

COUNTRYSIDE CONSULTATIVE PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held at 7pm on 4 October 2022 –
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Minute Annex

Countryside Consultative Panel Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 4th October 2022

Committee Rooms, Bromley Civic Centre

Present		
Cllr Adam Grant (AG)	Shortland and Park Langley ward (attending on behalf of Cllr Turrell)	
Hannah Jackson (HJ)	Assistant Director For Carbon Management & Green Spaces	
Paul Mellor (PM)	Principal Planning Policy Officer	
Sue Holland (SH)	Education and Conservation Development Manager (idverde)	
Steven Lofting (SL)	Senior Conservation Ranger (Biodiversity)	
Dr. Judith John (JJ)	Orpington Field Club	
Chantal Lane (CL)	Bromley Bridleway Access Group	
Peter Woodward (PW)	Friends of Chislehurst Commons	
Parisa Wright (PWR)	Greener Cleaner Bromley	
1.	Welcome & Introductions	Action
1.1.	SL Opened the meeting	
2.	Apologies	
	Cllr Aisha Cuthbert (AC)	Shortlands & Park Langley Ward, Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services & Open Spaces
	Cllr Alexa Michael	Hayes and Coney Hall Ward
	Cllr Thomas Turrell	Hayes and Coney Hall Ward
	Cllr Andrew Lee	Hayes and Coney Hall Ward
	Cllr Chris Price	St Paul's Cray Ward
	Cllr Jonathan Andrews	Darwin Ward
	Jim Raggett (JR)	Public Rights of Way Officer
	Hugh Chapman (HC)	Arboriculture services manager
	James Hilsden (JH)	Parks and Green Spaces Manager
	Andrew Hodgson	Operations manager – idverde
	Jamie Fletcher	Bromley Biodiversity Partnership
3.	Election of new chairman and vice chair for the coming municipal year	
3.1.	Due to the absence of elected members the election was deferred until next meeting.	
3.2.	Cllr Adam Grant kindly agreed to stand in as chair for this meeting.	
4.	Minutes of last meeting	

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4.1.	<u>Accuracy</u> Minutes approved for accuracy	
4.2.	<u>Matter arising</u>	
4.3.	No Matters arising	
5.	Review of Terms of Reference	
5.1.	AG led review of the terms of reference.	
5.2.	JJ suggested additional wording to be added to point two “ <i>This should also include discussion of how best to improve and deliver enhanced ecosystem services to reduce carbon loss, and deliver improved carbon capture and storage, soil moisture retention, pollution reduction etc.</i> ” Panel unanimously agreed this change.	
5.3.	PW raised that overlap between the parks stakeholder meeting and Countryside Consultative Panel – Peter McCreedy was looking into this. HJ to pick up.	HJ
5.4.	Point six changed from September to October to correctly reflect the annual cycle.	
5.5.	AG to investigate who can chair the meeting for the coming year in line with the Terms of reference.	AG
6.	Planning matters	
6.1.	<p>PM gave an update on National planning policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Planning position – Following all the upheaval, nothing came of the previous white paper on planning reforms and no response to the 40,000 consultations responses on this. Reform had been temporarily off the table, however there are now potential large national issues. The government intends to introduce investment zones in addition to freeports. These areas are vast and will include important habitats. Planning is proposed to be de-regulated in these areas. If this is successful it may be a precursor for wider national de-regulation. Such a move would result in supply-side changes – specifically with planning, although it is not clear what this means for planning in future. Less regulation may result in less planning. • Government is also rushing through the Retained EU Law Bill (currently in Commons). This will delete the 750 environmental laws inherited from the EU with no immediate plans for their replacement. This is causing widespread concern as other environmental protections may be diluted or removed (such as Habitat Regs and the site assessments these require). • New NPPF – Michael Gove announced the new NPPF’s arrival in June, scheduled for July, however the governmental changes have delayed this. Gove had said the new NPPF will “outline how we can drive important environmental outcomes and ensure all development is in accordance with the highest environmental standards.” We await news, but a new NPPF may have much lighter environmental protections considering the other potential reforms. 	
6.2.	<p>PM also gave an update on local planning policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan review is due to start this will involve consultation and review on Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in 2023. PM to liaise with the panel, Biodiversity Partnership and idverde when the consultation is released. 	PM
6.3.	PW asked what the process was to for SINC review?	

