

WEST WICKHAM COMMONS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 27 January 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the West Wickham Commons Consultative Committee held at the Metropolitan Police Sports Club, BR2 at 7.00 pm

Present

Members:

Barbara Newman	Val Polydorou (West Wickham Residents' Association)
Sylvia Moys	Cllr Neil Reddin (London Borough of Bromley)
Gladys Edmonds (Wickham Common Residents' Association)	Sam Wheatcroft (Wickham Common Residents' Association)
Peter Hodges (Hayes & Coney Hall Police Community Advisory Panel)	
Chantal Lane (Bromley Bridleways Access Group)	

Officers:

David Arnold	- Town Clerk's Department
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, The Commons
Hadyn Robson	- Support Services Manager, The Commons
Allan Cameron	- Head Ranger, West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons
Barry Gutteridge	- Senior Ranger, West Wickham Commons
Maria Traynor	- Support Services Officer, West Wickham & Coulsdon Commons

Barbara Newman in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman), Philip Woodhouse, Verderer Peter Adams, Cllr Nicholas Bennett (London Borough of Bromley), Bridget Hogan (West Wickham and Spring Park Volunteer's Group), and Sue Short (Heartsease Girl Guides Group).

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the public minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2015 be agreed as an accurate record.

4. THE COMMONS DIVISIONAL PLAN 2015-18

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of The Commons, accompanied by a presentation that outlined The Commons' Divisional Plan

2015-18. Members were advised that the Plan would be updated at three year intervals. The Superintendent added that the collective name for the Division had recently changed 'The Commons' for communication purposes to help provide a unified identity across all commons. Members noted that the names of the individual Commons, i.e. Coulsdon or West Wickham, would continue to be used locally at each site.

The new member representing the Bromley Bridleways Access Group would be added to The Commons newsletter circulation list.

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5. **OPEN SPACES BILL**

The Committee received a verbal update and presentation from the Superintendent of The Commons regarding the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Bill. Members were advised that the Bill had been deposited to Parliament in November 2015 and it had already had its first reading. The second reading was due to take place on 1 February 2016 and the petition period had been extended until 15 February 2016. The Superintendent added his thanks to Consultative Committee members for the helpful and constructive feedback received during the consultation process in 2015.

In response to members' questions regarding enforcement, the Superintendent advised that City Corporation Officers would be trained and authorised to issue penalty notices for certain offences.

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6. **SERVICE BASED REVIEW**

The Committee received a verbal update and presentation from the Superintendent of The Commons regarding the financial savings to be delivered as part of the City Corporation's Service Based Review. Members were advised that £162,000 worth of savings per annum were currently anticipated to be delivered by the Division by 31 March 2018 through increased operational efficiencies and income generation.

Projects to deliver savings across the Division included a reduction in the use of consultants to save £17,000 per annum; the rationalisation of the vehicle fleet, machinery and equipment to save £15,000 per annum; increased income generation through voluntary donations, wayleave charges; and the letting of office premises. In response to members' questions, the Superintendent advised that it was possible to block access to the Common if wayleave charges remained unpaid.

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7. **PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND SITE VISITS**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of The Commons that examined the impact of the re-merger of the West Wickham and Coulsdon

Commons Consultative Committees upon the frequency and nature of consultative meetings/site visits and sought to reduce demand on the Members and Officers involved, whilst ensuring that effective governance and community engagement was maintained. The Superintendent advised that the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common Consultation Group had agreed to reduce the frequency of its meetings, as per the recommendations in the report, for a one year trial period. Members of the Coulsdon Commons Consultative Committee had supported the re-merger and suggested a two year trial period.

Members supported the proposed re-merger and requested that meetings and site visits alternate between West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons. Members also noted that they would be consulted regarding the agenda items in advance of each meeting to ensure that the most important issues at each site were considered.

RESOLVED – That the re-merger of the West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons Consultative Committee be supported, subject to a review two years after the re-merger.

