

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest & Commons	9 th November 2015
Subject: Superintendent's Update	Public
Report of: Superintendent of 'The Commons'	For Information
Summary	
<p>This report provides a general update on issues across the nine sites within 'The Commons' division that may be of interest to members and is supplementary to the monthly email updates.</p>	
Recommendation	
<p>Members are asked to note the contents of this report.</p>	

PLANNING CONTROL

Burnham Beeches

1. **SAC - Planning workshop.** This workshop was held at Burnham Park Hall on 23rd September 2015 with Michael Welbank providing the welcome and closing comments. The event was well attended with representatives from many organisations and expert speakers from the industry. The workshops have identified 'common ground' across the various organisations represented on the day. We are currently awaiting confirmation that the notes are accurate and once available they will be circulated and the way forward mapped out.
2. **Crown House.** Development to convert the buildings associated with Crown House, Crown Lane into 24 residences is nearing completion. A further application has been submitted with 5 more dwellings being proposed.
3. **Beeches Road.** An application for 3 dwellings has been submitted
4. **Crown Lane.** Outline planning consent has been submitted for the development of Wyevale Garden Centre on Crown Lane to residential.
5. **Taplow.** Planning consent has been granted at Mill Lane for 199 houses. An application for a further 12 houses is anticipated.
6. **Beaconsfield.** A planning application for around 700 houses is anticipated at Wilton Park.
7. **Gravel Extraction.** Soil stripping has been completed for the first cell at East Burnham Quarry, traffic lights have been installed across Allerds Road and extraction commenced on 12 October. An officer attended the quarry liaison meeting which is an opportunity for the quarry operator to meet with

regulatory organisations, local councils and other interested individuals. As a result an update report has been commissioned by the operator from an independent hydrologist regarding the state of the dipwells and their monitoring.

8. **Cross Rail.** Highway alterations and other infrastructure improvement works have commenced around Burnham, Iver, Slough, Taplow and Maidenhead Stations. The completion of the Cross Rail project will have a significant impact on local property and land values and an increase in housing demand is anticipated.

Coulsdon Common

9. **Windmill Farm telecoms tower.** Vodafone Limited has entered into an agreement with Telefonica UK Limited pursuant to which the two companies plan to jointly operate and manage a single network grid across the UK to significantly reduce the environmental impact of network development.

Vodafone and Telefónica are in the process of identifying a suitable site in the Coulsdon area for a radio base station. A letter of consultation was received to seek views on the proposal before any planning submission was made. The Planning Authority have since stated that the matter has been withdrawn.

West Wickham.

10. **A232 - Pedestrian Crossing.** Transport for London (TfL) has concluded its public consultation process for the A232 pedestrian crossing. The result was that 97% of respondents supported your committee's approved option – (report of March 2015). A detailed report from TfL providing technical and land dedication issues is anticipated in January 2016.

PARTNERSHIPS

Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC)

11. The Burnham Beeches team has entered an agreement with Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) to provide winter grazing (ponies) on their heathland at Black Park. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement i.e. BCC is provided with free grazing and the City is provided with free overwintering land.

Kenley Airfield

12. The Kenley Revival Heritage Lottery Fund bid was successful. Consent to proceed was received on the 18th September 2015 and mobilisation has commenced. Recruitment has started with the Project Officer being the first appointment to be made. Officers and project partners have since met with HLF who commended the submission, elements of which are considered to have been exemplary and are being adopted as examples of best practice for

training purposes. The project will report on progress monthly via the Project Vision portal and will submit quarterly reports to the HLF.

Open Spaces Society visit

7. The Open Spaces Society visited Ashtead Common on Saturday 10th October. The guests, including Kate Ashcroft (General Secretary) and other members who were hosted by the Head Ranger. The Open Spaces Society has posted some very positive feedback on their website.

WORK PROGRAMME - HIGHLIGHTS

Stoke Common

13. Year 8 of the programme to restore the heathland vegetation at Stoke Common has got off to a positive start with major restoration work already completed by contractors with 1.5 ha of secondary woodland cleared from the site and soils mulched to encourage heathland species. A new discovery for Stoke Common in the last month has been golden dock another scarce plant in Buckinghamshire and a new record for the common.

