

Minutes
Greenham & Crookham Commons Commission Meeting
Tuesday 23rd April 2024: 7pm
at Greenham Common Control Tower

Commissioners	Sue Ellis (WBHF & Chairman), Derek Cutt (Commoner), Frank Huxtable (Commoner), Tony Ferguson (Greenham Trust), Roger Hunneman (NTC), Simon Pike (TTC), (WBDC), Laurence Parker (GCCV) Micheal Williams (Commoner)
WBDC Appointed Officer	None
Secretary	Kim Lloyd (Greenham Parish Council Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer)
Advisors	Tom Hayward (BBOWT)

1. Public Session, no public members were present.
2. Apologies from Nicole Rorie (Commoner), Claudia Sievers (Commoner) and Tony Vickers (LAF).
3. Declaration of Interest, none raised.
4. Minutes of the last meeting 30th January 2024 was approved to be a true representation of the meeting. (Simon Pike will be added as an apology in the last mins)

Matters Arising

i) Letter to the Commoners and 2024 Election timetable.

Sue Ellis reported that she had sent notification and the timetable of the election to all commoners. If over 10 commoners contact the commission, an election would take place. An advert is in the Newbury Weekly News. If an election, the following timetable would need to be adhered to;

- Publish the Statement 14 May
- Delivery of notice of the candidate's 15 May
- Dispatch of the ballot papers 16 May
- Closure 30 May 2024

Carrying out this process should also provide GCCC a complete list of Commoners and Graziers.

The current commissioners will need to confirm if they wanted to remain on the Commission Committee. Tony Ferguson mooted that he would be happy to stand down if more members come forward.

The meeting quorum was confirmed to be 5 (Schedule 3 of the Act) with a total of 20 members on the commission.

- It was reported that Thornford Road issues are being monitored by the Police.
- Beating of the Bounds details, to be advised by Ken Neal, not present in meeting

Matters for Decision and presentation

5. Update on Greenham and Crookham Common Commission Regulations

Sue Ellis was pleased to announce that the GCCC Regulations are now amended after a long time of chasing Defra. They are now signed and GCCC are waiting for the final signed copy to be delivered. Thanks were given to Sue Ellis for her perseverance and Derek Cutt for his past work on getting this started.

It was raised and discussed that in the past there used to be three sub-committees on the Commission for Planning, Governance and Conservation. These committees would take forward some of the following agenda item issues. Once the regulations are in place, and the election is closed it would be good to follow this up again and ask for representation from the Commission members on these sub-committee groups. The sub-committee members could meet in between Commission meetings and report back. It was thought that sub-committee met every quarter, a month before the Commission meet. The Planning committee would need more consideration because of the consultation on Planning deadlines. A remote meeting could be held. A revised remit needs to be written for the proposed committees. More understanding would be needed to consider the remit for the planning committee. BBOWT do not have the resources to check all Planning applications. Reinstating the three committees would support BBOWT with their correspondence, at the moment everything is sent to BBOWT to advise on, and they don't have the resources and sometimes the specific knowledge to deal with all enquires. A subscribed online planning service called [Hugo Fox](#) was raised that could be used to alert planning committee members to the appropriate applications that would need to be considered by the Commission.

Action: Simon Pike will look into the planning process to help write a remit for a proposed Planning sub-committee along with what is required from the Commission ACT.

Action: Consideration to the Governance and Conversation sub-committee remits also needs to be considered.

6. Dogs on Greenham Common

Tom Hayward (BBOWT) reported that 65% of common users have a dog. From interactions with dog walkers 75% of them walk their dogs off the main paths. 52% of dog owners thought their dogs should be on a lead during nesting season, and 11% thought that dogs should be on a short lead the rest of the year.

There have only been 5 formal complaints to BBOWT over the past 2 years regarding uncontrollable dogs even though there had been discussions at Commission meetings regarding uncontrollable dogs on the common.

BBOWT are there to protect wildlife from dogs and to not re-train dog owners.

