

183 Canholme Road

Lincoln LN1 1RU

19th Feb 2013

Mr J Bibby

Lincoln City Council

Dear Sir

Removal of Commons Warden and Urban Ranger Service

We wish to object to the removal of the above services in the strongest possible terms for the following reasons:-

Commons Warden :- Is responsible for the supervision of all three commons within the City boundary and having recently completed the Commons Management Plan will this have been just a paper exercise with no actual worth? His duties are varied and many but he is only one person and limited only to common land.

Urban Rangers:- The removal of these posts would provide by far the most serious threat to the City's open spaces and council property. They patrol approximately 90 sites within the City and are frequently the first line of response to users of Parks, Play Areas and Commons; generally making these areas safe for adults and children to enjoy. Since the Urban Ranger posts were commissioned we have seen a massive drop in anti-social behaviour on Whittons Park and West Common, with much vandalism being curtailed by the public contacting the Urban Ranger service and the rapid response of the team. Who will provide this response in their place?

There is obviously a great need for this service (the statistics speak for themselves) and the loss could result in those areas becoming unsafe to use as it is apparent that abusive behaviour, drinking gangs (driven out of the City centre) and marauding youths are becoming more of a concern.



WEBSITE: www.wera-lincoln.co.uk

E-MAIL: wera@hotmail.co.uk

We feel very strongly that the areas of open space used by our community are under threat with the entire Council interface with our open space users being removed and we would request that you inform us what protection for the public at large will be put in place for these much loved and cherished areas.

We await your reply with great interest.

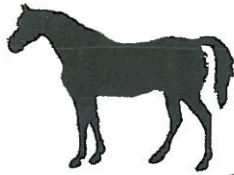
Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'G' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

G Woolfenden (Chairman)

Cc Mr S Bird

Coun N Murray



LINCOLN COMMONS HORSE ASSOCIATION

Mr J. Bibby

Lincoln City Council



The Lincoln Commons Horse Association would like to put forward our concerns, and objections regarding the proposed axing of the Common Warden and Urban Ranger Services.

The focus of our concerns relate to the Lincoln Commons, however this in no way diminishes the importance of their roles in other recreational areas in and around Lincoln.

We will look at the two services separately as all be it they overlap in many instances.

The Commons Warden

How refreshing it was to have an identified person and role dedicated to the commons with whom we could liaise, bridge between the commons' users and the city council officers. Areas addressed through the Commons Warden include areas such as grass management, safety and welfare, fencing, vandalism. Also importantly, someone who could identify a horse, locate the ownership and work with them in problem solving – or seek intervention from outside agencies if rarely required.

A management plan for the commons has now been passed which details interventions to enhance and improve this unique open space. The Commons Warden's role is highlighted repeatedly in this management plan, and a great deal of time and thought was given to this document, what happens to the plan now?

Urban Rangers

This is a service of great importance and has been demonstrated time and time again in its effectiveness in both prevention and dealing with misdemeanours on our commons.

2

Who do the public turn to as regards to antisocial behaviour issues and safety and welfare concerns of those accessing the parks and recreational areas? The Police, who are already over stretched and have to prioritise their case loads.

Prior to the Urban Ranger service, the commons were often a haven for unsavoury characters, vandals, litter bugs, drugs and alcohol abusers, and sexual offenders. Although some of the problems will be ever present, the commons are now considerably safer places for children to play, people to exercise and enjoy their rights to roam.

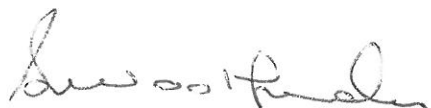
The commons are patrolled regularly with easy accessibility, the rangers are highly visible, which is both a reassurance and a deterrent. They have an approachable and helpful attitude and have always responded to incidents when requested.

Without this monitoring through the current ranger service, we can foresee that the commons will become unsafe places. Those who genuinely enjoy these spaces for recreation, walking and having quality family time will shy away from the areas, as they become unsafe and unclean through increased crime, damage and litter. This would be a sad and sombre outlook for areas of land that enhance the city's boundaries and are enjoyed not just by locals, but by visitors attracted by its historical and unique persona.

We sincerely hope you will take on board our comments and concerns, as we truly believe this service is too valuable to lose for all.

