proposed, the KC would, with great regret, be minded to withdraw from its agreement of cooperation with the Corporation.

Response

27.1 Perhaps this situation is inevitable given the nature of the issues and different values and purposes of organisations concerned. It might be more constructive for the KC to choose to support further research into this issue and work in partnership with Open Space managers and Natural England to gain a broader perspective and understanding of the issues. This would be an important step towards developing a policy to guide the management of dog walking on sites of high conservation value across England.

Alternative proposal (KC)

As a positive way forward, we recommend the Committee:

- 1. Supports the Schedule 1 proposal for picking up across the whole site.**

Response - Agreed

- 2. Rejects the Schedule 2 proposals for extensive year-round, on-lead areas based on a simplistic percentage allocation.**

Response – Officers have not based the favoured option on a simplistic percentage allocation. Rather, they have considered all issues in the round, consulted the public and used their detailed knowledge of access and biodiversity issues on the site to inform the decision making process. Officers have then used the local and corporate committee structure to take the matter forward.

- 3. Asks officers to come back to Committee with a clear policy about when and how the Schedule 3 (on-lead by direction) power will be used.**

Response – Unnecessary. This policy exists as the Burnham Beeches Dog Code.

- 4. Formalises the existing no dogs area around part of the café using Schedule 4, if that is what is proposed.**

Response - Agreed

- 5. Sets the Schedule 5 maximum number of dogs to 6 as recommended by Defra in the DCO guidance.**

Response – Members may wish to seek a compromise on this issue.

Existing committee policy states a maximum 4 dogs. The BBCG and the recent consultation exercise indicate that a max of 3 is locally acceptable.

The Superintendent also recommends that, the final delivery of DCO's at BB is reviewed at year 3. This will allow time for issues to settle, problems to become apparent and solutions considered to ensure that the best balance is achieved in the longer term. The statutory duty to monitor and report annually will be followed and should this highlight major concerns the review could be brought forward

Additional Appendices (contained in main report to EFCC – March 2014).

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Burnham Beeches Visitor Survey Interim Results

Durwyn Liley



Today

- Focus on Dog Walking elements and DCOs
- Preliminary results: (survey work completed in November, report finalised in January)
- Final report will include:
 - Full analysis of questionnaire data
 - Maps showing distribution of people within the site;
 - Analysis of postcode data
- Approach; Key results (Dog Walking); Interpretation

Logistics



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- 23 July – 16th November
- 17 different dates (8 weekend, 9 weekday) (134 person hours survey work)
- Split between main Car-park (8 days); Stag (3 days); Dell (4 days); Moat (2 days).
- Pre-school holidays; school holidays; autumn half term; mid November
- On each date 8 hours survey work spread from early am to near dusk

Approach

- Single surveyors; selecting interviewees at random
- Survey day broken into 2 hour sessions
- Questionnaire involved two discrete sections,.
- Visitors also counted
- Data collected using ipads



Questionnaire

- Visitor type (e.g.. a local resident or a holiday maker)
- Visit seasonality, duration, timing and frequency
- Transport mode used to access site
- Activity undertaken during visit and motivation for visiting
- The route taken by the visitor and whether this was reflective of their normal route
- Visitor demographics (age and gender)
- Home postcode
- The number of dogs observed with a visitor and whether these were seen on or off the lead
- The names of other local sites visited by interviewed group
- Questions were also incorporated into the question to gauge visitor opinion on the potential introduction of Dog Control Orders.

