

Greenham & Crookham Common Conservation Management Committee

Meeting held 14/11/22 at Estovers @ 13:00

Present: Tom Hayward, Andy Coulsdon Phillips, Roger Stace (BBOWt), Ken Neale (Graziers and vice chair of GCCC), Derek Cutt (GCCV and commoner).

Outstanding items:

- Provide governance committee with a list of properties sharing a boundary across the stock fence (20/2/21)
- BBOWT provided an update on the work being undertaken to map adjacent ownership along stock fence. Now we have got details of most of the ownership adjacent to the boundary fence, although a few address queries are outstanding.
 - o **ACTION** - KN send over details of his neighbor to BBOWT.
 - o **ACTION** – TH to draft a letter to send regarding fencing responsibilities. Agreed that letter should be signed from BBOWT, Governance & WBC.
- Approach WBC re mowing Thornford Road verge in summer 2020 as a way of controlling Himalayan balsam (20/2/21).
 - o DC outlined the problem is still on going and would like WBC to see if they can resolve issue through changing mowing regime.
 - o **ACTION:** RS to liaise with highways maintenance (Mike Pearce) about potential of cutting this verge.
- Search for historic heather-coverage data to compare drone mapping against (20/2/21)
 - o This item can be included into wider management plan review.
- Path location on firebreak
 - o *On agenda for this meeting.*
 - o *Notes from previous meeting (16/2/22). The CMC were broadly supportive of formalizing a path here as there were obvious recreational benefits to users of the common. We recommend that as part of his breeding birds survey, Adrian Hickman looks at the historic data and provides an evaluation of which species utilise this area to help inform a final decision to be made.*
- Grazing monitoring on common
 - o *On agenda for this meeting.*
 - o *Notes from previous meeting (16/2/22). The CMC agreed that it would postpone a decision as to whether to continue monitoring using existing methodologies until winter 2022, as it was hoped that a decision on the regulations may be in place by then. BBOWT will continue to undertake grazing monitoring using the same methodology for this coming season i.e. 2022.*

Agenda & Minutes:

1. Conservation works update provided by RS
 - o Crookham pools 2 ha scrub clearance / 78 man days carried out by RedKite.
 - o Volunteer winter scrub clearance days started (BBOWT Wednesday group & Sunday group).
 - o Potential for a group to undertake birch coppicing to use for Besom broom making. Opportunities in Crookham restoration area, with added benefit for nightingale. Could become a regular activity if delivered successfully this winter.

- Fire risk assessment is being finalized. Site visits have been completed with fire brigade who have signed them off. Still some mapping updates required of suitable water bodies to use in event of fire for water extraction.
 - Gorse burning date penciled in for 8th December
 - **ACTION:** RS confirm dates with graziers closer to the date.
 - Ponies being taken off Greenham in November with the plan not to bring them back on next year.
 - Tree H&S works planned in for winter 2022/23 with EJM.
2. Monitoring update provided by ACP
- Adder tracking undertaken this year and maps being updated
 - **ACTION:** ACP to share adder maps & check whether a report being produced.
 - Results for our annual monitoring programme will be produced in January.
 - **ACTION:** feedback on results of annual condition monitoring of Greenham to be provided at next CMC meeting.
 - Updated Striking the Balance report not yet started but plans underway to start in new year.
 - **ACTION:** ACP to produce Striking the Balance report in new year.
 - **ACTION:** RS to update livestock records into spreadsheet ready for analysis.
3. Grazing monitoring
- Following on from discussions at the February CMC meeting, it was agreed that grazing enclosure monitoring will not resume until the recommendations outlined in Striking the Balance are met. However, it was agreed that heather monitoring will still be undertaken annually.
 - **ACTION:** DC and BBOWT field team to take down wire on enclosures.
 - **ACTION:** ACP to update Striking the Balance report accordingly, confirming that BBOWT will resume grazing monitoring once grazing control implemented through regulations.
4. Ash die back planning in place for 2023.
- Plans are being put in place for carrying out more ADB management, principally along Burys Bank Road in Autumn/Winter 2023. This will allow time for the required permissions to be secured and protected species assessments to be carried out.
 - DC questioned the liability along power lines. BBOWT, as part of wider Wildlife Trust ADB working group, are looking into this issue, and can feed back when more detail available.
5. Fire break footpaths.
- The group looked over breeding bird territory maps for Dartford warbler and woodlark produced by Adrian Hickman as part of his 2022 breeding bird survey. These were compared to historic breeding bird territories maps from previous years. The middle firebreak on the north western lozenge looked most suitable in terms of

the supporting data, with a lack of clear breeding bird territories in this area. Consequently, it was agreed that the CMC would make a recommendation to the Commission to allow the provision of a path across this part of the lozenge during the bird breeding season.

- **ACTION:** TH to draft recommendation to Commission and send round to other members of the CMC for comment, prior for submission at the next Commission meeting on 26th January 2023.

6. Pond fencing

- The CMC considered the potential for fencing off some of the high value wildlife ponds on site, due to the impact caused by prolonged drought and low summer rainfall, the impact of increased disturbance by dogs and ongoing poaching caused by drinking cattle.
- KN outlined that the cattle should have plenty to drink and fencing a couple of wildlife ponds would not have an impact on available water for cattle.
 - **ACTION:** within the limitations outlined in Section 14 of the Act (see Greenham and Crookham Commons Act 2002) BBOWT to put forward a proposal with rationale to fence off a couple of the ponds for Commission approval. Draft to be sent round comment from CMC members in advance of submission to Commission.
- The group discussed the benefits of using barbed wire fencing to help manage livestock at Greenham. Both the Graziers (KN) and the BBOWT field team (DC) would welcome using barbed wire to help with site management.

7. Gorse paper

- ACP outlined that Some of limits in the paper are not completely accurate, and /or conflict with the designation limits, and /or the baseline area being measured is not clear. For example, there are slightly different limits in the paper, in the management plan, for the SSSI and the CS agreement. The group discussed the potential of revisiting the drone mapping carried out in previous years, and agreed that it would be a useful monitoring exercise to revisit, but should be undertaken following the completion of the gorse management cycle in 2025.
 - **ACTION:** Currently in year 6 of 8 – propose to carry out full review of gorse in 2025 using original monitoring methodology.
 - **ACTION:** BBOWT to update gorse paper with management undertaken to date, and explain some of the complications and complexities around setting targets for gorse management limits, and circulate.
- It was agreed that a programme of more gorse management is required, especially outside of the lozenges. TH outlined the plan for BBOWT to complete additional gorse control this winter, focusing on gorse control in the roam zone near Pyle hill car park.
- The group questioned what impact does gorse burning have on heather growth?
 - **ACTION:** RS to ask New Forest burning expert.

8. Management plan review

- The Greenham management plan is dated 2016 – 2021. It will be replaced/updated by a summary management plan. BBOWT presented the new structure for the summary plan to follow.
- There was a request to review the plan before updating and streamlining the new plan, including outlining what has failed and succeeded in terms of delivery over the last 5-year plan period.
- DC requested that it be a public facing/ accessible document.
 - **ACTION:** BBOWT to meet and check that CS and management plan targets/limits align.
 - **ACTION:** Need the most up to date Favorable Conservation Tables from Natural England for Greenham to check what are the targets and levels required. RS to follow up.
 - **ACTION:** BBOWT to update and clarify timeline for management plan review in 2023.

9. Italian alder control

- **ACTION:** RS and DC to look at potential areas where additional alder clearance and control is required.

10. Membership of CMC / meeting frequency & date of next meeting.

- Send minutes to NE and request representation.
- Next Meeting in March