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| <b>Committee(s):</b>   | <b>Date(s):</b>            |
| Epping Forest and Common Committee   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2014 |
| <b>Subject:</b>  | <b>Public</b>              |
| Burnham Beeches Consultation Group Minutes of 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2014   |                            |
| <b>Report of:</b>  | <b>For Information</b>     |
| Superintendent of Burnham Beeches, Stoke and City Commons  |                            |
| <b>Summary</b>   |                            |
| <p>This report provides your committee with the minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 meeting of the Burnham Beeches Consultation Group (BBCG)</p> <p>The main topic's covered at the meeting were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction of Dog Control Orders (DCO's) at Burnham Beeches</li> <li>• Planning research results</li> <li>• Expansion of conservation grazing</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p> <p>Receive this report</p> |                            |

### **Minutes if Burnham Beeches Consultation Group – 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014**

**1. Welcome:- Chairman Alderman Gordon Haines**

**In Attendance:-** Sue Ireland, Andy Barnard, Martin Hartup, John Mellish, Judy Tipping, Andy Booth, Christopher Mitchell, Alistair Helliwell, Tim Crauford, Joy Winyard, Vivienne Ely, Kavan Harley, Adrian Sutton, Naomi Turner, Brian Bilgorri, Caroline Spicer & Mary Kohlase-Darbyshire

**Apologies:-** Virginia Rounding, Allan French, Sheila Riley, Paul Jarczewski, Martin Albertini, Andy McVeigh, Mark Frater & Alan Samson

**New attendees:** - Margaret Rook Personal Assistant to the Superintendent

**2. New members:** - None

### 3. **Minutes of the last meeting – matters arising**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

### 4. **The Superintendent's expanded Role**

The Superintendent explained the recent merger between Burnham Beeches, Stoke Common and City Commons highlighting the growth in staff numbers, geographical coverage of City Commons and their features.

The following items were highlighted as challenges and projects for the next quarter:

**Service Based Review** – A City of London initiative to drive financial savings, increase income and find efficiencies.

**Structure Review** – The staffing structure will need to be reviewed due to the demands of the service based review and the imminent retirement of a Head Ranger at City Commons.

**Grazing Model Review** – Grazing across the new division is managed differently.

**Heritage Lottery Fund** – Kenley Common has achieved funding for one year to progress an application to preserve historical features of the WW2 airfield.

**Dog Control Orders** – Progress to statutory consultation at Burnham Beeches.

**Tree Health & Safety** – To monitor tree disease issues and have an effective work programme across all sites.

**Q.** Do these changes mean the Superintendent will spend less time at The Beeches?

**A.** He anticipates spending two days at Burnham Beeches, two days at City Commons leaving one day for meetings and appointments in London.

**Q.** Who will be in charge in the Superintendents absence?

**A.** Martin Hartup (Head Ranger) will be leading the Burnham Team on these days and has done so since January.

The Chairman interjected that he had every confidence in the team at Burnham Beeches to handle the merger seamlessly.

The Director of Open Spaces added that the opportunity to develop staff into larger roles had enabled the Open Spaces Department to realise a substantial saving.

**Q.** It's great to see opportunities for Martin and Andy but will others be needed to pick up the slack?

**A.** The timing for the merger was good and with a revised work programme Senior Ranger's have an adjusted workload. Recruitment of an Assistant Ranger has also taken place.

Thanks were received for the emergency work undertaken after each winter storm episode and the swift removal of fly tipping.

The Director confirmed the extreme winter weather had resulted in an expensive work programme across the whole of Open Spaces.

## **5. Dog Control Orders**

The report sent to Epping Forest Consultative Committee in January was referred to a Members working group to consider a late response from The Kennel Club.

The Members working group presented their findings to the March Epping Forest Consultative Committee and they accepted the recommendations for Schedule 1, 2, 3 & 4. Schedule 5 (the number of dogs permitted to be walked at one time) was changed from a maximum of three to four.

