

DECISIONS OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

14 April, 2005

*Councillor Matthew Offord (Barnet) (Chairman)
Councillor Richard Harrod (Vice-Chair) (Brent)

Councillors:

\$Arun Ghosh (Barnet)
*Ansuya Sodha (Barnet)

*Jim O'Sullivan (Brent)
Mary Farrell (Brent)
*Cllr Christopher Harris (Barnet)

Organisation

Barnet Council for Sport & Recreation
Birchen Grove Residents' Association
British Waterways

English Nature
Local Agenda 21
London Wildlife Trust

West Hendon Community Forum
West Hendon Youth Club
Welsh Harp Conservation Group
Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre
Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre Action Group
Welsh Harp Sailing Association
Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base
Woolmead Residents' Association

Representative

* Frank Hewlett
* Dorothy Jakes
* Mike Manuel
* Peter Walker
* Paul Losse
* Julie Johnson
* John Colmans
* Clive Cohen
* Judy Shepherd
Rebecca Goh
Leo Batten
* Roy Beddard (for Harry Mackie)
* Malcolm Scott
* Brian Turgoose
* Haydn Matthews
* Geoffrey Johnson

*denotes Member present

Also in attendance were

Mark Evison (Barnet Environmental Services),
Leslie Williams (Brent Parks Service),
Philomena Jemide, (Barnet Principal Solicitor) and
Janet Rawlings (Barnet Democratic Services)

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2005 (Agenda Item 2)

RESOLVED – That, subject to the inclusion of Haydn Matthews in the list of members present, the Minutes were agreed.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Arun Ghosh (Barnet) as he was attending a Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee;
- Dr Leo Batten (Welsh Harp Conservation Group)
- Harry Mackie (Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre).

3. JEAN STUDELL, WOOLMEAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Chairman reported that the Jean Studell, of the Woolmead Residents' Association, had died. Jean had been an active member of the Committee and would be missed.

4. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

None declared.

5. PUBLIC SPEAKING ARRANGEMENTS

No members of the public had asked to address the Committee.

6. WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT (BARNET) (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport – Item 6):

The report was presented by Mark Evison, of Barnet's Environmental Services. A full and constructive discussion ensued on all aspects of the report.

- (i) Local Nature Reserve LNR) and Byelaws and Street Enforcement Service patrols and Enforcement

It was noted that the byelaws related only to the LNR and not the whole area of the Welsh Harp.

Issues discussed included the following:

- Inclusion of fishing in the acts prohibited on the Reserve
- typographical errors – these would be rectified
- proposals for publicising the byelaws – the Committee were shown a mock-up of a sign which illustrated the byelaws both in words and pictures. Four of these signs were installed on 23 April.
- enforcement - it was generally agreed that the byelaws alone would not secure compliance, and often there were problems after 6pm. It was noted that the police were stretched. The Chairman agreed that these issues should be brought to the attention of the Street Enforcement service with a view to securing a "presence" at the area, and also to explore the possible use of Anti – Social Behaviour Orders for recurring bad behaviour in this area. In connection with the Street Enforcement Service, the Chairman agreed to take action to ensure, as far as possible, that officers were aware of their powers under the Environment Protection Act to deal with litter
- sailing- the Welsh Harp sailing Association were concerned that their legitimate activities, which were licensed by the British Waterways Board might be affected by the byelaws. The Joint Committee noted that under the proposed new byelaws water activities would be prohibited except for those allowed under licence from the London Borough of Barnet or British Waterways Board.

- use of cameras – the Joint Committee asked for clarification on the wording of clause (xxi), which appeared to prohibit the use of all cameras
- consultation – the Joint Committee considered that English Nature should also be consulted on the proposed byelaws, in view of their involvement with the Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The London Borough of Brent was still considering the need for a separate set of byelaws for the LNR, as that authority had byelaws in place for the whole of the area that fell within that authority's responsibility. Brent was also still considering the possibility of providing a Ranger at the area, as Barnet had done. The Joint Committee considered that Brent and Barnet should be working together. The Committee also considered that Brent should explore measures to protect the tadpole farm.

(ii) Water Quality

The Joint Committee noted that the Environment Agency was not present and noted the contents of Barnet's report. Additionally, the Committee also noted the additional briefing note prepared by Barnet's officers, which was circulated at the meeting.