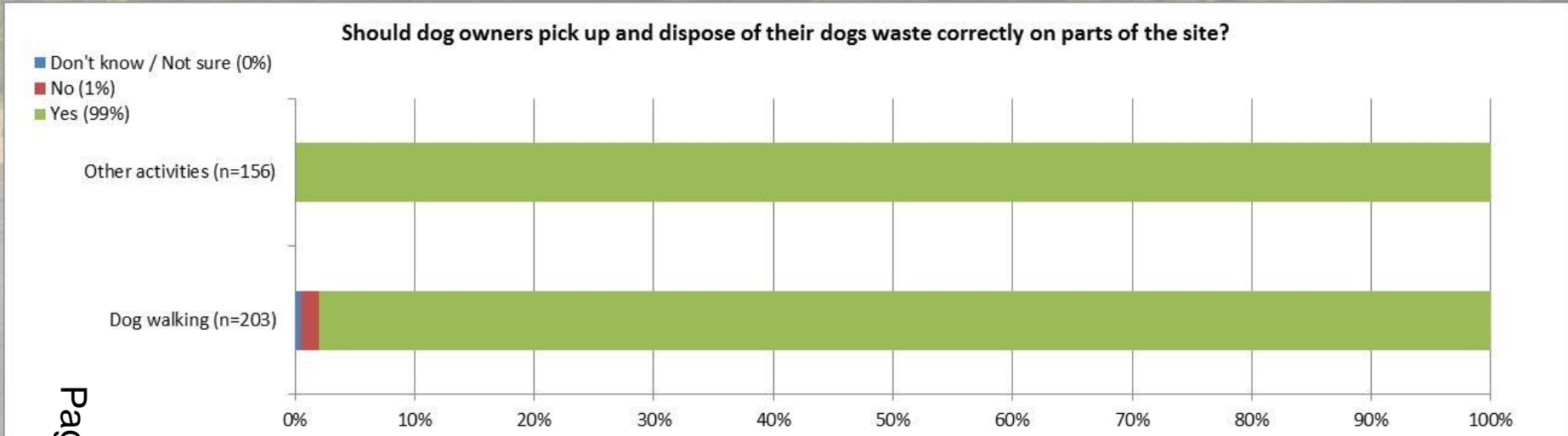
An overview

- 359 interviews (data relating to 702 people)
- 70 refusals and 49 people already interviewed
- 61% of interviews conducted at main CP
- 44% visit 3x a week or more – dog walkers and joggers primarily
- 15% visit less than once a month - those visiting for walking, a family outing or 'other' activities
- 85% of all visitors arrived by car, 14% on foot
- For 43% of all visitors, main factor behind choice of BB is it's close to home
- Just 3% of people choose to visit BB because of the trees and 2% visit because of the wildlife interest

Dog Walking

- 62% of interviewees had dogs with them (max 8 dogs)
- 57% interviewees were dog walking; 44% once accounting for group size
- A higher proportion of interviewed dog walkers were female (63%)
- 52% of all dogs were seen off-lead
- 88% of dog walkers interviewed had travelled to the site by car (81% non dog walkers)
- For 74% of dog walkers, visit is an hour or less
- For 50% of dog walkers, the main reason they choose to visit BB is because it is close to home (whereas 33% of non-dog walkers visit because close to home)
- No dog walkers interviewed stated that the trees or wildlife interest were a reason for visiting
- 94% of dog walkers were aware of the importance of Burnham Beeches for nature conservation

Schedule 1: Pick up



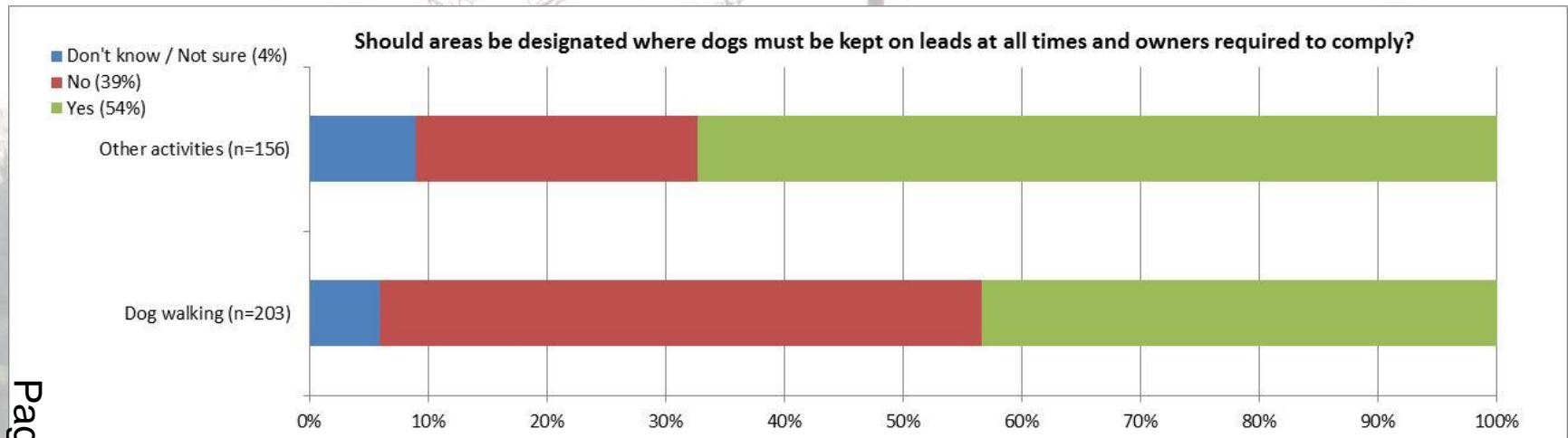
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For those that said yes:

- All of site: 88%; (81% of dog walkers; 96% non dog walkers)
- Part of the site: 12%

Comments included the suggestion 'around main paths' and not in 'deep woods'