The group discussed this change and the other influences such as the breed of dog, professional dog walkers, length of lead and cycling or talking on a phone whilst exercising dogs. The group reviewed the data from the public consultation to find that there was only a 2% variance in those suggesting three or four dogs and accepted the change.

**Q.** How will the orders be policed?

**A.** With our own staff. The orders provide more tools to deal with the issue than our byelaws alone.

**Q.** Will outside enforcement be needed?

**A.** Only from the City of London Solicitor for cases that proceed to Magistrates Court and an agent for processing the administration.

**Q.** How will non locals or those refusing to give a name be dealt with?

**A.** Good information and acceptance that a cultural change may be slow, however cautions and vehicle id checks can be used if necessary.

### Next Steps

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| Consult with District Council & Police | April 2014                    |
| Public Notice of Proposal              | May 2014 (28 days to comment) |
| Consider responses and draft orders    | June 2014                     |
| Report to EFCC                         | July 2014                     |
| Publicise enforcement date             | July 2014                     |
| Erect signage                          | August 2014                   |
| Enforcement to commence                | September 2014                |

**Q.** Can The Kennel Club or another body arbitrate?

**A.** No not in this instance but we want the best outcome so responses are genuinely sort.

**Q.** Will there be a public meeting or further questionnaire?

**A.** No not in this instance as the work has been publicised well and consultative. The reports are accessible as public documents and The Kennel Club have sent a representative to the EFCC meeting. The Director asked that members of the group helped with the local message.

## **6. Planning Issues**

Helen Read provided an update on work with South Buckinghamshire District Council on the development of their Local Plan. Reports have been sort on the following;

### **Hydrology**

The catchment of all streams, potential effects of development and a recommendation that no development is permitted within 10m of a water course.

### **Visitor Survey**

Considers, where visitors travel from, where they visit on the reserve and the impact of additional dwellings

### **Beech Tree Health**

Analyses annual health assessments and shows long term decline rather than short

### **Air Quality**

Awaiting a report from South Buckinghamshire District Council.

### **Lichens**

Monitoring of a data set from 1993 shows an increase in nitrogen loving lichens and a decline in acid loving lichens.

### **Soils**

High, medium and low visitor pressure samples

### What's Next?

Reports to be finalised by the end of April 2014 for discussion with the District Council.

**Q.** Has the new refuse site been considered?

**A.** It has been looked at but it isn't considered an impact.

**Q.** What about the effects from another runway at Heathrow

**A.** We are currently planning a meeting with Heathrow to discuss the European Conservation Directive.

**Q.** Will the Civil Aviation Authority be involved?

**A.** We are unsure at this time.

Helen Read was thanked for her work on this project.

## **7. Expansion of the Conservation Grazing Scheme**

The success of the invisible fence for grazing Burnham Beeches leads us to develop the trial to possibly 90 hectares in 2014.

**Q.** How easy is it to move the loops of fencing?

**A.** Reasonably easy as they aren't dug up but have junctions every 500m.

**Q.** Regarding HLS funding would you please keep Natural England informed of your progress?

**A.** Yes dialogue is in place for this.

## **8. Projects and Achievements October – March 2014**

Forty ancient pollards have been worked on, continuation of heathland restoration whilst opening up areas for grazing and visitor access. Hazel coppice, scrub management along with tree safety work has taken place.

Volunteer hours have almost reached 6000 hours this year.

Six site closures were implemented over the winter during severe weather.

A variety of community events have taken place including, Christmas carols, walks and early school visits.

The wood pellet boiler and solar panels have now started creating income for us and our electric bikes and quad have achieved 2,500 miles powered by the solar panels. Diesel has been driven down by 25% this year.

## **9. AOB**

**Q.** Are there plans to dredge the ponds? The bird life seems to be dropping away whilst the pond is silting up.

**A.** The silting work needs to be carried out whilst the dam walls and banks are improved to avoid causing more damage. This work may have to wait for two years due to funding.

## **10. Date of next meeting**

**9<sup>th</sup> July – Stoke Common**