

COMMONS ADVISORY PANEL

Monday, 18 September 2017
6.00 pm
Committee Room 1, City Hall

Membership:	Councillors Neil Murray (Chair), Karen Lee (Vice-Chair), Yvonne Bodger, Helena Mair and Tony Speakman
Substitute member(s):	Councillor(s) Sue Burke and Jackie Kirk
External members:	Mrs S Davies, Ms A Griffiths, Mr V Hughes, Mrs E Langdon-Manning, Ms E Olivier-Townrow, Mr C J Smith, Mrs M Smith, Mrs C Steel, Mr G Woolfenden and Mr A Sweeney
Officers attending:	Caroline Bird, Steve Bird, Dave Charysz, Lee George and Democratic Services
Also in attendance:	Dave Walker: Volunteer Coordinator Representative: Western Power Distribution

A G E N D A

SECTION A	Page(s)
1. Declarations of Interest	
Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary.	
2. Confirmation of Minutes - 26 June 2017	3 - 6
3. Matters Arising	
4. Presentation: Potential Play Area - Bowling Green	Verbal Report
5. Western Power Distribution- Plans to Lay Underground Cables-Discussion	Verbal Report
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9. Reports from External Members	

None received.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday, 11 December 2017 (6.00 pm)

Present:	Councillor Neil Murray (<i>in the Chair</i>)
Councillors:	Councillors Yvonne Bodger and Sue Burke
External membership:	Mrs S Davies, Ms A Griffiths, Mr V Hughes, Mrs E Langdon-Manning, Ms E Olivier-Townrow, Mr C J Smith, Mrs M Smith, Mrs C Steel and Mr A Sweeney
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor Karen Lee, Councillor Helena Mair, Councillor Tony Speakman and Mr G Woolfenden

1. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

2. **Confirmation of Minutes - 3 April 2017**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2017 be confirmed.

3. **Matters Arising**

None.

4. **Revised Membership**

The Democratic Services Officer welcomed Emma Olivier-Townrow who would attend future meetings of Commons Advisory Panel as representative for Long Leys Residents Association in replacement for Gary Lisseman.

5. **Councillor Karen Lee**

Vic Hughes, representing Lincoln Civic Trust congratulated Councillor Karen Lee, Vice Chair of Commons Advisory Panel on her recent appointment as Member of Parliament for Lincoln. He hoped that Councillor Lee would continue to show interest in the City Commons in her new role.

RESOLVED that noting her absence from Commons Advisory Panel this evening, a letter be sent to Karen Lee MP wishing her every success in her new appointment, hoping that she would continue to represent the interests of Lincoln City Commons in her future role.

6. **Welcome - New Volunteer Coordinator - Dave Walker**

Caroline Bird, Community Services Manager, updated the Panel as follows:

- Dave Walker had recently been appointed to the new post of Volunteer Coordinator.
- The scope of his responsibilities would be to broaden engagement with volunteers.

- Dave would be employed by Continental Landscapes but answerable to the Council.
- He would be involved in the coordination of volunteer work in public spaces across the City including Common Land, in agreement with the Commons Management Plan.
- Dave was currently gathering policies/procedures together in order to plan how to engage with volunteers.

An offer from Caroline Steel, representing Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, to meet up with the new volunteer coordinator to discuss the ecology of the City Commons was gratefully received.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

7. Seats on West Common (Verbal Report)

Lee George, Community Contracts Officer, outlined a request received from Gary Simpson on behalf of West End Resident's Association for additional seating alongside the perimeter of the West Common on Long Ley's Road. He circulated a map of potential locations and requested opinions from Panel members.

Members supported the idea of additional benches with arm rests to help elderly people get up and off the seating. It was also requested that the benches be situated not too close to the Common boundary to prevent horses getting trapped or attempting to jump over them.

Lee George agreed to seek the advice of horse owners before deciding on the final location of the seating. He suggested that the iron benches being replaced in Boutham Park could be reused along the West Common, and bolted down in their new locations.