Schedule 2: Dogs on leads at all times



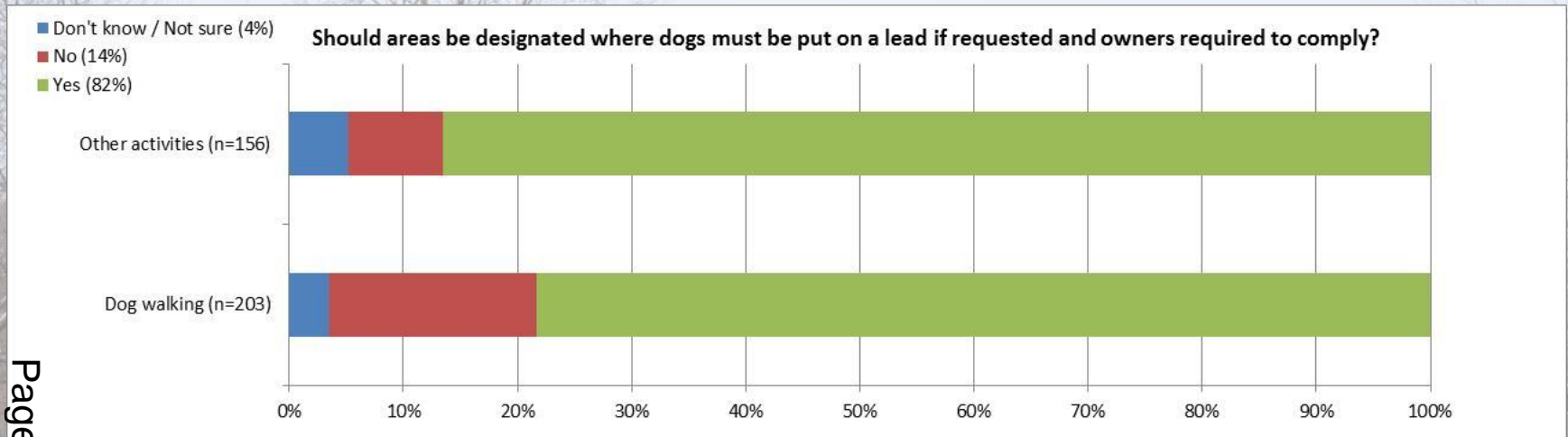
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For those that said yes:

- All of site: 12%; (8% of dog walkers; 15% non dog walkers)
- Part of the site: 82%

Variations in % of site (less than 25% most common, then 50-74%); comments related to around café; where livestock; where wildlife interest (e.g. ponds); where 'valid reason'

Schedule 3: Dogs on leads if requested



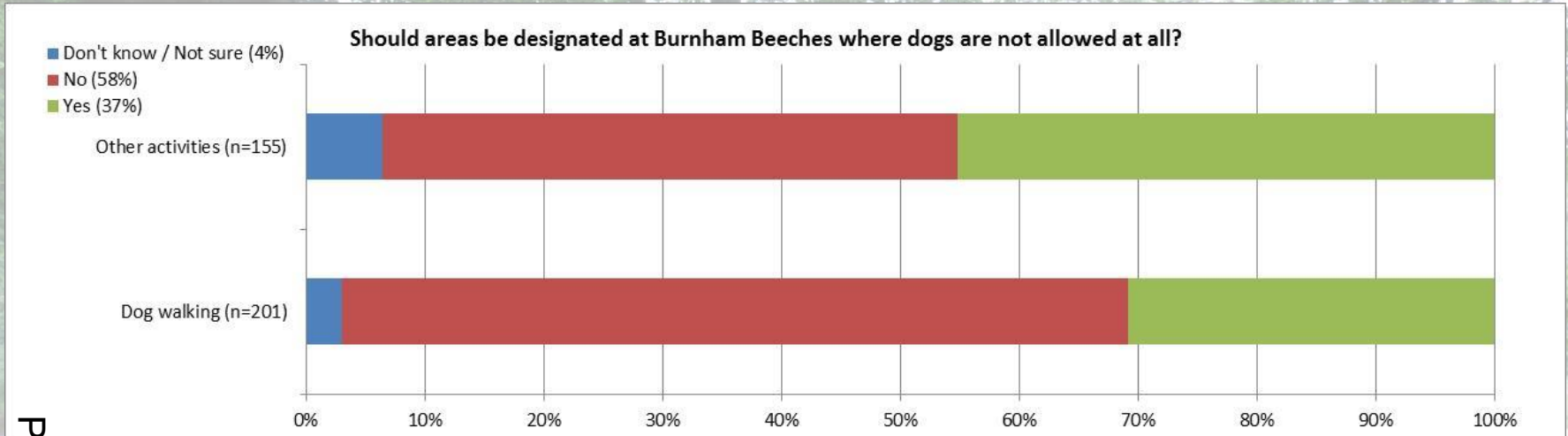
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For those that said yes:

- All of site: 43%; (36% of dog walkers; 52% non dog walkers)
- Part of the site: 52%

Variation in %s where given: 25-49% most commonly given range. Many responses related to livestock, children, café, ponds, where lots other dogs

