

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