

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	26 th January 2016
Subject: Minutes of the Burnham Beeches Consultation Group meeting of 18 th November 2015.	Public
Report of: The Superintendent of The Commons.	For Information
<p>Summary</p> <p>This report provides Members with minutes of the November 2015 meeting of the Burnham Beeches Consultation Group. Matters discussed included updates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent Update • Consultative Group Meeting frequency • Budgets • Planning • Projects and Achievements <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contents of this report 	

Main Report



Title of Meeting: Burnham Beeches Consultative Group
Date: 18th November 2015
Time: 19:15 – 21:00
Location: Burnham Beeches Estate Office

Chairman: Alderman Gordon Haines

Attendees: Deputy Chairman, George Abrahams – CoL
Barbara Newman – CoL
Sylvia Moys – CoL
Susan Ireland - CoL
Andrew Barnard - CoL
Helen Read – CoL
Martin Hartup - CoL
Hadyn Robson – CoL
Deborah Harris – CoL
Karen Holman - CoL
Jane Griffin - SBDC
Mary Kohlhase – The Avenue Residents Association
Judy Tipping – Burnham Beeches Volunteers
Sheila Riley – Burnham Beeches Volunteers
Caroline Spicer – Nightingale Park Residents Association
Andrew Booth - FoSC Volunteer Group
John Mellish – Local Visitor Representative
Kavan Harley – Site Caterer
Christopher Mitchell – Regular site visitor (ex COL)
Mark Frater – Local Business Representative
Adrian Sutton – Nightingale Park Residents Association
Bob Milne – Farnham Royal Parish Council
Vivienne Ely – Joggers & Wheelers Society
Rachel Forsyth – National Trust

Apologies: Peter Cathcart - Farnham Common Parish Council
Alan Samson – Burnham Parish Council
Brian Bilgorri – Joggers & Wheelers Society
Natasha Bajwa – The Dogs Trust
Andy McVeigh - Flora Group Rep
Joy Winyard – Local Bird Interest

Agenda

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Minutes of the Last Meeting – Matters Arising
3. Superintendent's Update
4. Consultative group meeting frequency and minutes (report recently circulated)
5. Budgets
6. Planning Issues update
7. Project and Achievements
8. AOB
9. Agenda items and date of next meeting – April 2016

Topic	Notes
1. Welcome and Apologies	The Chairman welcomed all attendees and acknowledged apologies and recognised Barbara Newman and Sylvia Moys for taking time to travel and attend. Bob Milne was welcomed as a new attendee.
2. Minutes of Last Meeting	Agreed and accepted, no actions from matters arising.
3. Superintendent's Update	<p>i. <u>Introduction to the Division Plan</u> - The Superintendent took members through the Division Plan and introduced the new name for Division i.e. "The Commons" This gives the 9 sites a unified identity. Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common will continue to be used as our 'local identity'. The November newsletter reflects the new identity.</p>
4. Consultative Group Meeting Frequency and Minutes	<p>ii. <u>Currently 4 Consultative Committees meet 9 times a year</u> – We are proposing to reduce the overall number of meetings to reduce their impact on resources whilst ensuring that they remain effective. This matter will be discussed with each of the four Consultative Committees' and then comments will be reported to the Epping Forest and Commons Committee for a final decision.</p> <p>iii. Members were asked to comment on the recommendation to reduce the number of meetings from 3 to 2 per year with a proviso that an extra meeting can be 'called' if required.</p> <p>iv. Members were asked to comment on the recommendation that the <u>Town Clerk's department provided administration support</u> for future BB & SC Consultation Group Meetings to bring it in line with other CoL Consultative Committees.</p> <p>v. <u>Comments/Questions</u></p> <p><i>Q. Is this because AB has taken on extra roles?</i> <i>A. Yes in part, but the main reason is to try and reduce the impact of the current consultative structure on all concerned. Members must feel confident that any changes will not reduce the effectiveness of the BBCG.</i></p> <p><i>Comment: A Member suggested maybe we do this for a year and report back.</i></p> <p><i>Comment: A Member suggested that the frequency of these meetings feel right "not wasting my time attending".</i></p> <p><i>Q. Could we have some form of protocol that describes how, when and why an additional meeting would be called?</i> <i>A. Yes, we will look into this. Reflecting on previous year's, matters such as the introduction of DCO's might be the sort of issue that would benefit from an additional meeting. (Post meeting note, any changes would need to be reflected in the group's Terms of Reference and agreed by the group)</i></p> <p><i>Outcome. Members agreed that the recommendations are an acceptable way forward with the requirement that a formal system to request additional meetings is</i></p>

5. Budgets

developed and that good advanced notification of dates of future meetings is communicated.

This feedback will now be given to the EFCC in March 2016 along with those of the other three consultative committees. Members of the BBCG will be informed of the EFCC's decision shortly thereafter.