Schedule 4: Areas with no dogs



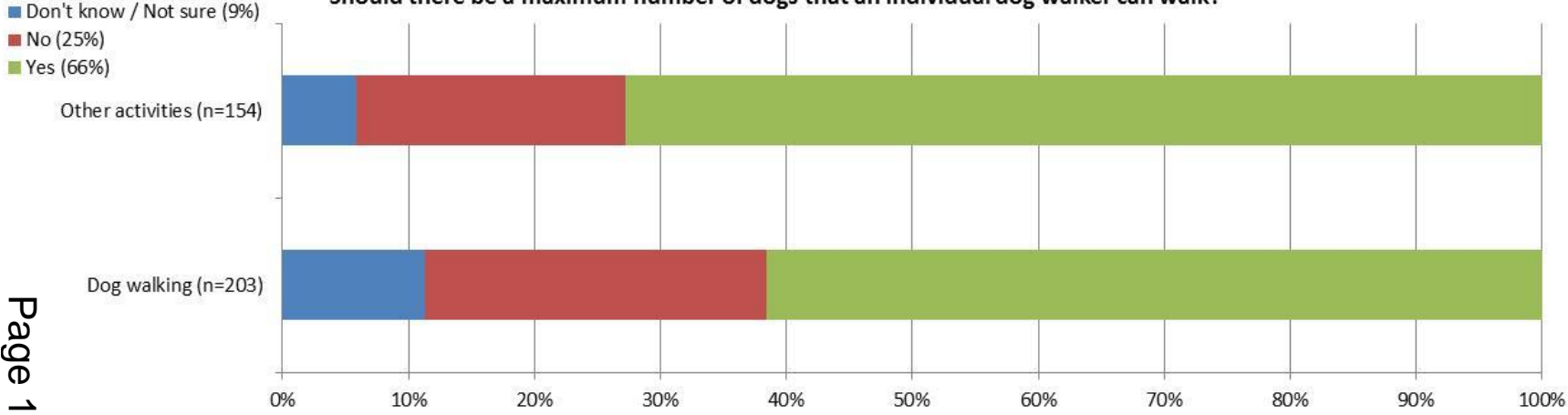
For those that said yes:

- All of site: 4%; (2% of dog walkers; 6% non dog walkers)
- Part of the site: 89%

Clear preference for small part of site. Picnics, café and eating areas. Comments included the wetland areas, livestock and bird breeding season

Schedule 5: Maximum number of dogs an individual can walk

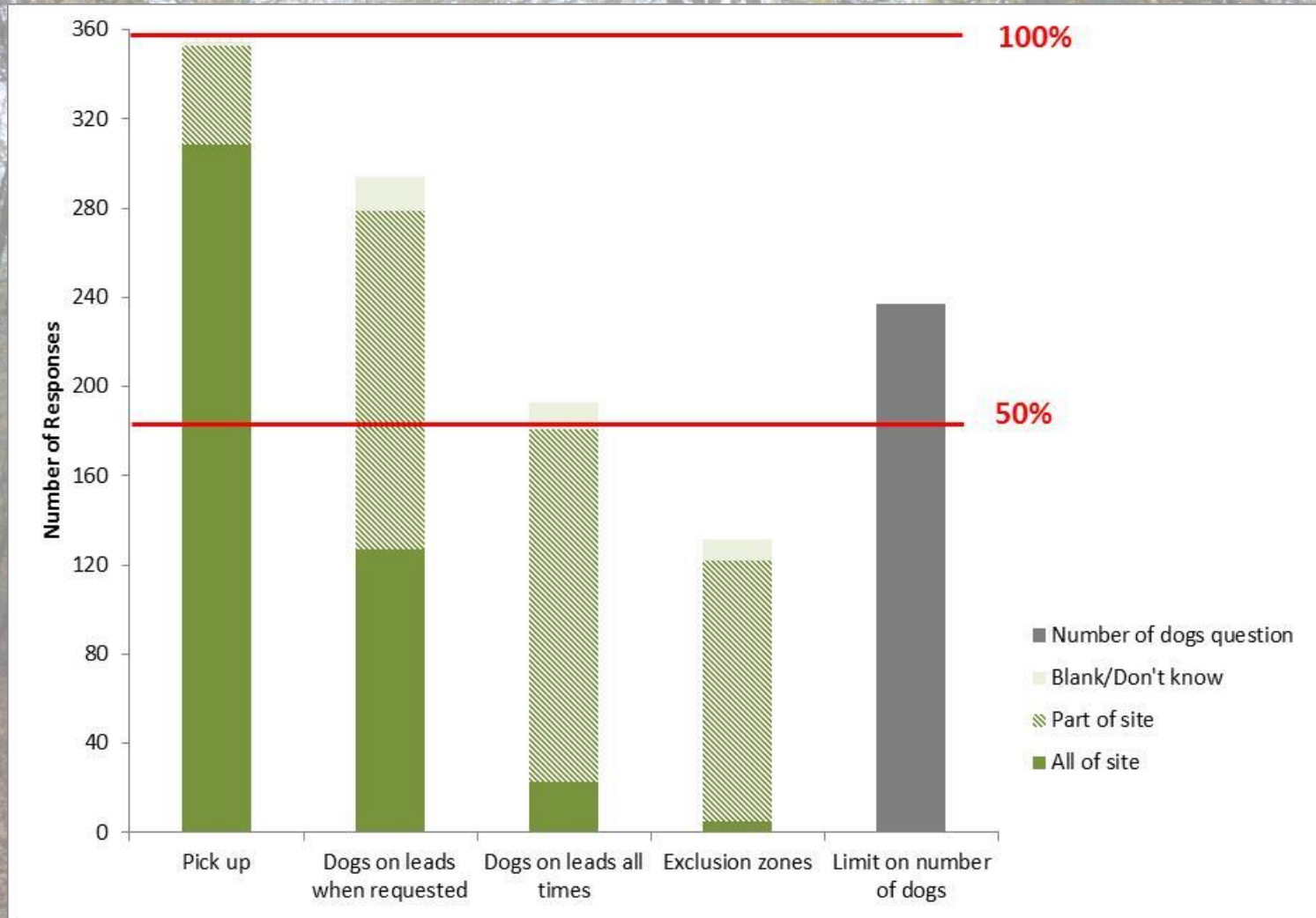
Should there be a maximum number of dogs that an individual dog walker can walk?