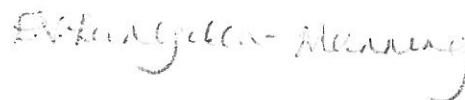
We await your response with interest.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Barbara Woolfenden

Chairperson of LCHA



Mrs Emma Langdon-Manning

LCHA representative for the
Commons Advisory Panel

From: Miriam Smith (GMAIL) [mailto:miriam@dunelm.org.uk]
Sent: 19 February 2013 10:25
To: Bird, Steve (City of Lincoln Council)
Subject: Commons Warden

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 22 January 2013 regarding the proposed withdrawal of Commons Warden Scheme. I realise that with such a shortfall of nearly £3 million that that cuts will be necessary but why reduce both the Commons Warden and Urban rangers? This is a retrograde step. These gentlemen do valuable work in preventing people from misusing the Commons.

The Lincoln Commons are important open air public assets within the City Boundary and must be cared for. Since his appointment the Commons Warden has done valuable work in improving the infrastructure of the Commons. Although some of this may continue, it will be more difficult to do so without a "man on the ground". South Common was beginning to look an eyesore and needed horses to graze it. Although there are still not enough horses there, the Commons Warden has encouraged owners to graze there. Will this continue if he goes? Will South Common deteriorate again?

In three months last year he reported that there had been 72 incidents on the Commons which had been dealt with. He had dealt with 45 of these personally. Without patrols these incidents will surely increase. The police are cutting back on manpower and won't necessarily be able to help. According to those living near the Commons they do not come as quickly as the Commons Warden or Urban Rangers when an incident is reported. Some incidents are not actual law breaking but could affect enjoyment of the Commons by the general public – e.g. excessive litter, minor law breaking such as drunks.

The introduction of the Commons Warden halted the decline in the state of the Commons. Are we to return to this? Will the Commons become embarrassing neglected areas on three of the approach roads to Lincoln? Please do your sums again and find the money for this service.

Yours Sincerely,

Miriam Smith
Lincolnshire Fieldpaths Association

From: Caroline Steel [mailto:CSteel@lincstrust.co.uk]
Sent: 20 February 2013 16:52
To: Bird, Steve (City of Lincoln Council)
Subject: Proposed withdrawal of the Commons Warden Service

Dear Steve

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust has worked constructively with the City Council and through the Commons Advisory Panel over the last few years to introduce Management Plans for the Commons. The Trust was very pleased to hear that the Council has now formally approved the plans and anticipated an increased level of work in the future to maintain the richest parts of the commons and increase biodiversity in the poorer areas, improving extremely important Accessible Natural Greenspaces within the city. Implementation of the management plans would bring the three Commons into 'positive conservation management', allowing the Council to report to Government on this achievement under Single Data List Indicator 160.00.

The Commons Advisory Panel has commented on the essential nature of maintenance of the perimeter fencing and the value of the Commons Warden in discouraging anti-social behaviour. Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust has nothing to add to these comments, but would like to register its concern over the potential for reduction in resources going towards maintaining and improving the wildlife value of the Commons, much valued by the people who use them. It has been said that volunteers could do more: this is likely to be true, but they need coordination: the Trust has a large volunteer force, but activity is coordinated by staff. Concerns for Health and Safety of volunteers, insurance requirements etc emphasise the need for staff to take responsibility for volunteer welfare. You have experience of this at Hartsholme and Swanholme.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust appreciates the financial constraints under which the Council must operate. However, we can not support any reduction in resources dedicated to conservation management nor any delay in implementation of the management plans: we do not want to see the condition of the Commons deteriorate.

Regards

Caroline

Caroline Steel
Head of Conservation
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
01507 526667
www.lincstrust.org.uk

Charity no. 218895. Registered in England, no. 461863. Registered offices: Banovallum House, Manor House Street, Horncastle, Lincs LN9 5HF.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, safeguarding wildlife and wild places in Lincolnshire and promoting understanding and enjoyment of the natural world from the Humber to The Wash.



Steve Bird Esq
Directorate of Housing and Community Services
Lincoln City Council
City Hall, Beaumont Fee
Lincoln LN1 1DE

TEL 01491 573535
EMAIL hq@oss.org.uk
WEB www.oss.org.uk

14 February 2013

Dear Mr Bird

Budget proposals—commons warden service

The Open Spaces Society is Britain's oldest national conservation body with a particular interest in the protection and management of common land. We played a key role in the implementation of the Lincoln Commons Act 1985 and the establishment and activities of the Commons Advisory Panel.

Lincoln's commons are of exceptional importance and value, extensive green spaces close to the heart of the town which have remained relatively unspoilt for centuries. They provide inspiration and recreation to Lincoln's population, as well as to those who come into the city to work. The council should treasure these unique assets.