The Joint Committee also received photographs, which appeared to show pollution in the Silk Stream, possibly caused by vegetable oil.

It was noted that the probation service are considering the suitability of the Welsh Harp as a site to clean up and that the Welsh Harp had been identified by the British Waterways Board as a potential "clean –up" site by Thames 21. It was also noted that the Welsh Harp could also be considered as a project for the "Art of Living Foundation". The Chairman thanked Clive Cohen for the suggestion and indicated that he would be very pleased to work with the Foundation.

The British Waterways Board also reported that the Environment Agency did clean up the booms in the silk stream and River Brent and considered that there was potential for reducing the pollution, saltation and rubbish.

(iii) Cool Oak Lane Car Park

The Joint Committee considered the issues associated with closure and the reasons for closure and noted that it would be possible to make keys available to the football team and other legitimate users, as stated in the report.

The Joint Committee also considered that more use of the car park at Perryfield Way could be made.

(iv) Cool Oak Lane Bridge

The Joint Committee noted the comments in the report and in the further briefing note provided by Barnet's Head of Highways and Design and circulated at the meeting.

The Committee considered that there were still problems with access to Woodfield Nursery and generally considered that there should be a width restriction at the end of Cool Oak Lane with a weight restriction on the bridge itself.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the issues raised in 6(i) above constitute the Joint Committee's comments on the draft LNR byelaws, and that**
 - (i) Barnet's officers take the appropriate action to progress the matter, including consultation with English Nature, and advise the Hendon Area Environment Sub – Committee accordingly, of action taken to address the issues raised by the Joint Committee and request that Committee to recommend the Council to approve them.**
 - (ii) Brent's officers ask that authority to**
 - (a) work with Barnet on the introduction, implementation and enforcement not only of the LNR byelaws but in providing security for the site in general, including the provision of a Ranger;**
 - (b) explore measures to protect the tadpole farm.**
- (2) That**
 - (i) Barnet's officers invite the Environment Agency to attend the next meeting of the Joint Committee to discuss the issues of Water Quality;**
 - (ii) Barnet and British Waterways Board work together, wherever possible, and take such action as they are able to improve the water quality.**
- (3) That the Joint Committee**
 - (i) have no objection to the closure of Cool Oak Lane Car Park, subject to access by legitimate users being safeguarded.**
 - (ii) request officers to consider the action that can be taken to maximise the use of Perryfield Car Park;**
- (4) That Brent's officers consider the ways in which access to Woodfield Nursery can be facilitated.**

7. WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN (BRENT) (Item 7)

Leslie Williams presented a report from Brent's Director of Environment detailing progress on the Management Plan, with particular regard to the residual Heritage Lottery expenditure, use of Neasden Pavilion, Local Nature Reserve issues and Kingsbury and Welsh Harp Reservoir Open Day.

The Joint Committee were updated on the progress of the projects for which grant aid had been secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the deadline for completion was 30 June. The Joint Committee noted that all the relevant agencies were working well together to meet this deadline.

With regard to the eastern edge of Neasden Recreation Ground, adjoining the industrial estate, British Waterways Board reported that there had been fly – tipping over a large area. By working with officers from Brent, and the British Waterways Board, the Environment Agency had secured a prosecution.

The Joint Committee also noted that Barnet too had secured prosecutions wherever possible.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the report be noted and the action being taken to complete the remaining stages of the Local Nature Reserve declaration be supported.

(2) That Brent and Barnet work together to address the issues of fly tipping in the area.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – That the next meeting be on 15 June, at the offices of the London Borough of Brent.

9. VOTE OF THANKS

RESOLVED – That the Committee's thanks be accorded to the Chairman for the manner in which he had conducted the business of the Joint Committee during the last year.

The Chairman responded by thanking the Committee for their support and contributions.

The meeting ended at 8.37 pm

POST MEETING NOTE-

ENGINEERING WORKS AND THE DAM AT THE BRENT RESERVOIR (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

After the conclusion of the formal business of the meeting, the Committee received a presentation from Peter Walker, Senior Project Engineer, British Waterways Board, the slides for which are appended to these minutes.