- i. **Service Based Review** – Various Powers Act. Members were thanked for their comments over the last few months and it was confirmed that these had been passed to Remembrancer. The Bill is now known as “Open Spaces Bill”.
- ii. Wayleave charges were increased in October 2016. Handgate charges were increased from £5.00 to £10.00 per annum. Motorgate wayleaves are now linked to local council tax bands and charges have risen from £50 per annum to between £150 and £210.
- iii. **Changes in RPA Grant Schemes** – MH took meeting through 2015 changes. Reduction in Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) grants of £31- 34k this year due to changes in definitions of land that is eligible. Mapping programme undertaken by HR to map land that is eligible under the new rules. The expansion of the grazing area to 73% of the site has enabled an increase of £20K in our Higher Level Stewardship payments (HLS) for 3 years. Overall still £10k down due to changes in BPS.
- iv. Car parks – SBR target of additional £20k to be earned from BB car parks in 2016/17. That money has already been removed from the budget for 16/17.
- v. **Meeting the Challenge** – of the impact on BB/SC budgets posed by SBR and RPA grant changes. MH took meeting through proposed new car parking increased charges options. MH showed all options are very comparable to other local sites. Option 1. Introduce week day charging. Option 2. Raise weekend charges only to £3.00. Option 3. Introduce weekday charging of £1 and raise weekend charges to £3. Preferred option – Option 3. Whatever option is taken forward must be in place for April 2016 and report back to EFCC in New Year.

Concerns raised: *Weekday charges may increase vehicles parked on verges and private residential roads.*

Q. *Would this affect voluntary donations?*

A. *MH stated that week day charges would result in loss of the donation money received through machines during the week but an increase in income overall as most visitors don't make a donation.*

Comment: *Weekday car parking could upset regular dog walkers.*

Q. *Could closed car parks be re-opened on donation basis?*

A. *MH explained that previously car parks had been closed due to very low levels of visitor use compared to maintenance cost and level of misuse.*

	<p><u>Q.</u> The car parking machines do not give change. <u>A.</u> MH explained that we are currently limited with machines we have at present. Any new machines in future may be able to deal with this better, research into payment through mobile phone devices to be undertaken.</p> <p><u>Q.</u> Will annual ticket be looked at? <u>A.</u> Annual tickets exist now and if we went to weekday charging would be looked at again.</p> <p><u>Q.</u> Do other CoL Open Spaces charge for car parking? <u>A.</u> Yes.</p> <p><u>Comment:</u> Enforcement - Car Parking fines not taken into consideration as P&D rates are very high 99.3%.(2015)</p> <p><u>Q.</u> What implications will this have on the Café? – KH expressed his concerns that this could affect the Café considerably. Impact on café currently unknown. Could a “grace” period or something similar be introduced? <u>A.</u> MH commented that this would be very difficult to manage with current systems and very time consuming. Need to keep any scheme simple and straightforward.</p> <p><u>Comment:</u> Changes in charging would need to be communicated very clearly.</p> <p><u>Comment:</u> Representative from the National Trust explained that Councils across the UK have been charging for car parking at open spaces for many years and the public must be made aware of the importance of maintaining these sites and the costs incurred for charities such as NT and BB.</p> <p><u>Outcome:</u> It was agreed that the Superintendent and Head Ranger would consider these comments and provide members with their favoured approach. Comments to be received by 06 December so that a recommendation report can be provided to EFCC in January 2016.</p>
<p>6. Planning Issues Update</p>	<p><u>HR gave update to meeting.</u> South Bucks Local Plan – new Local Plan being put in place which will be a joint one with Chiltern District Council.</p> <p><u>Hosted workshop</u> on Impact of Small Scale Development was well attended and very positive meeting. Meeting with Natural England scheduled for January 2016.</p> <p><u>East Burnham Quarry</u> – Infrastructure now in place. Gravel extraction started early October. Gravel Liaison Meeting met in September and next meeting scheduled for 03 December. Hydrology is the major issue; Summerleaze Ltd (the operator) and independent hydrologist are working on a review of the dipwells which will be discussed at the meeting. If anyone feels that any of the conditions are not being adhered to please report to Parish Council as they can raise them at the liaison meeting. Only extraction underway at present but when infill commences there will be more traffic movements.</p>
<p>7. Projects and Achievements</p>	<p><u>Grazing expansion</u> - 160ha 73% of Beeches now grazed with cows and ponies. Nearly 120ha with invisible fences. 2015 invisible fencing very successful.</p>

<p>8. AOB</p> <p>9. Date of Next Meeting</p>	<p><u>DCO Update</u> – since December 2014 - 559 individuals/groups challenged and all but a handful happy to comply when asked. Most people complying without challenge. No fixed penalty notices issued as yet.</p> <p><u>Stoke Common</u> – Year 8 removal of 1.5 ha dense pines completed. Previous year's restoration work has proved very successful.</p> <p><u>Other works</u> - Cable laying over the summer, winter work about to start on old pollards, bat surveys completed prior to winter tree works, ponies grazing on the North commons, volunteers have clocked up 3,400 hours in the last 6 months.</p> <p><i><u>Q.</u> Is Burnham Beeches affected by fly tipping?</i> <i><u>A.</u> Yes on occasions but South Bucks District Council assists us. Stoke Common is more problematic.</i></p> <p>April 2016.</p>
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Appendices - None

Andy Barnard

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