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| Committee(s): | Date(s): |
| Epping Forest & Commons | 26 th January 2016 |
| 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.** A further meeting with SBDC and NE has now been arranged for January 2016 to follow up matters arising from the 2015 workshop.
2. **Beeches Road.** An application for 3 dwellings has been permitted.
3. **Crown Lane.** Outline planning consent has been permitted for the development of the Wyevale Garden Centre on Crown Lane to residential use.
4. **Triliums, Templewood Lane.** A third application to build 2 houses in a designated Woodland Road has been refused as being inappropriate to the setting. The developer has appealed so the matter is now being considered by the Planning Inspector.

Coulsdon Common

5. **Kenley Common.** Comer Homes has submitted a third planning application to develop the former Officers Mess building at Kenley into residential accommodation. The site is adjacent to Kenley Common. The application suggests that the line of the perimeter fencing may be altered in a manner that would be of benefit to visitors to the Common. The application appears to be sensitive to the heritage features of the Officers Mess and surrounds. It also gives a commitment to retain the historic structures located within the curtilage.

6. The Superintendent has responded and:
 - Encouraged further discourse re the perimeter fence.
 - Encouraged consideration as to the need to conserve and maintain the Portcullis Club, Squash Court and gun emplacement.
 - Emphasised the need for continued community access to the Portcullis Club, through the adoption of a long-term agreement.
7. In their response to the application, the local parish council have suggested that a small part of the site i.e. Coxes Wood, be transferred to the City Corporation. The Superintendent will inform Committee of any formal approach made concerning this matter.
8. **A232 - Pedestrian Crossing.** The Senior Ranger recently met with Transport for London (TfL), Bromley Council and the Project Contractor to discuss detailed design and material issues. A detailed plan is anticipated in the near future and will be presented as part of a joint report with TfL at this committee's in March 2016 meeting.

PARTNERSHIPS

Kenley Revival update

9. The campaign to recruit a Project Manager was unsuccessful and the post has been re-advertised. This delay has affected the project's start schedule, but the elements that need to be progressed as an immediate priority are being addressed. These include the recruitment of the Learning and Volunteer Officer and a specialist Conservation Consultant. The target completion date for the project as a whole remains unaltered.

WORK PROGRAMME - HIGHLIGHTS

West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons etc

10. The wood pasture extension at the Grove (Coulsdon Common) is now complete. This project is part of the HLS programme and will see cattle being grazed on the site in early spring 2016.
11. The Winter Work Programme is well under way across both the West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons with contractors completing another scrub compartment on New Hill and clearing successional areas on Farthing Downs.

Burnham Beeches

12. A Visitor Numbers survey has commenced. This is being carried out on specified dates over the coming 12 months to provide an updated figure of the site's visitor numbers. The survey is being carried out by staff and volunteers.

13. The winter work programme is well under way with a variety of scrub cutting and tree projects. Rangers and volunteers cleared scrub and 'over shadowing' trees from around 60+ old pollards. Restoration works to the pollards will start in January 2016. A birch Christmas tree and reindeer were also installed at the Beeches café for the annual carols event and a festive trail laid on for visitors to explore the woodland over the holiday period.

Stoke Common.

14. The Friends and other volunteers have been very busy working on the common and the annual Christmas task culminated in the building of the now traditional birch Christmas tree with the addition of two birch reindeer! The Burnham Beeches ponies have been grazing the North Common for the 2nd year helping to re-establish the acid grassland in this area following tree clearance over the last 2 winters. Contractors will be removing the encroaching scrub on heathland and at paths sides on the West Common in the New Year.

Ashtead Common.

15. The winter work program is progressing well. Volunteers and contractors are engaged in scrub management and grassland restoration activities. Part of Bridleway 38 and Ride 3 have been resurfaced to remove potholes and erosion scars. As an offshoot of these works a small bund has been created next to Woodlands Road to protect the site from illegal incursions. Conservation work on approximately 75 veteran oak pollards has commenced.

CUSTOMER SERVICES.

16. A complaint has been received concerning the removal of trees and use of fences at Kenley Common. The Head Ranger has responded and explained the need to restore the common to its previous flower rich state and the associated need to maintain grazing

PERSONNEL

17. A member of Ashtead Common team has now undergone the second of several surgical procedures and will be unable to attend work or on light duties for several weeks.

INCIDENTS

18. A sheep was attacked and killed by dogs at Riddlesdown. The Police have been informed. The Head Ranger is taking steps to reduce the number of incidents of this type including changes to livestock posters and signage, use of social media, discussion item at the newly introduced 'meet the ranger' events and a greater ranger presence on site. The Head Ranger and his team also propose to visit Burnham Beeches to familiarise themselves with the management of dogs there.
19. A member of the public reported a fire in a veteran Beech tree. The fire was extinguished and monitored for several hours by the site Ranger.

FILMING AND OTHER COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

20. The Burnham Beeches meeting room was rented for a day by the Ancient Tree Forum to carry out interviews. This provided an income of £230 (net of VAT and staff costs).
21. The Burnham Beeches meeting room was rented for a day by Flora Locale to carry out a training event. This produced an income of £230 (net of VAT and staff costs).

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