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	JJ and Pm clarified that SINC or amendment to SINC are put forward to the Local Wildlife Sites board for approval.	
6.4.	JJ suggested the panel members check the existing SINC boundaries on the LBB planning map website and suggest amendments from there. https://www.planvu.co.uk/bromley/	
6.5.	PM informed the panel that LBB are still awaiting clarity on the Local Nature recovery Networks. It is presumed the GLA will most likely be the responsible body for London. Implementation expected to be 2024.	
6.6.	PM informed the panel that the BNG site register is due to go live soon.	
6.7.	PM gave an update on three major Planning applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former Bromley Ski Centre – new application has been received with half the number of original dwellings proposed. 40 homes. External ecological advice has been sourced due to a number of biodiversity implications on the site. LBB are insisting 10% BNG is applied. • Walnuts development – application has been withdrawn • Bourne Wood Sand and Gravel – was due for appeal in May but this was withdrawn. Enforcement proceedings have re-commenced. 	
6.8.	JJ raised concern that the Bournewood sand and gravel site is next to Bourne Wood SINC.	
6.9.	PW _r asked if where a development has felled trees is there is a condition for replacement of canopy cover and carbon capture? Is this part of BNG PM stated that all application have to meet the urban greening scores assigned to them by replacing lost trees and vegetation. BNG differs to urban greening factor and will requires 30 years management.	
6.10.	JJ asked following recent events at Hayes Common if planning applications directly affecting parks could be sent to idverde for comment especially those involving SINC and SSSI as idverde hold detailed ecological information and knowledge on these spaces. PM to liaise with SL to add idverde to consultation lists.	PM
7.	LBB Update including Open Space strategy Implementation	
7.1.	HJ reported on the Open Space Strategy on behalf of JH this can be found in appendix 1	
7.2.	Further to the report HJ informed said that many of the actions in the OSS are dependent upon the Open spaces audit for which progress is now being made in addition to reviewing funding strategies and processes to support open spaces.	
7.3.	Discussion as held regarding tree planting and carbon management HJ pointed to the reports for further information links to which can be found in appendix 2	
7.4.	PW _r asked if carbon sinks and renewable energy project in parks would be considered under the OSS. HJ said these would sit separate in the net zero plan.	
7.5.	PW _r asked about tree survival during the recent drought, HC provided the following statement following the meeting: The tree team are currently monitoring and have observed varying degrees of impact in the mature tree stock from slight discolouration to full defoliation. This is a typical survival response to drought conditions although, in severe cases can lead to a complete shutdown of the vascular system and ultimately death. Visual checks will be undertaken in spring 2023 where we will begin to develop a better understanding of the impact however, an accurate data set is unlikely as there are too many factors to consider. Additionally there are specific pest or disease stressed trees such as Horse Chestnut and Ash which drought conditions may impact severely, these will be subject to ongoing monitoring.	

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	In terms of management we will continue as normal implementing risk based mitigation works.	
7.6.	PWr asked if GCBB could collaborative with LBB on walking and active travel to parks initiative. HJ welcomed this.	
8.	Reports from member organisations	
8.1.	<p>SH gave an update on behalf of idverde:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of staff changes have taken place and a restructure of the countryside team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ John Pemberton promoted to national role, SH now holds his former post ○ Steven Lofting promoted to Senior Conservation Ranger (Biodiversity) ○ New RSPB Biodiversity ranger appointed starting at the end of October. ○ Ross Fryer has been appointed to replace ranger Donna Cook. Recruitment for another ranger is currently is ongoing. • iBBAP implementation continues • Programme of felling and winter woodland operation for biodiversity have begun for the 2022-23 season including major forestry operations at High Elms Country Park • Changes to BEECHE structure and more involvement of the ranger team to deliver more sessions in more locations. • Voluntary hours stand at over 7000 for the year at current this lower than 2021 due to a two week hiatus as result of extreme heat wave this summer. • Brilliant butterflies sites continue to prosper with good results. 	
8.2.	PWr asked if idverde vans and equipment were moving to electricity SH said there is a move for this however some of the electric kit is not powerful enough for all the task idverde undertake therefore petrol equipment is still in use.	
8.3.	PWr said that GCBB are running a schools event in November and would welcome BEECHES participation. SH welcomed this.	
8.4.	PW gave an update behalf of Chislehurst Commons which included the summer walk, issues with fly tipping and tree safety surveys. PW was grateful for the support of idverde and LBB.	
8.5.	JJ gave a report on behalf of Orpington Field Club and Bromley Biodiversity Partnership which can be found in appendix 3 below	
8.6.	PWr asked if reminders of species to report could be published in environment matters? HJ to investigate .	HJ
8.7.	Questions were raised over swift bricks and their use as a condition within planning. PM said they are conditioned where there is proportionate rationale to do so that is enforceable. The enforcement team is currently stretched. BNG in the long term may be a better mechanism for some planning applications in the long term. All applications will be assed and conditioned on a case by case basis.	
8.8.	<p>CL gave an update on behalf of Bromley Bridleways Action Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work continuing assessing and requesting lost bridleways to be added to the definitive map. • The group held a successful jubilee ride • Annual quiz coming up. 	
8.9.	<p>PWr Gave an update on behalf of Greener Cleaner Bromley and Beyond:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hub has been open since March to expand outreach • Undertaking carbon literacy training and workshops with staff and volunteers • Undertaking youth outreach in schools 	