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- 2 dogs: 16%
- 3 dogs: 39%
- 4 dogs: 37%
- 5 dogs: 8%

Overview



Taking forward

- Clear split between dog walkers and non-dog walkers
- Proximity to home particularly important for dog walkers
- Dog walkers higher than expected visitor volume – increasing?
- Few people visit because of wildlife or the trees
- Some challenges with the survey: clearly contentious and wide range of views
- People struggled with the %s and these need to be considered cautiously

Appendix 3 - Delivery Timetable

1. Formal written consultation with SBDC	April 2014
2. Formal written consultation – PC's	April 2014
3. Arrange public notice of the proposal	May 2014
4. Draft the orders i.e. agree wording and possible introduction date	June 2014
5. Report to EFCC	March and July 2014
6 Publicise enforcement date and deliver marketing campaign	July 2014
7. Erect signage	August 2014
8. Enforcement commences	September 2014

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Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches

Members' Working Group 3rd February 2014

Dissenting Note from Deputy Alex Deane

Introduction

I do not concur with the general position adopted, or specific conclusion reached, on the question of on-lead requirements by officers and members of the informal working group convened to examine the question of Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches. It seemed sensible to me, and to the officers concerned, that I write a separate short note about the issue rather than muddy any written Working Party or Officer response to be distributed as a result of our discussion with my perspective inserted in it.

I restrict this dissenting perspective solely to the proposed Schedule 2 requirement that dogs must be on leads all year round across 59% of the site. I agree with all of the other conclusions reached by the officers.

Even on this one point of concern, I still agree to an extent with our officers. I accept that a seasonal solution cannot work, and that an area designated for on-lead walking must be year-round. The point of my dissent is simply that, in designating a majority of our site, we have gone (really quite some way) too far.

A note on our officers

I would wish it to be clear that in my view our officers are first class. They work hard and they are highly skilled. So it is without criticism of them that I say that, in this instance, my fear is that we collectively have begun with a false premise, therefore reaching the wrong conclusion.

The absence of any pressing concern

In the example we are considering here, contrary to the borderline obsession some seem to feel about dogs, incidents are in fact very low. There are, on our own calculations, 220,000 dog visits to the site each year. Since 2003 there have been 1,900 reported incidents – which, had they occurred in one year instead of over eleven years, would still only constitute an incident rate of 0.0086%. Telescoped over a decade, the incident rate then falls to a position so low as to be almost daft as justification for the imposition of any rule, and hardly constitutes a “problem” that we as an authority need to be concerned about (let alone so perpetually absorbed). I am afraid that in my view, there is a certain, regrettable, lack of a sense of proportion in evidence (from both officers and some Members) in the desire to “solve” alleged problems like this rather than simply accept that, on occasion, users of what all agree is a “busy” open space will occasionally rub up against one another or fall out or take a dislike to one another or their pets. Such is life.

Instead, because the evidence does not in fact bear out the suggestion of any real problem, I am afraid that it seems to me that as an Authority we have sought to find different justifications for what we seem to want to do anyway.

Bluntly put, in my view the approach adopted by the City of London on this question has therefore been contrary to the direction of good public policy both at a national and a local level. The focus in determining questions of public policy should be on specific issues as they occur, rather than seeking to impose blanket rules in response to relatively generic surveys which effectively invite the conclusions that they reach. As the above sets out, the “issue” simply isn’t here to “solve”. One doesn’t need to go into the benefits or otherwise of off-lead walking for animals to exercise (which officers agree is a desired benefit for at least some present users of the site): the question for us as an authority isn’t to tie ourselves in knots wondering about whether dogs and/or their owners are better off with or without access to such activities – it’s simply whether or not there’s a large enough problem to merit active intervention and control from the Corporation in such activity, imposing rules on users and the site. The answer is straightforward. There isn’t.

So we will be perceived to be (and will actually be) using a sledgehammer to crack a nut if we activate wide prescriptive rules on a site because of this non-problem.

It is also something that will have negative consequences for users, too. Beyond the principle that one rather dislikes rules for the sake of rules, and that authoritarian, illiberal measures are unattractive, the reason that this is worth dwelling on rather than shrugging and allowing the proposal to be passed is that we all want people to use our open spaces. Many (we all seem to agree) will wish to do so whilst exercising their dogs off-lead. The message conveyed by rules like this is that if you enjoy exercising your animal off-lead, this isn’t the place for you – this is a rule-laden site. Go elsewhere.