Sally Davies, representing South Park Resident's Association raised concerns as to whether concrete should be used on the City Commons.

Lee George confirmed that the concrete slabs to retain the benches would not be permanent and could be taken up and back-filled with soil if necessary at a future point in time.

RESOLVED that the erection of additional seating alongside the West Common near the Long Ley's Road entrance be supported by members of Commons Advisory Panel.

8. Update: Sleepers on South Common

Caroline Bird, Community Services Manager and Lee George, Community Contracts Officer updated the Panel regarding travellers on the South Common highlighting the following main points:

- Due process had been followed and a possession order served this afternoon on travellers currently resident on Malandry Closes, South Common.
- The Council had a duty of care to travellers to carry out welfare checks.
- The travellers would be evicted tomorrow if they still remained on site.

- Contractors would be brought in to clear the land once it was vacated, although there had not been too many issues.

Sally Davies, representing South Common Residents Association, raised concern that the Council was unable to prove that the travellers had broken onto Common land and that the eviction took so long. A camera on the gate would be beneficial

Caroline Bird advised that if it couldn't be proved that the gate to Malandry Closes was not wide open police would not get involved. A witness had seen the damage being done, however, the police had not been able to take a statement at this stage. The eviction process had been carried out as quickly as possible according to availability of a court date and obligatory welfare checks.

The Chair, Councillor Neil Murray confirmed that a City of Lincoln Council protocol was in place to minimise occupancy by illegal travellers on Common land whilst remaining within the law.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

9. Standard Agenda Items: Commons Management Plan Update

Caroline Bird, Community Services Manager:

- a. provided a written report to Commons Advisory Panel on the Commons Management Plan covering the period April – June 2017, as detailed at Appendix A to the report
- b. advised that in January 2013 the Council's Executive approved the Lincoln Commons Management Plan 2012-2017 which included separate action plans relating to each of the three Commons – South Common, West Common and Cow Paddle, together with an over-arching action plan
- c. confirmed that in August 2013 a revised action plan was agreed by the Executive; it was noted that opportunities to deliver on actions detailed within the plan were limited and in many cases subject to future funding or staff resources; since that time, a progress update had been provided prior to each Commons Advisory Panel meeting
- d. highlighted that the current Commons Management Plan would become out of date at the end of 2017; officers had commenced engagement with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust regarding a refresh of the document and had not lost sight of the need for its review
- e. requested members' comments on the content of the report.

Sally Davies, representing South Park Resident's Association, referred to work required to trees on the South Common which were sprouting saplings.

Caroline Bird advised that relevant action required to cut back these sprouting saplings was included within the Commons Management Plan.

Colin and Miriam Smith, representing Lincoln Group Ramblers Association and the Lincolnshire Fieldpath's Association reported on an inspection of the Viking Way and

one path across South Common on 26 June 2017, highlighting the following main action points:

- The newly mown path inside the metal fencing along Canwick Road could be improved if the grass was cut shorter and the surface of the path was flatter.
- Pruning was required to at least one elderberry bush obscuring the view from Seat No 1 from Canwick Hill. Visitors would wish to come down from the Bomber Command Memorial to view the sights across the city
- Seat No 3 from Canwick Road had broken slats caused by a 'mini' fire. Also, Sycamore and Hawthorn trees required pruning to protect the view.
- All the new fencing looked impressive.
- The last route down to the Common nearest Cross O Cliff Hill was still blocked after approximately three steps (previously reported).
- The need for the stile at the next gate coming down Cross O Cliff Hill was questioned as it was broken anyway.
- The narrow path across the Common from the direction of Cross O Cliff Hill was blocked in places by high vegetation falling onto it and many paths appeared to be very narrow.
- Ragwort was found close to horses in the south east corner of the Common (near Viking Way).

Officers agreed to look at the actions required to check those which formed part of planned works, and take appropriate measures to address the issues raised.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Commons Management Plan Update be noted.

