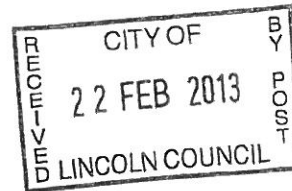


LINCOLN COMMONS HORSE ASSOCIATION

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.

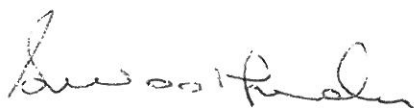
The commons are patrolled regularly with easy accessibility, the rangers are highly visible, which is both a reassurance and a deterrent. They have an approachable and helpful attitude and have always responded to incidents when requested.

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.

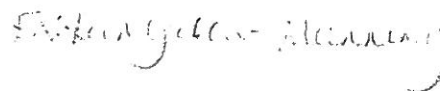
We await your response with interest.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Barbara Woolfenden

Chairperson of LCHA



Mrs Emma Langdon-Manning

LCHA representative for the
Commons Advisory Panel

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

line. They also deal within their remit drugs addicts and alcoholics plus vandalism. Complaints about graffiti, mini-moto riding, fly-tipping and abandoned syringes have diminished thanks to the Urban Rangers. Since their deployment, the work of the Urban Rangers has led to a dramatic drop in incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Urban Rangers have been effective on Withams Park and the West Common. There are three urban rangers for the Lincoln area.

All that is going to change from June 2013. And Why?

The Urban Rangers team who look after parks and urban spaces in the city, leading to savings of £100,000 per year, will be scrapped. The Commons Warden role will be lost as well.

This is due to budget cut and no one will be patrolling the parks, the open spaces and the three commons leaving them all open to vandalism, the return of drug addicts and alcoholics, using them for unauthorised raves and binge drinking, fences being ripped up for bonfires, and where anything else goes.

The police, due to their budget cuts and these green spaces being owned by the City of Lincoln Council, have not the manpower to do the job of the urban rangers. Not a priority unless serious crime has been committed such a murder, GBH, rape, and so forth.

These areas could become out of bounds for those who wish to use them for pleasure, recreational, etc, and the problem will be if the playground at Withams Park with its swings, slides, etc, for children are destroyed, there is no money in the kitty to replace them.

The question given to the residents on the Long Leys Road area of Lincoln and the local residents association is this - should the three urban rangers remain or should they go?

You decide and what to do about the situation!

Local residents have said to me since the proposed budget cuts became known, what will happen to The Lincoln Arboretum which was originally designed and laid out between 1870 and 1872 by Edward Milner, one of the most celebrated Victorian gardeners of his time. A well maintained park, with beautiful gardens, lakes, fountains and bridges, Victorian bandstand and children's play area. It is a park of grade II of historic importance. The size is 22 acres.

In 2003, three million pounds worth of restoration work was carried out on the park to bring it back to its original beauty. Of course it is owned and managed by the City of Lincoln Council to be enjoyed by residents, tourists, and visitors. The Urban Rangers again act as a deterrent against vandalism and abuse, etc. The PCSOs and the police cannot patrol on foot as it is too large to cover but the Urban Rangers can use their motorcycles.

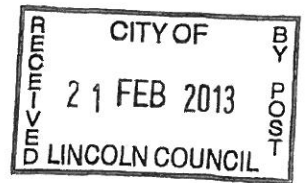
Local residents say also what will happen to Hartsholme Country Park and Swanholme Lakes Local Nature Reserve which lies within the boundary of Lincoln. It is a Green Flag Award winning park containing Victorian landscaped gardens, a large reservoir, woodlands and grasslands. It also has a play area and playground for children. Hartsholme Country Park covers more than 200 acres. Again, the Urban Rangers play their role here.

The common census from members of the Long Leys Residents Association is to keep the services of the Urban Rangers and the Common Warden. For without them, who and what will take their place. A local government officer from City Hall is no replacement or can provide such a service that still exists. Nor can the police authority provide any service due to their restraints.

Therefore please do not withdraw the Commons Warden and Urban Rangers service as they are irreplaceable.

Would you kindly acknowledge receipt of this letter by e-mail.

John Shipton
Long Leys Residents' Association
Lincoln



183 Carholme 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.



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 horizontal line and a diagonal stroke.

G Woolfenden (Chairman)

Cc Mr S Bird

Coun N Murray

From: Colin Smith[GMAIL] [mailto:colin.colin.smith@gmail.com]
Sent: 18 February 2013 10:30
To: Bird, Steve (City of Lincoln Council)
Subject: Proposed withdrawal of Commons Warden Service

Steve,

In response to the letter you sent about this on 22nd January, here are my comments –

Duncan Hall has done an excellent job as Commons Warden and the Council should think very carefully before removing that service.

The work being done by Duncan ensures that the maintenance of vegetation, hardware, ecology etc is as good as is financially possible he has also done a good job by generating the draft of the Commons action plan. His job in working with the golf club is also useful.

I believe that the way that Duncan works with the Urban Ranger service in clamping down on misuse of the Commons has made sure that they are pleasant places for the people of Lincoln and their families to be. Without the service provided by the Commons Warden and the Urban Rangers the Commons could become unpleasant places where nobody wants to be.