This is particularly unwise in my view because, ironically, those most likely to obey these new rules, or go away and not use the site, are those least likely to be inconsiderate in the first place. Contrariwise, those who are problematic users of the space now are those most likely to disobey these new rules if introduced.

I caution against our passing regulation by personal anecdote, as some seem inclined to do. As an authority we would, rightly, be a laughing stock if it became known that some wish to curtail off-lead walking on a site we control because they know someone who doesn’t like dogs. The undoubted existence of an irrational fear or phobia of dogs is regrettable, but the fact that someone might know someone else with such an irrational fear is irrelevant for us as the relevant authority: it is something that requires addressing, in and of itself, with appropriate help for the individual concerned, and is no justification for blanket regulation of everybody across the majority of an open space - any more than an irrational fear or phobia of open spaces would constitute justification for the curtailment or abolition of open spaces.

I note, too, that the correct role of an authority is sometimes to consider a situation and then not act, because the issue concerned can only be resolved by a device or rule which would be excessive or disproportionate. The elimination of risk in life is impossible. The aim was and is excessively prescriptive, and the methods following from that aim are naturally excessively prescriptive as a result. The default position of a public authority ought not to be that something is banned unless explicitly allowed: the reference in the course of the Working Group’s discussions to the “precautionary principle” was deeply disquieting on this point.

I have restricted my remarks solely to alleged dog “incidents” rather than addressing the supposed wildlife and nature concerns because, as is conceded in the officer response to the Kennel Club, there is simply no evidence available on this point either way. It is peculiar that this concession is made in the response, only to be followed by repeated

assertions about wildlife and nature conservation anyway. Assertions in the absence of evidence do not become stronger by being repeatedly made – indeed, it might rather be thought to reveal a desire to paper over the absence of evidence with the excessive presence of verbiage.

I am not an absolutist. I concede that there is sufficient, heartfelt, sincerely held concern amongst those who undertake the daily work of overseeing the site, and amongst officers and Members, to warrant the issue being discussed and whilst, on balance, the conclusion that I would draw from the situation with which we are presented is that, with a sense of proportion and willingness for individuals to compromise in using a shared open space, the status quo is adequate, in the face of the view of the majority in the working party (and perhaps the Committee) I acknowledge the need for compromise. **I do not argue for the abandonment of the proposed scheme in their entirety.** Indeed, as indicated at the outset, I accept all of the proposals bar one, and on that one issue, off-lead walking restrictions, I also suggest a compromise rather than adopting an absolutist position, too.

Whilst appreciating the need for both certainty and for a logically delineated area using existing, easily recognisable boundaries (for the convenience of our staff and visitors), the area currently proposed is simply far too large a part of the site.

Conclusion

The current proposal, with a majority of the Open Space in Burnham Beeches included in the on-lead policy, goes too far and in my view it ought to be sent back and reconsidered by those responsible for the space with a view to designating a smaller area.

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Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	March 10 2014
Subject: Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons Management Priorities for 2014-15	Public
Report of: The Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and the City Commons	For Decision
<p>Summary</p> <p>This report presents the management priorities for the Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons Division that will guide the annual work programme during the period 01 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the Management Priorities for 2014-15 	

Main Report

Background

1. In January 2014 the Superintendent of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common assumed additional responsibility for the seven City Commons.
2. Each of the nine open spaces in the newly enlarged division has a comprehensive management plan and detailed work programmes to guide management activity over a 10 year period.
3. The work prioritised in the management plans and work programmes, together with any additional project work and organisation requirements, forms a set of annual management priorities. These are presented here.

Current Position

4. The process of combining the two sections of the new division has only just begun and it is not yet possible to present the management priorities in a single consistent format. For this reason the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common priorities are considered in the main body of this report, while the City Commons priorities are appended to it.
5. The management priorities have recently been presented to local consultative committees for information or will be the subject of discussions later in the year.

Management priorities for Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common (Charity Reg. No. 232987)

6. **Management plan objectives**

The targets and actions listed in the ten year management plan are continually monitored and adjusted. We follow sustainable working practices in order to minimise any harmful impact of our activities upon the environment and others. The works that are carried out all contribute towards meeting the three objectives for each nature reserve:

7. **Objective 1: Biological/Conservation**

To restore and maintain the key habitats of Burnham Beeches to favourable condition and restore and maintain the heathland and associated habitats at Stoke Common to favourable condition.

Key projects for 2014-5

- **Grazing** – Continue to graze Stoke Common and Burnham Beeches as in previous years. Continue to plan grazing expansion at Burnham Beeches including undertaking further trials of the virtual fence
- **Pollarded trees** - Continue restoration work on old pollards, create new ones and cut young pollards in rotation. Start evaluation of experimental plots developed from research report.
- **Heathland restoration** - Continue heathland restoration work on Stoke Common by clearing trees. Carry out follow up work on recently cleared areas including flailing, cutting and removing organic matter. Continue heathland restoration at Burnham Beeches in area close to Hawthorn Lane.