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8.10.	PW ^r also raised Verge trials. HJ to liaise with idverde on this	HJ
9.	AOB	
9.1.	PW ^r raised bedding and whether this can be made more biodiversity friendly bedding? HJ said that idverde are working on new bedding designs following this year's drought.	
10.	Date of next meeting	
10.1.	Tuesday 25 th April 2022	
10.2.	AG thanked for standing in to chair this meeting.	
10.3.	Meeting Closed 2120	

Appendices

Appendix 1- London borough of Bromley Open spaces strategy report

The Open Space Strategy was endorsed during the November 2021 Environment Community Services Policy Development Committee will report to Committee in November 2022 on the progress.

Good progress has been made with officers continuing to work to ensure that strategic projects are delivered that improve the Open Space Portfolio whilst also providing good value for money for the Council and its taxpayers.

A major new development, the unveiling of the £1 million Platinum Jubilee Parks fund has provided the opportunity for the improvement to the Open Space Portfolio, with multiple Friends and Community groups preparing applications for their favourite parks and open spaces with ideas ranging from small biodiversity projects through to the improvement of playgrounds and sporting facilities.

Much work remains to be done, but we remain confident that people can get this done.

Strategic Objective 1 Quality and Accessibility

- The strategy has been fully designed and has now been uploaded to the Council Website split into the strategy content and the appendices. Now the new webpage is live, work will be undertaken to fully flesh out the page so that it has its own dedicated page on the site.
- The brief of the Open Space Audit is to complete, with the hope of putting it to the market in Dec 22 with the report produced by consultants by Jan 2024.
- Governance and Organisational Structure review is starting internally but a wider discussion will be subject to the output of the audit.

Strategic Objective 2: National, Cultural and Historical Assets

- The Biodiversity strategy document has completed and progress is being made towards meeting its goals. A major Heathland restoration project currently being scoped that would make a strong contribution to this objective.
- Sites across the borough have been identified where woodland planting can take place and approved by Council Committee – these sites are now to go through the scoping stage.

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- The 'Brilliant Butterflies' project has been extended to Blake Recreation Ground and High Elms Country Park.
- The Emergency Repair Works at Scadbury Park have completed and work is now underway in formulating the larger Masterplan for the site.
- Croydon Road Recreation Ground Bowie Bandstand is out to Tender with the aim of works starting in the new year.
- Work is underway for a suitable replacement for the bridges at Kelsey Park.
- Training continuing of new staff to contract manager and contract monitoring providing the latest relevant practice advice. The Education strategy has expanded to Crystal Palace Park previously

Strategic Objective 3: Health, Wellbeing and Community

- Further promotion to be undertaken of existing walking routes with an aim of increasing active transport.
- Collaboration due to start between Environment and Adult Social Care on initiatives as part of their strategy to tackle loneliness and the use of parks to achieve this.
- A model for Community Gardens has been identified and conversations now being had to take these forward.
- The web content review has been completed with proposals drafted on improvements to parks webpages which can now start to be actioned.