Regards,

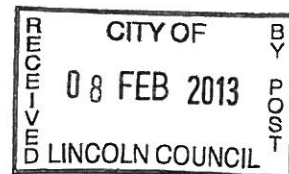
Colin Smith,
Ramblers Association, Lincoln Group.

The Cafe at Hartsholme Park Limited
24 Moor Lane, North Hykeham,
Lincoln LN6 9AE
01522 872828
jhaw@btinternet.com

City of Lincoln Council
City Hall
Beaumont Fee
Lincoln
LN1 1DB

5th February 2013

To whom it may concern,



Re Urban Rangers

I am writing with regards to the announcement that the Urban Rangers Service will cease in the next few months. As a business within one of the parks that the Urban Rangers patrol I am astounded that the Council has made the decision that this service is no longer sustainable.

I understand the Council's budget deficit and a need to cut costs but to cut such a vital service which covers such a large area of Lincoln in my opinion would be a mistake. In this time of economic problems and uncertainties free leisure activities are becoming increasingly popular and necessary and the parks and open spaces around Lincoln are seen as a safe haven for families to visit free of charge.

I have grave concerns that the loss of this service will have a huge impact on the perceived safeness of these areas. I know many of our customers cannot believe the announcement. The high visual impact of the Urban Rangers patrolling certainly makes the parks feel safer and their presence for well over a decade has enhanced these areas. I realise there is no legal obligation to provide the service but back in the late 1990's the service must have been deemed important enough for it to be introduced. What has changed? In my opinion nothing. The police are over stretched as it is and I do not see who is going to fill the void left.

On one hand the Council has invested heavily on improving the parks including many play areas and spent tens of thousands of pounds. The service which protects these areas from vandalism/damage is now being taken away. How much will it cost to keep repairing/replacing the play equipment etc? Vandalism and damage in general in Hartsholme Park is certainly rare I am concerned that anti social behaviour will increase without the Urban Rangers presence. I hope that the Council does not regret this decision when the parks around Lincoln are no longer attracting the law abiding responsible people of this community as they are no longer deemed safe places to go.

I do hope the Council will reconsider their decision

yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Haw'.

John Haw

M R N I

Monks Road Neighbourhood Initiative

Mr John Bibby
Director of Housing and Community Services
City Hall
LINCOLN
LN1 1DE

17 February 2013

Urban Rangers Consultation

Following letters circulated by City of Lincoln Council to park advisory groups a meeting was called by the Arboretum Group on Friday 8th February to consider the proposed cut of the urban rangers service. In addition to residents from the Abbey Ward, members of Hartsholme, Birchwood and Boultham Park groups were also present.

After a brief introduction by City Council representatives outlining the reasons behind the suggested cuts the matter was discussed at some length. Because of the financial restraints placed on the Council it was accepted that retaining the service in its present form was not an option. It was agreed, however, that the urban rangers were of great value in controlling anti-social behaviour, were highly visible, able to access difficult to reach areas and respond quickly to call-outs, made people feel safer and provided important support to the already stretched CCTV service. They are the "eyes and ears" of the Council.

The groups considered that the service was too important to be axed. In view of the financial difficulties faced by the Council they felt a solution might be found in seeking sponsorship from local businesses with the Council continuing to be responsible for the administration. It was therefore proposed that local firms should be approached by the groups in an attempt to fund the urban rangers service. As we understand the service will continue until the summer, it would allow time for the sponsorship scheme to be put in place. Would the Council be prepared to consider such a solution and meet us part-way in our efforts to save the service?

Chairman: John East, 11 Clarina Street, Lincoln, LN2 5LZ
Secretary: Britt Gallop, The Old Bakery, 38A Winn Street, Lincoln, LN2 5EN
Email: bgallop@tiscali.co.uk

A list of possible sponsors is being accumulated so we are all set for action and look forward to a positive response from the Council.

Yours sincerely

On behalf of

Arboretum, Birchwood, Boutham Park and Hartsholme Advisory Groups

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Britt Gallop', written in a cursive style.

Britt Gallop

Secretary

Monks Road Neighbourhood Initiative

As I work in Hawthorne Park
Cafe for 7 years, I feel safe
knowing that there is urban
rangers across the road!
Without them there will be
so much trouble, as before
there was kids making fire's
trashing the play park's,
wrecks on the slide, riding
motorbikes on the grass, hurting
wild life the list can go on.
if they did so I wouldn't feel
safe bringing my young child
which many people feel the
same, dog walkers come a
long way to walk there class
in a safe park knowing there
are urban rangers, this will
stop many people coming!

Rosemary Hall

Bfincill Close Broomfield
Lincoln LN603K.

Lesley Piper

Hertscholme Cafe

I'm beginning to hear, from many, many visitors to the park, that they are scared, fearful and very frightened because the Urban Rangers are about to be disbanded. The tales of anti-social behavior, not regulated by local police, are far too frequent to be mere coincidence.

I would appeal to the Council, who are making this decision, to reconsider.

The damage which will undoubtedly happen, will more than outweigh the costs of keeping this service active. - But there is no cost that can be put on 'Safety'!

Please don't wait for something dreadful to happen before you make the case for this ongoing costs.