



**Greenham & Crookham Common Commission Meeting**  
**Minutes of Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025 @7pm**  
**West Berkshire Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury RG14 5LD**  
**in the Roger Croft Room**

**Commissioners Present**

Sharon Bovingdon (Local Access Forum)  
Sue Ellis (WBHF & Chairman)  
Derek Cutt (Commoner)  
Tony Ferguson (Greenham Trust)  
Frank Huxtable (Commoner)  
Ken Neal (Commoner, Vice Chair)  
John Parker (Conservation Volunteers)  
James Field (Commoner)  
Nicole Rorie (Commoner)  
Sally-Ann Jay (Greenham PC)  
Claudia Sievers (Commoner) – Remote attendance  
WBDC Appointed Officer: Matthew Hart (rep)  
Secretary GPC Clerk: Jon Davey  
BBOWT Advisers: Tom Hayward

**1 Apologies**

Simon Pike (Thatcham TC)  
Judith Curson (Commoner)  
Roger Hunneman

**2 Declarations of Interest.**

Derek Cutt now a member of the Association of Hedge Layers

**3 Public Session**

**4 Minutes of the last meeting 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

The new Greenham Parish Clerk, Jon Davey, and the new representative for the Local Access Forum, Sharon Bovingdon were attending for the first time. Introductions to all commissioners and representatives present were made.

The minutes of the meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025 were approved.

No matters arising not on the agenda. Jon Davey suggested that meetings could be recorded to assist with minuting. There is no objection to this, but the technology used for the Zoom/Teams online access to the meeting may not be capable of picking up all the discussions.

### **Matters for Decision and presentation**

#### **5 Consultation on planning proposal at Bishops Green**

A consultation, prior to a planning application, is being carried out by Catesby Estates. This is for up to 60 homes on land east of Ecchinswell Road, Bishops Green. A previous application to build up to 300 homes on the same site, made by the same developer, was withdrawn in 2001. The consultation has been passed to the Commission by Frank Huxtable, as the proposed site is adjacent to the A339 running south of the Common and the Business Park. The proposal was discussed – Ken Neal pointed out that the cumulative effect of many successful applications impacts upon the Common. Sally-Ann Jay pointed out that Greenham PC had been made aware of this and will pass the consultation leaflet to Sue Ellis, who will draft a response on behalf of the Commission, and circulate it. Tom Hayward agreed that BBOWT will also provide a response. Due date is 19<sup>th</sup> October, so this must be completed for consideration by the Commission by 13<sup>th</sup> October.

**ACTION** Commissioners to provide any comments to Sue Ellis, who will circulate a proposed response by 13<sup>th</sup> October.

#### **6 Gorse monitoring and removal**

Tom Hayward reported that the Conservation Committee had looked at the planned gorse removal works for the winter. Works will be adjacent to the lozenges, where gorse is expanding. It won't be mulching but cutting and burning. The team will be out cutting with the tractor.

**ACTION** Tom Hayward will circulate a map of the planned works by end October for the Commission's information.

#### **7 Cattle on the Commons 2026**

This year there were around 80+ cattle plus calves on the Common. An explanation of the grazing process was given for the new Commission members. Ken Neal explained that while there was little grass on the Common because of the summer drought, cattle were in good condition, and the grass is coming back slowly. A bull was bought in some 7/8 years ago, and this has led to good quality bred calves.

Tom Hayward explained that the current numbers of cattle are sufficient given the grass conditions. Normally the Commission would ask the graziers to take the cattle off at the end of December, and Sue Ellis noted this would be a decision for the Governance Committee which is meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Ken Neal made a request for some cattle to be kept on the Commons by the graziers through January and possibly February – perhaps around 40 or 50 cattle.

There was a discussion around this request – Ken Neal explained that the drought has affected all grazing, and layback land is also poor because of it. Sally-Ann Jay pointed out that the cost of hay and feed has gone up considerably, which also makes it difficult for graziers if the grazing is poor. Derek Cutt pointed to the Striking a Balance report, and asked whether it was too early to change the parameters put forward in this. There was a discussion between Ken Neal and Derek Cutt about the requirement to provide layback land for graziers.

Tom Hayward raised BBOWT's concerns over a precedent being set by permitting the cattle to remain. Ken Neal reminded him that the conditions this year had been unprecedented, and that the graziers had run a reduced number of cattle during the year. Derek Cutt asked whether the graziers would, in turn, be prepared to graze a smaller number of cattle on the Commons next year. Ken Neal advised that the graziers would need to discuss this if asked, and pointed out that the graziers constantly monitor the grazing and grass cover, as BBOWT and the Commission do. He suggested that there is nowhere that the grass is increasing, although this was later shown (Governance meeting 14/10) to be inaccurate – grass cover has increased across the common, and heather has reduced.

**ACTION** Sue Ellis will invite Ken Neal to the Governance meeting at Estovers on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October at 1pm to put the graziers pov to the committee, and make a formal decision at that time.

## **8 Request to implement access control measures for 2026 ground nesting birds season**

This is a formal request from BBOWT taken at the October meeting each year. BBOWT's control measures include restrictions on access to certain areas, awareness for users of the Commons, and requirements for close control of dogs in some area (off lead areas are provided).

The Commission formally **AGREED** to the request. Details will be provided at the January meeting.

## **9 Appointment of a representative from the Local Access Forum**

Sharon Bovingdon had been welcomed and introduced at the start of the meeting. Derek Cutt pointed out that the Act under which the Commission operates states that the Commons must be accessible, and the appointment of a new representative was very welcome. He also reminded the Commission that the Act requires West Berkshire Council to prepare and keep up to date a map of the Commons and to supply a copy to the OS (Section 13 of the Act)

**ACTION** Sue Ellis is working on this (NB to be completed once the Crookham Pools Common Land is adopted into the Commons).

## **10 101 Arts Events (Take it Outside and Creative Commons) Feedback**

Tom Hayward explained what the events consisted of and how they had been run. There was a trail with various activities and artists delivering performances. There had been good feedback about the events and a lot of people who had gone

specifically for this. It was likely to have attracted people who had not previously visited the Commons.

### **11 Beating the Bounds event 12<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Ken Neal has organised a Beating the Bounds walk for the following Sunday, starting 3pm from the field gate by the Control Tower. This is now an annual event. Sue Ellis had done a flyer and would promote it at the Beating the Bounds talk on Friday which forms part of Thatcham Festival.

### **Additional papers and reports**

#### **12 Committee reports**

##### **Conservation Committee Meetings 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

Tom Hayward reported that this had been a walk and talk, looking at a number of conservation issues on the Commons, including gorse, and discussing remedial works.

#### **13 AOB.**

##### **- Crookham Common Pools**

In the absence of Paul Hendry an update on this was held over to the next meeting.

#### **14 Date of next meeting.** Meeting frequency: normally four times a year. **ACTION** circulate possible dates, check room availability with Paul Hendry.

Proposed dates in 2026

**January** Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup>; **April** Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> **OR** May 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> ;  
**July** Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> ; **October** Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup>

#### **15 Greenham Common Control Tower – Design of extension**

Simon Pike had provided information on a planned proposal to create a covered seating area outside the Control Tower café. This was considered, and after discussion it was agreed the Commission liked the idea and design, and that it would benefit the use of the Control Tower and external events. **ACTION** Sue Ellis will advise the Control Tower Trust of our views.

#### **16 Calves**

Ken Neal advised the Commission that the majority of calves had now been taken off the Commons.

The meeting ended at 8.25pm