Strategic Objective 4: Local Economy

- Kings Meadow Playground is fully open to the public with two other major playground projects (Queensmead Recreation Ground and Cudham Recreation Ground) in development - the regeneration of other playground sites across the borough is likely to form the basis of some applications to the Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund.
- Farnborough Recreation Ground Cricket Square and Outfield now fully open and in active use by Locksbottom Cricket Club.
- Proposals for an improvement to play and sporting facilities at Coney Hall Recreation Ground continues apace.

Strategic Objective 5: Financial Sustainability and Modernisation

- The basis of a fundraising plan has been worked on, however a new plan will be developed that will cover the items identified within the strategy.
- The BMX Pump Track at Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground has completed and is fully open to the public. Work now continues on ensuring there is a community cycle club that can operate structured sessions at the site and continue on the work to build a community presence via the 'Hoblingwell Hub'.

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Appendix 2 – Links to LBB reports

- Tree planting update:
<https://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50099939/Treemendous%20Programme%20of%20Tree%20Establishment%20-%20Update.pdf>
- Woodlands establishment:
<https://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50099909/Bromley%20Woodlands%20Establishment%20PART%201%20REPORT%20TEMPLATE.pdf>

Appendix 3 - Orpington Field Club and Bromley Biodiversity Partnership report

LBB Species Action Plans

Data collection ongoing for toad & hedgehog via citizen science. Full reports available January 2023. 'Hedgehog Highways' (13 x 13cm holes at base of fences) requested for planning applications where hedgehogs present within 2 kms (the extent of male hedgehog movement per night). Swift records now being sent to RSPB Swiftmapper website. To see records for LBB see <https://www.swiftmapper.org.uk> Swift Champions (appointed for most wards) continue to monitor planning applications and request swift boxes where appropriate.

White Admiral Butterfly. Records so far this year only for High Elms & Crofton Woods.

Dormice: numbers very low this year.

Other Species

Purple Emperor recorded at an additional site this summer (Little Thrift, adjacent to Petts Wood).

Brown Hairstreak: still present but only a few sightings of adults recorded.

The hot dry summer seems to have negatively impacted many lepidoptera species with Burnet moths noticeably very low in numbers once again this year.

Please can planning proposals for the countryside sites be sent automatically to Steven Lofting, Senior Conservation Manager (Biodiversity) at idverde. Site managers can then input directly to the planning department re the species and habitats on their sites. This is particularly important for SSSIs and LNRs and would have helped re the recent Commonside car park proposal.

Planning Issues

Consultations and planning applications commented on since the meeting on 5th April include:

- a plan to install a 25m+ telecom tower in Commonside car park: later withdrawn
- encroachment of Green Belt, specifically in the Cudham Valley -a vitally important area in LBB for biodiversity due to its size and network of protected sites linked by open countryside stretching from Green St. Green to Kent Downs AONB.

General issues include loss of trees & woodland, artificial grass & hedges, non-native invasive species e.g. cherry Laurel, the importance of native hedge planting as part of mitigation, swift bricks, bats and artificial lighting, possible loss of priority habitats.

OFC Report JJ

Update of the Ancient Woodland Inventory

Natural England are now adding ancient woods 0.25-2ha in extent to the Ancient Woodland Inventory. These were previously excluded. Spring surveys of 20 woods and adjacent hedgerows and shaws were carried out, concentrating on the western side of the borough. 14 woods were put forward for

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inclusion, for a further 5 woods extensions were proposed. Species lists and map evidence were sent to the Project Officer at GiGL responsible for updating the AWI records for Greater London. Further woods to be surveyed Spring 2023. Any suggestions of woods/shaws worth looking at would be welcome. To view woods in LBB currently on the inventory see: <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/ancient-woodland-england>

SINCs update

BBP is working with idverde regarding areas within LBB that are of sufficient quality to be put forward to the Planning Department and GiGL for possible inclusion as SINCs in the next Local Plan. Surveying and recording of some areas has been carried out. We will be surveying further sites in 2023. All records to be sent to GiGL. Please have a look at Bromley's SINCs map (see <https://planvu.co.uk/bromley>) and let us know if you think sites may need adding, extending or possibly downgrading. The SINCs are shown as brown dots on the map.