8. **Objective 2: People**

To encourage the sustainable use of Burnham Beeches for the recreation and enjoyment of the public whilst promoting public involvement and fostering greater understanding of the reserve

To encourage low-key public access at a level that is compatible with the conservation features of the reserve and to encourage local community involvement in the management of Stoke Common

Key projects for 2014-15

- **Dog Control Orders** – Implement these at Burnham Beeches, including public consultation and developing enforcement methods and procedures
- **Car parking** - Review car parking charges and procedures at Burnham Beeches

9. **Objective 3: Estate Assets and Legal Issues**

To fulfil all legal obligations and to maintain estate structures in good condition

Key project for 2014-15

- **Protection from development** - Work with South Bucks District Council and Natural England on the Development Management Local Plan for the area including Burnham Beeches to prevent damage to the habitat of European importance

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. The management priorities support Key Policy Priority number five: increasing the impact of the City's cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation; providing safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces.
11. The management priorities support the five themes of the City Together Strategy and reflects the charitable status of our open spaces.

Implications

12. The projects and tasks outlined in this report will be funded by the local risk budgets of the Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons Division.
13. The annual work programme addresses soft landscaping issues and poses no direct implications for the City Surveyor's property maintenance, nor impacts on the revenue works programme.

Conclusion

14. This report presents the proposed management priorities for the Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons Division for the period 2014 to 2015.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – City Commons Management Priorities for period 2014-15

Andy Thwaites

Head Ranger

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Management priorities for the City Commons — Working together to care for our open spaces, now and for the future 2014 - 2015

OUR SERVICE — Provide our customers with a visible, accessible and approachable service

- **Visitor experience** — implement inspections of open spaces against set criteria, regularly patrol them and create an approved programme of work so that they are maintained at GFA standard 365 days a year.
- **External communication** — develop the Information Ranger role so that we share a consistent message for the City Commons with stakeholders using modern technology to engage with a wider audience.
- **Condition assessments** — continue a programme of NVC surveys and support independent inspections so that we assess the condition of our sites against ESS, SSSI & Cross Compliance criteria.

OPEN SPACES — Protect and conserve distinctive and valued places

- **Conservation grazing** — implement our business plan for grazing so that we continue to meet our needs, apply the constraints of ESS & SPS and to maintain them in favourable condition.
- **Tree Health** — work with others to monitor our trees and woods for known diseases so that we prevent harm being caused to the biological, historical and cultural interest of our sites or our visitors.
- **Kenley Revival** — Prepare and submit a second-round application for Heritage Lottery Funding to implement the project.

OUR PEOPLE — Encourage and support our team to achieve our vision and values

- **Business planning** — continue delivery of balanced scorecard, key projects and management priorities as set out in the Department Business Plan and our approved annual work programmes.
- **Personnel** — implement recommendations from the Cultural Change Project, deliver structural changes, set core behaviours and PDR objectives to reflect the vision, leadership charter, our psychological contract and management priorities.

MAKING CONNECTIONS — Forge strong partnerships with our communities, volunteers and stakeholders

- **Consultation** — continue implementing changes to our consultative committees for three charities so that we work more effectively with local communities, elected members and officers from other organisations.
- **Volunteers** — Create new opportunities and improve the quality of experience for volunteers across City Commons so that we implement the Open Spaces Department strategy, policy & procedures.
- **Education, Recreation & Events** — co-ordinate delivery to reflect policy, balanced scorecard and KPIs and put in place procedures for providing a sustainable diary of activities across City Commons.

OUR STANDARDS

- **Sustainability** — deliver our Local Sustainability Improvement Plan for 2014/15 - reducing use of energy, fuel & water; printing less; and improving our environmental footprint.
- **Finance** — manage budgets efficiently and sustainably, reflecting changes such as the restructure and any requirement for efficiency savings as required.

- **Health & Safety** — deliver H&S Improvement Plan for 2014/15, audit and review our performance.
- **Personnel** — develop revised PDR objectives to reflect restructure and cultural change project.
- **Internal communication** — maintain our structured approach to meetings and improve our methods of internal communication so that we work together to achieve our vision and annual work programme.

ASHTED COMMON (Charity Reg. No. 1051510)

- **Veteran trees** — halo release but review crown reduction after developing the condition assessment.
- **Grazing** — experiment with conservation grazing across restored pasture to keep it in favourable condition.
- **Bracken control** — roll/mow areas restored as pasture and maintain routes designated as firebreaks.
- **Successional areas** — continue scrub work to maintain favourable condition for breeding birds.
- **Woodland edge** — maintain rides and glades with ecotones for benefit of wildlife and safe access.
- **Roman Villa** — develop plan of future work including analysis and interpretation of data gathered.
- **Amenity areas** — maintain rural/urban boundaries, rides, public right of way and other amenity areas.
- **Boundaries** — review to ensure site protected and safety of people.

WEST WICKHAM COMMONS (Charity Reg. No. 232989)

Spring Park

- **Small-leaved Lime Project** — plan, deliver and promote the second-year of this SITA Trust funded project.
- **Coppicing** — continue the annual programme of restoring traditional management to this woodland.
- **Boundaries** — review to ensure site protected, safety of people and management of landscape.

