

Tooting Commons Management Advisory Committee
Minutes of the Meeting on 31st August 2021, 7.00 pm via video conference

Members Present:

Clare Fraser -CF
Duncan MacDonald -DM
Hannah Stanislaus – HS
Mark Shotton - MSh
Matthew Hamlyn - MH
Mike Squires - MSq
Oli Griffiths (Chair) - OG
Robert Broadhurst - RB
Ruth de Grey - RdeG
Sarah McDermott - SM
Tim Whitaker - Tim W

In Attendance:

Steve Biggs – Parks police - SB
Ian Mitchell - Enable Leisure and Culture - IM

Apologies Received:

Adam Smith – AS
Kirsten Botting (Secretary) - KB
Leonie Cooper – LC
Mark Bery – MB
Mike Morley-Fletcher - MM-F
Nabi Toktas - NT
Tom Mytton – TM
Tom Willetts – Tom W

Members of the public present

Anthony Gilmour - AG

1.0 Acceptance of Apologies.

The apologies above were received but not announced at meeting.

2.0 Minutes of the meeting of 19th July 2021

The minutes were accepted without alteration.

3.0 Matters arising

IM expanded on his notes as provided separately and asked the MAC to suggest where the Green Flag flagpost could best be sited.

Action: OG to consult members and advise Neil Blackley

Steve Biggs will investigate the motorcycle group disturbance and advise on any further information. He stressed that such issues should always be reported to the Met Police

Action: SB to advise OG of any further information

IM said that Enable had instructed a clear up of Graveney Woods and SB said that officers had been attending the site but no drug dealers/users had been found there

IM confirmed that Green Spaces Forum minutes can be provided to MAC members

IM confirmed that the state of the path parallel to Elmbourne Road will be addressed as part of refurbishment work across the Commons. RB asked whether alternative surfaces would be under consideration.

Action: IM to revert on which surface to be used on Elmbourne Road path

Action: OG to send the proposed survey to IM for any input before going live

4.0 Declarations of interest

There were no changes to the usual declarations of interest

5.0 Committee membership change

Birgit Waiswa will be living in Germany this year and so resigned her place on the MAC. Duncan McDonald has been reappointed to the MAC in her stead.

5.1 Parks Service Information

TW asked whether Enable were anticipating similar problems to those during previous lockdowns this winter. IM said that most of the damage had been done in the summer and that many of the 'desire lines' had endured and that these would be addressed using natural barriers which would be installed in the winter.

SM asked when and if recycling bins would be used on the Commons as these were now in use at Wandsworth Common. IM said that their installation there and at Battersea Park were part of a 8-week test with a specialist contractor. Initial feedback appeared to be good, and focused on the need to educate users and change their behaviour. These appear to address some or all of the capacity issues with the existing bins

OG asked about the rollout of the large lidded 'Eurobins'. Two have been seen on the Commons by RB, these are for periods of heavy Commons use which is normally the warmer months

Actions: IM to advise on when and where Eurobins will be sited

MSq asked what Enable were doing to adjust practice in the light of climate change. IM said that the flooding report (see below) was an important first step but Enable are also looking at different seeds and types of grass

Actions: IM to advise on proposed changes re trees, lake etc

5.2 Police Report

The MAC welcomed back SB, who said that the Parks Police had been active on the Commons targeting unlawful parking, out of control dogs and antisocial behaviour. They plan

to run a responsible dog ownership campaign using a small marquee near the café in October.

SB noted the Police plan an operation in Graveney Woods in September with a zero tolerance approach to offenders. He also noted their supportive approach to rough sleepers and reluctance to remove their belongings.

SM asked about unlawful vehicles on the Common. SB said that this was mainly by West Drive and that they would take a zero tolerance approach and issue Fixed Penalty Notices. He also called for the restriction lines in the Dr Johnson Avenue carpark to be marked in red.

MH noted that someone had removed the new sign asking people to keep their dogs on leads and not to enter the lake.

Actions: IM will investigate and address missing signage

6.0 Tooting Triangle Development

TW has worked hard on pulling together our response to the Secretary of State on this. The draft has been shared with the drafting group and will be brought before the MAC for approval before submission.

MSq asked if a date has been set for the Inquiry but it seems not yet.

7.0 Flooding

The MAC enthusiastically welcomed Enable's report on flooding prevention on the Commons

SM and MSq noted that the multiple stakeholders and the scale of the task make effective action very challenging, not to mention expensive.

MH asked whether there is an existing forum that brings the stakeholders together and how the flooding would affect the proposed developer's plans at the Triangle. IM said that they were forming a group for the specific Tooting Common issue and that they were not yet in discussion with the developer about this issue.

TC asked about timings and possible budget. IM said that this would be the next stage and that the Tooting Commons flooding was a very important issue and would not be shelved.

MSq asked whether the pipeline map could be extended to cover the entire Commons

Action: IM will ask for the wider pipeline map to be provided to the MAC. MH offered to send round a link to SuDS Sustainable Drainage. IM will let the MAC have an action plan and a timeline for the work to be carried out.

OG stressed the importance of green infrastructure measures such as scrapes and fast growing water loving plants that could not only reduce the need for and cost of hard infrastructure measures, but would also add to the biodiversity and interest of the Commons. IM noted that Enable were keen on this approach and to investigate the options with the MAC and to start work in early 2022.

Action: IM to fix a meeting between MAC members and Valerie Selby and Annabel Osborne to review the options and to ask them to attend the next MAC meeting

OG thanked IM for presenting such a positive report.

8.0 Sub-committee terms of reference

The draft terms of reference for three sub-committees were presented, another three were not ready.

SM suggested that four of the proposed sub-committees were amalgamated into two to reduce complexity and keep things focused. This was agreed so that these will now be:

Ecology Biodiversity and Dark Skies

Public Amenity and Safety

The other sub-committees are

Communications

Planning

MSq presented the Ecology and Biodiversity TORs, stressing that these are rooted in the management plan. This was agreed but require to be brought together with the Dark Skies Terms which are in preparation. TW, RB, RdeG would like to join this group

Action: MS to work with MM-F to develop a single set of TORs for the next meeting

CF presented the Planning TORs which were agreed. SM, MH, OG and MSq would like to join this group

In KB's absence OG presented the Communications TORs. It was agreed that there needs to be a clear understanding of what the MAC does and how it relates to other groups – especially the FOTC and Enable - and what it hopes to achieve from communicating before any actions are undertaken. This strategy needs to be agreed by the MAC and a key component must be how the MAC plans to listen and react to the voices of other Commons users. CF and TW would like to join this group

Action: Communications team to work with Chair and others to propose a strategy to the next MAC meeting

Action: The survey part of this work is to be started as soon as possible

HS offered to draft the Terms of Reference for the Public Amenity and Safety Sub-committee

Action: HS to bring draft TORs to next MAC meeting

Other members of the MAC who could not be at the meeting are asked to advise which, if any, of the groups they would like to join.

Action: ALL to advise OG if they would like to add their names to any of the groups above

Dark Skies

On 3 November there will be an evening of star-gazing. Any members and others who would like to join please to contact RdeG

9.0 Survey of the Commons

The Questionnaire has gone to IM for approval. It will then be sent to MAC members who will pass it on to friends and contacts, then we will go onto the Commons and ask users for their views. If anyone who was not at the meeting would like to be involved please contact KB.

Future meeting dates:

- 31 Aug (Tues)
- 13 Oct (Weds)
- 23 Nov (Tues)
- 4 Jan (Tues)
- 17 Feb (Weds)
- 28 Mar (Mon)
- 10 May (Tues)
- 22 June (Weds) APM