10. Reports from External Members: Vandalism and Criminal Damage

Emma Langdon-Manning, representing Lincoln Common's Horse Association spoke on behalf of George Woolfenden, representing West End Resident's Association /Open Spaces Society regarding vandalism caused to the cricket pavillion on West Common in the form of broken windows/graffiti. The premises were now covered by CCTV which should help.

RESOLVED that a watching brief be kept on the area around the cricket pavilion.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

Monday 18 September 2017 – 6.00pm – Committee Rooms 1/2

SUBJECT: TREE AND SCRUB WORKS IN SUPPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN- SOUTH COMMON

DIRECTORATE: COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: STEVE BIRD ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES AND STREET SCENESS

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To advise Commons Advisory Panel on proposals relating to tree and scrub work, in support of the existing Commons Management Plan, and thus seek their views before this matter is considered by the Council’s Planning Committee

2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report constitutes a proposal to use volunteers to assist in the delivery of elements of the management plan for South Common.

2.2 Parts of the work that will be undertaken include work to trees and scrub areas, for which it is proposed to report and seek the permission of Planning Committee.

2.3 When reporting to the council’s Planning Committee it is intended to include the views of this committee, which it is hoped will be supportive.

3. Background

3.1 The Council has in place a management plan for common land. Although not timetabled or funded in full, it recognises the need to take advantage of opportunities were these can be created to support its delivery.

3.2 Following a service review last year the council is now trialling a new post focused on developing opportunities for volunteering work on council owned public open spaces. As a part of the work of this post, the holder has reviewed existing management plans and assisted in creating new plans were appropriate.

3.3 The delivery of the work identified in these management plans has then been looked at, and where volunteers could be used to progress delivery, then an outline work programme has been developed.

4. The Proposal

4.1 In the case of the work programme for South Common, there are a number of works affecting trees and scrub areas that it is hoped to progress this late

autumn/winter.

- 4.2 The Volunteer co-ordinator is pleased to present an outline of, and details were necessary/appropriate, of the work proposed. (verbal with supplementary papers at the meeting).

5. **Strategic Priorities**

Let's Enhance our Remarkable Place

The Council's management plans, and their delivery, supports its main aim of improving Lincoln's environment.

6. **Organisational Impacts**

6.1 Finance

There are no new financial impacts arising from support of this work. All costs are accommodated within the existing budgets.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules N/A

6.3 Land, Property and Accommodation

This work is in support of the existing management plan, previously agreed.

6.4 Human Resources

N/A

6.5 Equality, Diversity & Human Rights

N/A

6.6 Significant Community Impact

N/A

6.7 Corporate Health and Safety Implications

All H&S implications of using volunteers for this work have been assessed and are covered by risk assessments and method statements.

7. **Risk Implications**

7.1 (i) Options Explored

- To do the work- the preferred approach
- Not to do the work

7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

Removal of trees and scrub is always sensitive. It may be that those that do not understand the work will assume that it is damaging the wildlife habitat. This will be mitigated by suitable publicity and notices on site when the work takes place. We will also look for support from partner organisations who are judged to be independent but have expertise in this area of work.

8. Recommendation

8.1 That Commons Advisory Panel offer support to the proposal.

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SUBJECT: FALLOW PERIOD- INITIAL VIEW

REPORT BY: CAROLINE BIRD, COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To seek Commons Advisory Panel's (CAP) views on whether to hold a Fallow Period in 2018.

2. Background

2.1 Under the terms of the Lincoln City Council Act 1985 the Council may require horses to be removed from common land for a specified period in order to facilitate protection of the sward.

2.2 The act states:

*15- (5)d The Council may -
by notice prohibit, for the purpose of protecting the sward, the grazing or pasturing of horses on the commons between 31st March and 14th May in any year.*

2.3 Whilst an annual fallow period was maintained until 2008, the decision was taken, following consultation with CAP, not to do so in 2009, and to reconsider the matter annually thereafter. At that time CAP concluded that the limited number of horses on the common meant that there was a limited risk of damage being caused to the surface of the common if the horses were allowed to remain instead of having a fallow period.