West Wickham Common

- **Oak pollards** — deliver annual condition monitoring so that we can review plan for restoration work.
- **Heathland** — restore, maintain and monitor our relic heath lying above the ancient earthworks.
- **Pedestrian crossing & bus stop** — report to EFCC about proposals from TFL and the Highway Authority.
- **Boundaries** — review to ensure site protected, safety of people and management of landscape.

COULSDON COMMONS (Charity Reg. No. 232988)

Farthing Downs & New Hill

- **Grassland** — restore open areas on Farthing Downs and New Hill to achieve ESS agreement options.
- **Scrub** — manage blocks of retained scrub on Farthing Downs and restore succession on New Hill.
- **Boundaries** — review to ensure site protected and safety of people.
- **Stock fencing** — audit stock fencing and develop a sustainable programme of repair and replacement.

Coulsdon Common

- **The Grove** — continue restoring wood pasture with planning permission for roadside fencing.
- **Drainage** — resolve flooding issue in Stites Hill Road so that foul water sewage no longer pollutes site.
- **Merlewood** — agree aims for area behind Estate Office and agree a future programme of work.
- **Boundaries** — review to ensure site protected and safety of people.
- **Stock fencing** — audit stock fencing and develop a sustainable programme of repair and replacement.

Kenley Common

- **Heritage conservation** — vegetation management around the important historic features.
- **Grassland** — restore and maintain the open areas of species-rich grassland along Whyteleafe Bank
- **Boundaries** — review to ensure site protected and safety of people.
- **Stock fencing** — audit stock fencing and develop a sustainable programme of repair and replacement.

Riddlesdown

- **Scrub** — restore successional areas across Norfolk Bank and Famet, and in Riddlesdown Quarry.
- **Grassland** — restore open areas across Norfolk Bank, Famet, Bull Pen and Butterfly Glade and in the Quarry.
- **Boundaries** — review to ensure site protected and safety of people.
- **Stock fencing** — audit stock fencing and develop a sustainable programme of repair and replacement.

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Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	March 10 2014
Subject: Sports and Miscellaneous Charges for the City Commons	Public
Report of: The Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and the City Commons	For Decision
<p>Summary</p> <p>This report reviews the charges for sports facilities and miscellaneous items that are provided by the City Commons Division and seeks approval for the proposed charges for 2014-15.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the proposed charges for 2014-15 	

Main Report

Background

1. Charges for the provision of sports facilities and other items are reviewed annually. The charges for 2013-14 were approved by your Committee in February 2013.
2. The City's Financial Regulations require all departments to recover full costs when setting charges to persons or external organisations, or submit reasons to the appropriate Committee when that objective is not met. It is, therefore, at the discretion of individual spending committees to determine the actual level of fees and charges relative to the services they provide, after taking into account local considerations and priorities.
3. Croydon Rugby Football Club rents space for two rugby pitches at Spring Park and Caterham Pumas Football Club rents space for a soccer pitch on Coulsdon Common. These pitches are cut at the start of the season, after which the clubs are responsible for marking and maintaining them.
4. Logs are often produced as a bye-product of land management activities. City Commons has a policy for the disposal of surplus timber arisings that allows volunteers to obtain logs free of charge and staff to get them at a discount. Logs are not sold directly to the public.

5. The City Commons Division has three rooms suitable to be offered as meeting venues to external groups. The rooms at Merlewood and Ashted are available to use free of charge by groups whose activities contribute to the management of the City Commons. All other groups pay a hire charge.
6. The basic rate of VAT is included in the room hire charge. VAT on solid fuel is charged at 5% and seasonal rental of sports pitches is zero rated subject to HMRC conditions being met.

Current Position

7. The income generated from sports and miscellaneous charges provides a regular, steady income for very little outlay or risk. At the time of writing this has amounted to £1,245 for 2013-14.

Proposals

8. It is proposed that the charges for 2014-15 are increased by 3%. This mirrors the increase that Your Committee recently approved for charges at Epping Forest.
9. The charges agreed for the 2013-14 financial year are currently being applied. They are shown in the following table, together with the proposed charges for next year.

Item	2013-14 Charge	2014-15 (With 3% Increase rounded)
Sports Charges		
Spring Park, 2 Rugby Football Pitches (for Season)	£407.00	£419.00
Coulsdon Common, 1 Football Pitch (for season)	£218.00	£225.00
<i>N.B. These pitches are cut at the start of the season and then the club is responsible for all pitch marking and goal posts.</i>		
Miscellaneous Charges		
Sale of Logs, per 3 tonne trailer load	£69.00	£71.00
Room Hire (per hour)	£25.00	£26.00

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. The provision of sports facilities supports the City Together Strategy theme 'A World Class City which is vibrant and culturally rich'. Linked to this is the associated Open Spaces Strategic Aim: 'Promote opportunities to value and enjoy the outdoors for recreation, learning and healthy living'.

Implications

11. Increasing the charges by 3% will ensure that costs are fully recovered for the provision of sports facilities and miscellaneous items for the 2013-14 period.

Conclusion

12. It is proposed that charges for sports pitches and miscellaneous items are increased by 3% for 2014-15 as shown in the above table.

Appendices

- None

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