8. **MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND PRIORITIES**

The Committee received a presentation from the Head Ranger of West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons regarding the upcoming management issues and priorities for West Wickham Commons. Members received updates regarding the following matters:-

Pedestrian Crossing on the A232 at Hartfield Crescent

The principle of dedicating a small part of Commons land to Public Highway alongside Hartfield Crescent and the A232 was approved by the Epping Forest and Commons Committee in March 2015. Transport for London (TfL) proceeded to carry out a formal public consultation on the crossing proposal, which 155 out of 168 respondents were in favour of.

TfL and the contractor were currently consulting with Commons staff to reach an agreement regarding the final detailed design and Commons land dedication, which would be submitted to the next appropriate Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting for consideration. If approved, it was hoped that construction would be carried out during summer 2016. The Senior Ranger advised that the final design that he was currently consulting on would suit the needs of the Commons. In response to a member's question, he added that TfL funds for the project were secured beyond March 2016.

Volunteering

Volunteers from the West Wickham and Spring Park Volunteer Group (WWaSPs) had contributed 227 hours of work during 2015. Volunteer days were held approximately twice a month and a Ranger was always present to provide supervision and expertise.

In response to a member's request, the Superintendent advised that he would ask the Information Ranger to incorporate a six week rolling events programme into the monthly e-newsletter to improve the amount of notice given for certain

events. In response to a member's question, the Head Ranger added that the content of all on-site interpretation boards were currently being reviewed with a view to update during summer 2016.

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9. REVIEW OF ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16 AND PRESENTATION OF THE 2016/17 PROGRAMME

The Committee received a presentation from the Head Ranger of West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons that reviewed the 2015/16 Annual Work Programme and previewed the upcoming 2016/17 Programme. Members noted the following matters:-

Conservation

The first five years of the ten year Environmental Stewardship Scheme to enhance certain habitats with agricultural benefits had been successfully completed. The Small Leaved Lime Project to conserve and protect the national rarity at Spring Park had entered into its third and final year. Chestnut and hazel coppicing was also being carried out at Spring Park as part of the Woodland Code.

West Wickham Common was home to the only area of heathland habitat within The Commons Division, so restoration was being carried out to increase heather seed spreading and collecting.

Events

40 educational events had taken place during 2015, including guided walks, stargazing events, Fungal Forays, and Meet the Ranger events. The frequency of Meet the Ranger events would look to be increased to engage further with the local community and develop local users' knowledge about who owns, manages and funds the site.

Awards

West Wickham Common and Spring Park had both achieved Green Flag Awards and West Wickham Common had achieved a Green Heritage Award.

Incidents

A traveller community had moved onto an area of Spring Park on one occasion during 2015, whilst incidents of fly-tipping, abandoned cars and fires continued to occur across both sites. Dragon's teeth would be added to the City Corporation / London Borough of Bromley (LBB) land boundary at Spring Park to prevent travellers from moving vehicles from one side to the other. The Head Ranger added that the LBB currently took responsibility for the removal of abandoned cars in the Spring Park Car Park but he would investigate whether or not it would be more cost-effective for removals to be carried out by City Corporation staff.

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)

Surveys were continued to be carried out and further monitoring for OPM would be led by the Senior Ranger during summer 2016. There had been no

infestations found during 2015 but Spring Park was within two kilometres of an OPM nest site. Close contact was being maintained with officers from LBB and the Forestry Commission, who were coordinating the response to the threat of OPM across London. Information notices would be installed at the Commons soon.

Spring Park 2016/17

Chestnut and Hazel coppicing would be carried out in the Park.

West Wickham Common 2016/17

Heathland restoration, hazel planting, and holly and tree clearing would be carried out across the Common.

The lumps, bumps and ditches on West Wickham Common were last excavated in 1931 but their origin was unable to be determined. The Head Ranger advised that he planned to invite local amateur archaeologists to re-open the case in an attempt to confirm their age and purpose. A member noted that she would provide Rangers with the details of a local archaeologist who may be interested in taking part.

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10. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

12. DATE OF SUMMER WALK

RESOLVED – That the date of the summer visit be circulated by the Town Clerk once it had been agreed by the Chairman, Superintendent, and Head Ranger, following the proposed re-merger of the West Wickham and Coulsdon Commons Consultative Committees.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Chairman

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