

ASHTEAD COMMON CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

30 JANUARY 2012

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ASHTEAD COMMON CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD AT GUILDHALL EC2 ON MONDAY 30 JANUARY 2012 AT 11:30AM.

Present

Barbara Newman (Chairman)

Alderman Gordon Haines (Deputy Chairman)

Joseph Byllam-Barnes

Bob Eberhard

David Baker

Wyn James

Cllr John Northcott

Helen Cocker

Anthony McLelland

- CTC Local Rights of Way
- Ashtead Residents' Association
- Ashtead Common Volunteers
- Mole Valley District Council (Ward Councillor for Ashtead Common)
- Lower Mole Countryside Management Project
- Ramblers' Association

Officers:

Edward Foale

Esther Sumner

Bob Warnock

Shaun Waddell

Andy Thwaites

Sue Kirby

- Town Clerk's Department
- Town Clerk's Department
- Superintendent of City Commons
- Senior Ranger, City Commons
- Head Ranger, City Commons
- PA to Superintendent of City Commons.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Douglas Mobsby, Cllr Chris Townsend, Dr Paul Krause and Pippa Woodall.

1A. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Anthony McLelland to his first meeting of the Committee. Members noted that Mr. McLelland would be the Rambler's Association representative on the Committee henceforth.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2011 were approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Further work with the station manager was required to make Network Rail better understand the need to give priority to the emergency services at the level crossing.

4. KEY PROJECTS

The Committee received a presentation from the Head Ranger on current and future key projects, during which the following points were made:

- The City Commons had 903,496 visitors in 2011, of which 192,811 had visited Ashted Common. There was a margin of error in this statistic, however a consultant had advised when the visitor counts should occur. This provided a standard model that could be used for future year on year analysis. Approximately 75-80% of City Commons visitors were physically active.
- The City Commons Newsletter was currently circulated biannually, and the Division was about to circulate this electronically to those who had requested to receive it in this fashion.
- There were currently approximately 1500 mailing list recipients, who had been asked whether they wished to remain on the mailing list. Approximately 400 people had replied.
- A volunteer policy had been launched, including a commitment to train volunteer leaders. Members noted that use of volunteer leaders would mean greater officer availability to undertake other tasks. It was confirmed that volunteers were legally classified as City Commons employees and were consequently covered by the corporate insurance policy.

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5. DOGS

The Superintendent gave a verbal update, during which the following points were made:

- A joint agreement between the Kennel Club and the City of London, with the objective of encouraging responsible dog walking, was signed in December 2011. A leaflet outlining the terms of the agreement was tabled. Members commended the agreement for addressing the needs of all stakeholders.
- The City of London was currently pursuing Secondary Authority Status, which would allow the City to introduce and enforce Dog Control Orders. Both Bromley and Croydon had recently introduced Dog Control Orders. The Superintendent believed that, due to the limited number of dog-related incidents on Ashted Common, the existing byelaws were currently sufficient for encouraging responsible dog walking.
- Members noted that on 26 December 2011 someone had been attacked by dogs on Ashted Common and suffered injuries. Although not reported to at the time, the Superintendent assured Members that this incident would be recorded, and emphasised that this was an isolated incident.
- The Superintendent hoped that responsible dog walking could be promoted via educational means, rather than enforcement.

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6. CITY COMMONS ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of the City Commons outlining the annual Work Programme for the City Commons Division for the period April 2012 to March 2013 inclusive.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- A priority one task was often a legal requirement whereas a priority two task was a management priority. Priority three tasks would be undertaken if opportunities arose for funding.
- Members commended the increasing use of volunteers.
- Mobility scooters were currently unable to cross a path near Lady Howards' crossing; however, this was the responsibility of Network Rail. A concern was also raised over the height of the drop-kerb opposite the level crossing. A Member undertook to raise the matter at a future Ashted Highways Meeting.

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7. SENIOR RANGER'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of the City Commons relative to the Senior Rangers' completed and on-going projects.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- The Veteran Tree Management Project was ahead of schedule prior to an accident on 8 December 2011.
- The Roman Villa excavations had recently revealed a ditch, which had likely been dug by Romans, along with pre-Roman pottery.
- The Environmental Stewardship Agreement had covered much of the funding for grazing.
- The investigation into the cattle death previously reported to the Committee had produced an open verdict.
- The Scrub Clearance Project would require the felling of between 60 and 80 oak trees in order to restore the scrub mosaic habitat. The older of the oak cohort would remain and likely grow stronger with a greater access to sunlight. In response to a concern over the number of oak trees that were due to be felled, the Senior Ranger advised that the scale of the work was appropriate for effective achievement of the required conservation outcome.
- The CTC representative thanked the City Commons Division for the resurfacing of a cycle path near Broadhurst on behalf of their club.
- There were regularly over 20 volunteers working on any one day. On one occasion, there had been over 50 volunteers working on Ashted Common.

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8. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In response to a Member's question, the Superintendent confirmed that the preservation of the Sentry Platform on Ashtead Common had been listed in the Wessex Schedule, and would be incorporated into Ashtead's Local Plan.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT
Barbara Newman's Last Meeting As Chairman

Members noted that this was Barbara Newman's last meeting as Chairman of the Committee. The Committee expressed thanks to the Chairman for her Chairmanship during her term of office.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: That the next meeting be held at the Ashtead Estate Office on 2 July 2012, preceded by a site visit.

The meeting closed at 12.28pm

CHAIRMAN

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