BBOWT have however carried out pop up engagement events on the Common to dog owners to explain the danger to wildlife etc from uncontrollable dogs and dogs being walked off the designated footpaths. They have engaged with local dog trainers to ask if they could run events on the common. They are working on a role for a Dog Warden but trying to find the right person to interact with dog owners is not easy.

BBOWT find the majority of users of the common do respect what BBOWT are trying to achieve. It was emphasized that BBOWT are only specialists in wildlife and not dog control. Commercial dog walkers are also being monitored, but when police enforcements sign was installed last year, it was noted that this was not welcomed well and BBOWT felt this was not the best way forward.

GCCC would need to work out how they could enforce a byelaw to keep the dogs on the lead if they did decide to investigate this further. The situation with uncontrollable dogs will be monitored.

7. Half marathon request

On 25 Feb 2024 a half marathon was organised on the Common which had been agreed last year from the organiser requesting to use the common who had attended a GCCC Meeting. It was reported that this event did bring some administration issues. 300 runners were agreed but 422 attended. A food van was mooted to be available, but did not happen after BBOWT said that runners needed to use the Tower Café facilities. 10% of the fee was agreed to contribute towards the common maintenance, but only 5% was contributed in the end, a total of £500. The organiser reported that they had higher preparation costs than originally thought. In general, the event on the day went well. It was agreed by the commission that stricter guidelines for 2025 would be needed. The 2025 run must be capped at 400, it was suggested for the organiser to use a pre- registration process so numbers could be monitored more closely.

8. Encroachments

Tom Hayward reported that part of the requirements under the lease with WBDC, encroachments on the land needs to be monitored. BBOWT carried out an audit on the common which covers matters like movement of boundaries, either intentional or un-intentional, changing the nature of the land, fly tipping etc. 68 encroachments were found. 24 of these were from movement of boundaries (for example, deer fences had been installed on Common land) 23 changes in the nature of the land, (for example someone had dumped 100 tons of horse manure) All 68 had been reported to WBDC.

Action: Tom Hayward will email the full report to Commission members.

Action: Sue Ellis will talk to Paul Hendy on what WBC enforcement could do to reduce these encroachments.

Action: Simon Pike will talk to *GCCC member* Erik Pattenden the WBDC representative for the Commission to ensure encroachment is monitored by WBDC.

9. Vehicle permits

The vehicle permits have now been established and reissued. A questionnaire has been sent to the commoners with a code of conduct to observe. These permits are issued annually. It was felt this is something that the proposed governance committee could follow up on once the system is in place. The permits are required by everyone that uses a vehicle on the common, including all commoners, this is so vehicles can be monitored and no one is using the common that shouldn't be.

10. Reptile and small mammals' tunnels project

The tunnels are now complete and will be monitored.

11. Governance and other Committee roles, see above under item 5.

12. Greenham & Crookham Common Byelaws – Proposal to revise

The current byelaws refer to organisations that do not exist anymore and these need to be reviewed and revised, for example the issues of flying drones etc. It is difficult to enforce byelaws but they still need to be in place.

Action: For all to review the Act and its Byelaws.

Action: Sue Ellis will find out if it's the Commission or WBDC who would produce any new Byelaws.

13. 80th Anniversary of D-Day Landings - 6 June 2024

The Tower is planned to be Floodlight. A strict programme is being adhered to. Most of the entertainment is planned around and inside the Tower. All are welcome to attend. To find out more, listen to [Kennet Radio News](#) for full details.

14. Greenham 25th Anniversary – April 2025

No further update on this item, deferred to future meetings when a working group is set up.

15. Greenham Parish Assembly – 25th April 2024

Speakers and presentations are planned for the Parish Assembly (Annual Parish Meeting) at the Control Tower. Sue Ellis is speaking on behalf of the GCCC and Tom Hayward is speaking on behalf of BBOWT.

Additional papers and reports

16. Committee reports –

Land management report was circulated before the meeting from BBOWT.

17. AOB, none.

18. Date of the next meeting.

23 July 2024

October 2024 to be advised

Meeting closed at 9pm.