Spring Park

14. Small-leaved Lime project. This three year project, which has seen the restoration of more than 1.5 acres of rare Small-leaved Lime coppice, reaches its completion this month with the return of the heavy horses. These wonderful horses will again pull felled timber from the woodland during the school half term holiday. Members of the public have been notified and a good audience is anticipated through the duration of the project i.e. Monday 26th October until Wednesday 28th October

Burnham Beeches

15. Following a summer of preparation and cable laying, Cattle and ponies grazed several parts of the Beeches for the first time in over a century. Around seventy six percent of the site can now be graze. The project was well received by the visiting public although some surprise was caused when the cattle made their first appearance close to the entrance of the site on Lord Mayors Drive! It is hoped that the grazing area will increase again in 2016 bringing this project close to completion.

DIVISION PLAN.

16. The new Division Plan has been produced and agreed by the Senior Management Team. This document reflects the Corporate and Departmental Plans and will guide the management of the Division over the coming years. It describes the common purpose of the newly formed Division setting out its Vision, Objectives and Core Values. It also sets out how the Division will achieve consistency of policy across the suite of sites whilst recognising where this would not be advantageous. This important yet straightforward

plan is being presented to personnel by the Superintendent at the October and November staff meetings. Copies are available should members require.

CUSTOMER SERVICES

17. Several complaints have been received from wayleave holders concerning the recent increase in charge for hand and motorgate wayleaves. The issues raised were discussed across the Department and letters of response have been sent.
18. One letter concerning the above, was received by the Town Clerk from the Rt Honourable Dominic Grieve who has been approached by a local constituent (Burnham Beeches) concerning the increase in motorgate wayleave from £50 to £210. Responses, setting out the City's position, have been sent to both parties.

PERSONNEL

19. An Assistant Ranger has been recruited at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common. The Officer to joins us from Black Park Country Park, Buckinghamshire County Council. The Officer was originally trained by the Lower Mole Countryside Management Project, which is part funded by the City of London. It is hoped that their employment will commence in December 2015.
20. A seasonal ranger has also been appointed at Burnham Beeches for the period November 2015 until March 2016. This post will help to ensure that the busy winter work programme can be achieved.
21. An Assistant Ranger has now been recruited at Couldson Common. This is an 18 month contract and the Officer to joins us from High Elms Country Park, Kent. It is hoped that their employment will commence in December 2015.
22. A member of Ashtead Common team continues to be affected by Lymes disease and remains on light duties
23. A member of Ashtead Common team has undergone the first of potentially several surgical procedures and will be unable to attend work for several weeks.

INCIDENTS

The Kennel Club

24. The Kennel Club has continued to hint at impropriety concerning the City's right to charge for car parking at the Dell Car Park and along roadside verges bounding the Beeches. On the most recent occasion their Access Advisor parked in the Dell car park, paid for a ticket and subsequently wrote to District Enforcement to contest the City's right to charge. The Kennel Club have been encouraged to write to the Superintendent and provide precise details as to the background to their allegations so that the matter can be dealt with on a professional basis.

Miscellaneous

25. Motorcycle riders have been a persistent problem at Ashted Common in recent weeks. The rangers and Police continue to monitor and provide an increased presence. Two offenders were apprehended by the Police on 8th October however, incidents continue to occur.
26. A temporary camp was found in woodland at West Wickham Common – it has since been removed. Rangers have increased the frequency of patrols on the site and are planning a community engagement (Meet the Ranger) event in January to raise awareness of their work.
27. Two cars were abandoned for several days in the Spring Park car park. Rangers notified the police and placed notices on the car. One has subsequently disappeared. Legal advice concerning the removal of the remaining vehicle is awaited.

FILMING ACTIVITY

28. Following a change of Programme Director, the BBC has recently cancelled its plan to use of the Beeches as a location for a new production of 'A Mid Summer Night's Dream'. This represents a loss of income of around £10,000.

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