

BURNHAM BEECHES AND STOKE COMMON CONSULTATION GROUP

Tuesday, 14 January 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultation Group held at the Burnham Beeches Estate Office at 7.00 pm

Present

Members:

Chairman Graeme Doshi-Smith- City of London Corporation
Martin Albertini- Bucks Invertebrate Group Representative
Les Davis- Scouts association
Barry Malki- BP Council
Penny Cullington- Bucks Fungus Group
Andy Booth- Friends of Stoke Common
Mark Frater- Local Business Representative
Joy Winyard - Local Bird Representative
Peter Harding- Farnham and Hedgerley Community Church
Judy Tipping- Parish Council
Tim Crauford- The National Trust
Adrian Sutton- Nightingale Park Residents Association
Sharon Owen- Scouting representative
Mary Kohlase- The Avenue Residents Association
Sarah Daughy- Beeches eco Café
Vivian Ely- Joggers & Wheelers Society
Stephen Knight- Chiltern Nordic Walkers Group
Caroline Spicer- Nightingale Park Residents Association

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent of The Commons
Deborah Harris	- Support Services Officer, The Commons
Debbie Bennet	- Asst Support Services Officer, The Commons
Martin Hartup	- Head Ranger, The Commons
Dr Helen Read	- Conservation Officer, The Commons

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Phillip Woodhouse, Sylvia Moys, Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney, Doug Wallace, Mark Franklin, Simon Meecham, Andy McVeigh, Jenny Jebson, Keith Greensborough, Katie Ayers and Martin Woolner.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Group considered the minutes of the previous meeting of the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultative Group.

RESOLVED- That the minutes be approved.

3. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent provided an update on the City of London's Fundamental Review including the process, governance timeline and the possible impact on the budgets of the Open Spaces Departmental budgets. In addition, the Superintendent commented that, although the impact of the Fundamental Review is not yet fully understood, it will likely have an effect on the working model of the Department.

Replying to a query from a Member of the Consultative Group the Superintendent clarified that the Governance Review being conducted by the City of London Corporation would likely delegate greater levels of authority to Officers. Further to this it was confirmed that a new operational model could include a number of opportunities for the management of Burnham Beeches.

The Consultation Group members discussed the possibilities of working with local parish council's and other partner organisations to support Burnham Beeches given the value it adds to the local community.

RESOLVED- That the Superintendent's update be noted.

- That the Superintendent contact local Parish Council Chairmen to explore what, if any, financial support there might be to deliver management objectives at Burnham Beeches

4. **THE BURNHAM BEECHES MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Conservation Officer provided a summary of the key details and progress of the Management Plan explaining that it had received the approval of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee on the 13th of January 2020. In addition, it was noted that an extensive public consultation had taken place regarding the Management Plan with an over ninety percent positive response.

Following a comment made by a member of the Group the Superintendent clarified that the public consultation had been targeted toward those who regularly visit Burnham Beeches as the primary stakeholders. In addition, it was noted that a balance between receiving an unmanageable number of visitors and informing a large number of people on the benefits of the Beeches needed to be maintained. Similarly, it was noted that a balance between visitors seeing all areas of the Beeches and minimising the impact of visitors was also important.

RESOLVED- That the Burnham Beeches Management Plan be noted.

5. **2019 UPDATE MAJOR HABITAT WORKS AND COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP WORK**

The Conservation Officer and Head Ranger provided a summary of the major projects undertaken in 2019 including the Department's engagement with the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

RESOLVED- That the summary be noted.

6. **PROJECTS FOR 2020 BURNHAM BEECHES CAR PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT – BURNHAM BEECHES THE COMMON UPDATE & CSS CAPITAL PROJECTS REMAINING AT BURNHAM BEECHES SC**

The Committee received an update from the Superintendent and Head Ranger on the projects scheduled for 2020 with particular importance on the capital projects, PSPO Review and the new car parking infrastructure system due to be introduced at the Burnham Beeches car parks. The Head Ranger explained that the intention was that the new car park charging system would be as flexible as possible to allow features including free stay period.

Replying to a comment from a member of the Consultation Group the Superintendent confirmed that the City of London Corporation was in regular contact with the operator of the Burnham Beeches Café in order that no adverse impact on the commercial viability of the Café is experienced.

In response to a query from a member of the Consultation Group the Superintendent explained while offences were decreasing complete compliance with the PSO regarding dogs would be unlikely and that enforcement was, as with all laws, the key element.

RESOLVED- That the update be noted.

7. **PLANNING ISSUES UPDATE**

The Conservation Officer updated the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultation Group on the South Bucks District Council noting the pressure that the increased houses would have on Burnham Beeches. In addition, it was noted that an information ranger could be required, and the Buckinghamshire unitary council merger could have an impact on the Local Plan submission and inspection process. A member of the Consultation Group noted that a local community group would be putting forward their representation on the Local Plan. The Chairman noted the extensive work that had taken place at many of the open spaces managed by the City of London Corporation with relation to the relevant local authorities' local plans.

RESOLVED- That the update be noted.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A Member of the committee queried the level of fire risk at Burnham Beeches. The Conversation Officer confirmed that the fire risk was primarily located at Stoke Common but that extensive mitigation measures were in position minimise the risk of fire at the site.

9. **SUMMER MEETING DATE**

The Town Clerk explained that the summer meeting of the Group would be confirmed and circulated to members in due course.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Richard Holt
Richard.Holt@cityoflondon.gov.uk