

**Minutes of**

**Greenham & Crookham Commons Commission Meeting**

**Tuesday 23rd July 2024 7pm**

**In the Greenham Common Control Tower**

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| **Commissioners** | Sue Ellis (WBHF & Chairman), Ken Neal (Commoner and Vice Chairman), Judith Curson (Commoner), Derek Cutt (Commoner), Nicole Rorie (Commoner), Frank Huxtable (Commoner), Tony Ferguson (Greenham Trust),Simon Pike (TTC), Billy Drummond (WBDC),Tony Vickers (LAF), Claudia Sievers (Commoner)  |
| **Secretary** | Kim Lloyd (Greenham Parish Council Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer) |
| **Advisors** | Tom Hayward (BBOWT) |

1. **Apologies:** Paul Hendy, Roger Hunneman and Lawrence Parker sent their apologies.
2. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair:** Sue Ellis was re- elected as chairperson, Billy proposed and Ken Neal seconded, Ken Neal was proposed to remain as Vice Chairman, Tony Ferguson seconded all in favour of both re-elections.
3. **Co-option of a Commoner onto the Commission:** Sue Ellis proposed Claudia Sievers to be co-opted onto the commission, Tony Ferguson seconded, with all in favour. Sue Ellis reported that one other commoner had shown interest which would give 8 commoners on the Commission.
4. **Declarations of** **Interest**: none were raised.
5. **Public Session:** no public present**.**
6. **Minutes of the last meeting 23rd April 2024:** Some typographical errors were raised which will be corrected.

**Matters Arising**:

1. **Election outcome**. John Thorogood and Michael Williams had both stood down. Thanks were given to both for their work and support to the Commission. No election vote was needed as 10 + people had not expressed an interest in joining the Commission. The next GCCC election will now be in 2027.
2. **Dogs on the Common**, BBOWT were working with volunteers talking to dog walkers and trying to find the right person to take this role on to engage with dog walkers regarding controlling their dogs on the common.
3. **Beating of the Bounds** will be on Sunday 13th October 2024. Liaisons with Thatcham Town Council Festival is required to try and promote the event as much as possible.

**Action**: Sue Ellis and Clerk to add to the Greenham and Commission websites.

Ken Neal and Simon Pike to promote with TTC Festival event.

**Matters for Decision and presentation**

1. **Governance and other Committee roles**

Planning sub-committee

Simon Pike reported that he was still investigating Hugo-Fox planning platform regarding identifying planning applications on the commons. Thatcham Town and Greenham Parish Councils will raise application notifications that are received that impact the commons and will alert the Commission Sub-Committee members.

It was suggested that Simon Pike and Ken Neal are the best members to go on the planning sub-committee to start because they receive notifications from both Thatcham Town Council and Greenham Parish Council.

**Action**: Simon Pike, Ken Neal and the Clerk will alert GCCC to any applications that impact the common.

**Action**: Simon Pike said he would write a draft Term of Reference (TOR) for the Planning Sub-Committee and circulate ready for the September meeting. More members will be identified if needed in the next meeting once the TOR is approved.

Governance Sub-Committee

It was agreed for Sue Ellis to be the Chair of this committee.

**Action**: Sue Ellis will write a Draft Terms of Reference for the Governance and circulate before the September meeting. .

Simon Pike said he would join the Governance Committee.

Some of the points for committee discussion was thought to be:

* that GCCC and Graziers are following the regulations.
* re-drafting of the byelaws
* looking at encroachments on the Common.
* It was discussed that the commons maps are not very user friendly and not current which needs reviewing. (Including maps for commoners’ properties and ordnance maps for access land). The GCCC website online digital map also needs a better version. It was agreed to wait until the lakes are included to show the whole area on the maps. Sue Ellis is chasing the matter of the addition of the lakes to the Common.

Conservation Sub-Committee

**Action**: Sue Ellis with the support of other Commission members will look at writing a Draft Terms of Reference for this committee. This will then give an outline of what is involved and who would be the right members to join the group in the next meeting.

1. **Cattle on the Commons**

BBOWT reported that livestock on the common was at its highest then previous years in May. Graziers need to be chased on how many cattle they have at least every month especially now that GCCC have the regulations in place, they need to be enforced.

**Action**: a copy of the regulations will be circulated to GCCC.

It was suggested that BBOWT could try to insist that graziers have cattle ear tags to identity’s each owner. BBOWT will look into ways of graziers informing them how many cattle they have, Sue Ellis said she had email addresses for some of the graziers which could be provided.

Tom Hayward raised that processes need to be determined on how the regulations are carried out.

* the process to impound livestock
* how to meet deadlines
* how fixed penalty notices will be carried out. .

It was recognised that the regulations written by Defra are hard to understand and need to be written in a way that people understand them and can adhere to them,

BBOWT are receiving complaints regarding calves being spotted alone on the Common.

**Action**: Ken Neal will write to NWN to provide information to the public to not be concerned if a calve is seen alone on the common as the mother will return.

**Action**: Tom Hayward and Sue Ellis will discuss steps on how to monitor the amount of cattle on the common.

1. **Emergency Access on the Common**

A man had a cycle accident and broke his hip, on the north south pathway at the Crookham end. The ambulance staff could not get access into the common when they arrived at the closest gate to the man. BBOWT reported that this has happened before and that WBC has an emergency procedure on how to get onto the common during out of hours, along with the emergency services. BBOWT has provided this information to the emergency services many times and didn’t understand why this information is not stored on their system and passed on when an emergency occurs.

**Action**: Tom Hayward will update the emergency services and WBC again regarding this latest issue to try and identify what went wrong and why the information was not passed on. Sue Ellis will look at the gates to see if anything can be made clearer with notices to stop this from happening again.

1. **Greenham & Crookham Commons Regulations** – This was discussed under Governance Sub-Committee, item 7.
2. **Greenham & Crookham Common Byelaws** – Sue Ellis proposed that the byelaws need revising. WBC will need final approval of any revisions. The last time the byelaws were reviewed was 2017. The Governance Subcommittee will work on this when the group is up and running. Some of the items to consider are;
* Drones and electric scooters and that if used on the common that permission is granted .
* Thoughts were raised to a speed limit on the common.
* to be able to control commercial dog walkers.
* how enforcement could work
1. **Greenham 25th Anniversary 2025**

8th April 2025 there will be a celebration of the 25-year anniversary of the opening of the Common. . Tom Hayward has already been in discussions with Sue Ellis, Tori from the GCT and WBC officers. Talks and tours of the opening of the Common is being planned along with a photographic nature competition which will be promoted from 1st September. The Greenham Trust could offer funding towards the event and could be involved in the day itself. Children activities are being looked into for the event also.

**Action:** BBOWT will get in touch with Greenham Trust regarding funding and being involved in the event and keep the commission up to date on the planning.

Sue Ellis is looking at speakers on the day.

An email will be circulated when more news is confirmed.

**Additional papers and reports**

1. **Committee reports** –
* Regarding the installation of the recent underground reptile tunnels on the common. Feral cats had been spotted in and around the tunnels. BBOWT are trying to work out how to stop the cats from using the tunnels. The Cat Protection was contacted for advice.
* Thanks were given to BBOWT for their support on the recentHoney Bees common experiment survey. They established that honey was made all along the common, the data obtained from this experiment had been passed onto the Bee Association – perhaps the Bee Association could be invited to the 25th anniversary Celebration?
1. AOB, no other business was raised.
2. The next meeting is on 15th October 2024.

Meeting ended 20.35