

Southampton Common Forum Public Open Meeting:

Tuesday 7th June 2016,
Richard Taunton 6th Form College,
Hill Lane,
Southampton
7:00 (tea and coffee) for 7:30



Background: In February 2016 local groups known to have an interest in The Common attended a public meeting at which there was strong support (including from the City Council) for establishing an inclusive, dynamic and transparent Forum as a means to represent all in the City with an interest in The Common. A small group of volunteers was tasked with forming a steering group to produce proposals which will be presented at this meeting for consideration.

The proposed Forum aims to be a focal point for issues affecting The Common for everyone who uses, enjoys or appreciates it by informing and influencing and lobbying on issues, helping with management and maintenance and raising awareness of The Common and its benefits to the City.

Provisional Agenda

- Introduction and Welcome.
- Presentation by the Leader of the Council, Cllr. Simon Letts, welcoming the establishment of the Forum and setting out the Council's hopes for it.
- Short presentation on some of the issues the Forum may / will find itself dealing with.
- Workshop on issues and aspirations
- Constitution / Terms of Reference
- Summing up

Southampton Common Forum: proposed terms of reference

Introduction

Southampton Common is owned and managed by Southampton City Council. It is widely accepted that The Common is one of the City's greatest assets. On 16th February 2016 a public meeting was held to which local groups known to have an interest in The Common were invited. At the meeting there was strong support for the establishment of a Forum as a means of focussing the interests of all in the City with an interest in The Common. It would be inclusive, dynamic and transparent. A small group of volunteers was asked to produce some proposals. This short paper is the result. It will be for consideration at

the public meeting on 7th June 2016 which it is hoped will be the first meeting of the Forum.

Draft Terms of Reference and Framework for a formal Constitution

Aim

To be a focal point for issues affecting The Common for everyone who uses, enjoys or appreciates it.

Objectives

1. To see that all those with an interest are **informed** of any issues that may affect The Common.
2. To give all those with an interest a means of **influencing** those issues.¹
3. To advise on, lobby and help with the **management and maintenance** of The Common.
4. To raise **awareness** of The Common and its benefits to the City.
5. To take **any other appropriate action** consistent with the aim of the Forum.

Structure

The Forum itself will meet at least twice a year, with one of the meetings also including the AGM. It will include a representative of each of the associated interest groups (see below). The Forum will appoint a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. These officers will constitute a management committee together with up to four other members of the Forum chosen annually through a means determined by the Forum. The committee will meet as often as needed, probably bi-monthly. Forum meetings will be held in public and members of the public will be encouraged to come and participate. Although the Council itself cannot formally be a member of the Forum, it is hoped and expected that Ward Councillors and Council officers and contractors will attend meetings and take part in the Forum's work. The Secretary will take overall responsibility for the Forum's communications, but arrangements will need to be made for the management of a controlled website, social media, etc.

Associated groups

It is hoped that as wide and diverse a range of organised groups and individuals as possible will be associated with the Forum, such as residents' associations, NSCF, SCAPPS, parkrun, promoters of events, fitness and orienteering groups, cyclists, walkers (including dog walkers), natural history groups etc. Any bona fide interest group can ask

to join the Forum. One of the Forum's most important aims, and biggest challenges, will be to identify and involve people with an interest in the Common who are not part of any existing group.

Administration

An up to date list of associated groups will need to be kept. Initially, the administrative support for the Forum will be provided by Common Sense (www.southamptoncommon.org). The costs could be met through a small levy on member groups if external funding cannot first be obtained.

Equal Opportunities and Data Protection

The Forum will need to have and adopt a suitable Equal Opportunities and Data Protection policies.

External Relations

At an appropriate point the Forum will need to link with other local and national groups and organisations with shared purposes or interests, such as the Open Spaces Society.

Note: 1 The nature of the Forum's response will depend on the issue. In some cases, it would be for the Forum itself to do so as a collective voice. In other cases, the Forum could encourage discussion and debate to help its associated groups and others provide informed responses.