3. Issues to be Considered

3.1 As yet no specific requests have been received either to hold a fallow period or not to hold one, in 2018.

3.2 The decision must take in to account the condition of the sward, horse numbers, and the potential benefits of holding a fallow period.

3.3 Whatever the recommendation at this time, the matter will be reviewed in December 2017, giving the opportunity for any changes in condition by that point to be taken in to account. This will be brought to the next CAP meeting by way of a verbal report, and discussion if necessary.

3.4 The Council has previously stated its consideration of consulting with independent specialists on whether to hold a fallow period, should this be felt appropriate, however there are currently no plans to do so in 2017/18.

4. Matter for Discussion

- 4.1 CAP members are asked for their views on the introduction of a fallow period in 2018, so as to assist the Council with its decision.

List of Background Lincoln City Council Act 1985

Papers:

Lead Officer: Caroline Bird Telephone 873405

SUBJECT:	MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE
DIRECTORATE:	COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT
REPORT BY:	CAROLINE BIRD, COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To provide an update to Commons Advisory Panel (CAP) on the Commons Management Plan.

2. Background

2.1 In January 2013 the Council’s Executive approved the Lincoln Commons Management Plan 2012-2017. The Management Plan includes separate action plans relating to each of the three commons – South Common, West Common and Cow Paddle – and an over-arching action plan.

2.2 In August 2013 a revised action plan was agreed by the Executive, in response to a reduction in resources available to deliver the plan. At that time it was noted that opportunities to deliver on actions detailed with the plan were limited and in many cases subject to future funding or staff resources.

2.3 Since that time, a progress update has been provided prior to each CAP meeting.

3. Update on Actions

3.1 An update on Management Plan actions is attached as Appendix A.

3.2 This update relates to the period April to August 2017 and follows on from the update issued prior to the April CAP.

4. For Discussion

4.1 CAP members are asked to note the contents of the update.

List of Background Papers:

Lincoln Commons Management Plan 2012-17

Lead Officer:

Caroline Bird Telephone 873405

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Appendix A Commons Management Plan Update September 2017

Below is a summary of the non-routine actions delivered since the previous update, ongoing works and works planned for the coming quarters. The numbers relate to those on the amalgamated action plan.

Completed works

14 Agreed mowing of adjoining fields to West Common to prevent ragwort flowering.

14 Ragwort removal all commons.

7/8 All three commons – cut and collect of large grass areas.

Ongoing works

14 Ongoing inspections and repairs of wooden fencing all commons.

14 Grass cutting on path ways all commons.

14 Hedge cutting all commons.

35 Continued vista and path maintenance along Viking Way.

35 Survey and record all signage on the commons.

23 South Common ponds B and C – developing plan to clear (aiming to complete works winter 2017-18. This will involve tree works)

23 Damage to south common pond A outlet structure repair.

Planned works

14 Wooden hand gate replacements on South and West Common

14 Leveling of single, lower water trough West Common

14 Repairs to lower horse shelter West Common

14 Horse water trough empty and clean on South and West Common.

14 Fencing Aldermans Walk – second stage.

14 Ongoing repairs to the Victorian fencing on both Commons.

14 Painting of newly repaired Victorian fencing along Old South Park.

14 Replanting sections of hedge line on Long Leys rd.

14 Replanting sections of Cross O'Cliff Hill boundary hedge Winter 2017.

A number of action plan items, e.g. 22, 23, 28, 35, 49 are dependent in some way on a volunteer workforce. There is currently no formal arrangement in place for volunteer working on common land, however this is a key part of the ongoing

Community Services review, and it is expected that progress will be made in this area during 2017.

This update does not include those issues where the responsible body is the golf club.