We are therefore dismayed to learn that your council is considering closure of the commons warden service. This, at relatively modest cost, ensures that the commons are well managed, safe places for people to enjoy, clear of crime and litter. The commons provide health and happiness to thousands of people each year. The service is a vital investment in the future of your ratepayers. Without the excellent warden service, the commons would deteriorate; they could become unpleasant places which people no longer wish to visit. Whereas at present they are something in which the city can take pride, they could so easily become an embarrassment. And you would merely be transferring costs to other bodies and departments—such as the police and the health service.

We believe that such a cut would be shooting yourselves in the foot. We strongly urge you to maintain this excellent service which does your city proud.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kate Ashbrook'.

Kate Ashbrook
General Secretary



The Open Spaces Society 25a Bell Street Henley-on-Thames RG9 2BA

Charity no 1144840 Registered in England and Wales, limited company no 7846516



Cross O Cliff Residents' Association
c/o 2 Orchard Walk
Lincoln LN5 8PL

Dear Sir or Madam

As an organisation we note with regret the Council's intention to disband the Common's Warden service.

The City Commons are greatly valued assets, which help make Lincoln unique; we are concerned that the loss of this management service will have serious negative effects on this special environment. The presence of the warden keeps crime and illegal camping under control, maintaining the commons as safe places for the public, and ensures that management of the commons is kept up. In addition the Commons warden has been an important facilitator of communication between the public, the Commons Advisory Panel and council officials. The commons warden's role was also key in the planning and delivery of our organisation's own successful Country Fair held twice on South Common in recent years.

If this decision were irreversible, we would want to be assured explicitly about how the common warden's functions will be carried out in the longer term.

Yours faithfully

Catrin Morrissey
On behalf of the Cross O Cliff Resident's Association

Bird, Steve (City of Lincoln Council)

From: John Shipton [jshipton1949@hotmail.co.uk]
Sent: 14 February 2013 21:51
To: Bird, Steve (City of Lincoln Council)
Cc: Bibby, John (City of Lincoln Council)
Subject: The proposed withdrawal of the Commons Warden and Urban Rangers service...
Importance: High

The Long Leys Residents' Association believe that the withdrawal will be detrimental to the City of Lincoln.

First, let's look at the Commons Warden position.

This was instrumental in the later part of the 20th century in where then the Common Warden looked after the three commons in Lincoln for their maintenance, security, upkeep, and appearance, to include the well being of the horses which grazed the commons. This came about due to the three Commons being protected by the Lincoln City Council Act 1985 which states that the City Council 'has a duty to maintain and to preserve the aspect of the Commons as an open space. The position was abolished at a later stage because of the council's budget cuts.

Secondly, the Commons Warden post was reintroduced in February 2007. The Commons Warden position is dedicated to the future enhancement of Lincoln's Common Land.

The role is to:-

- Patrol the Commons (alongside the Urban Rangers)
- Issue fixed penalty notices for dog fouling and littering
- Watch out for anti-social behaviour and illegal use of the commons
- Make sure the commons are well maintained
- Meet and talk to the users and non-users of the commons
- Meet environmental groups and commons advisory panel

After a lengthy process and much discussion, a management plan was agreed by the City of Lincoln Council and the Lincoln Commons Advisory Panel. This was given approval and adopted by the Executive only just recently. The Common Warden is to play a major part and role of its implementation.

With the abolition of the Common Warden, it is believed that the management plan will fail as well as monitoring what has been written in the document. This is not the best way forward for the protection, etc, for the West Common, the South Common, and the Cowpaddle.

Now let's look at the Urban Rangers which are under threat.

There are three Urban Rangers. The council's Urban Rangers are responsible for looking after the city's many open spaces.

This included all parks in Lincoln, the three commons, dealing with anti social behaviour, abuse, and all sorts of problems affecting them.

Both the police and the public welcome them and they act as a deterrent plus give valuable advice.

Without them who will police the open spaces of Lincoln?

Kindly read this account made by a local resident of the Long Leys Road area of Lincoln from the residents' forum...

LOSING A COMMUNITY NEED AS THIS WILL AFFECT ALL

by Jeff » Thu Jan 31, 2013 9:23 pm

Urban Rangers employed by the City of Lincoln Council patrol the parks, open spaces and the three commons sited in and around Lincoln. They act as a deterrent with the use of motorcycles and attached to their helmets are video cameras. When it comes to tackling yobbery, littering and dog foulers they are on the front