

MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Monday 26 March 2012 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Ashraf (LB Brent) (Chair), Councillor Hart (LB Barnet) (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Johnson (LB Barnet) and Hall (West Hendon Allotment Society), Molly Savage (Local Agenda 21), Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust), Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), Harry Mackie (Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre), Judy Shepherd (West Hendon Community Forum), Geoffrey Johnson (Woolmead Residents' Association), Brian Turner (Training Ship Broadsword) and Derrick Chung (West Hendon Residents' Association / Friends of York Park)

Apologies were received from: Councillors Khatri (LB Barnet), Rayner (LB Barnet) and Mashari (LB Brent) and Neale Hider (Environment Agency) and Julia Touloumbadjian (Welsh Harp Sailing Association)

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 January 2012 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to Martin Hall, representative of West Hendon Allotment Society being added as present.

3. Matters arising (if any)

The Chair reminded members that he was in the process of arranging site visits with Barratt Homes, and he would keep members updated of when they would be.

4. Barrett Homes- Welsh Harp

Warren Reid, Technical Co-ordinator at Barratt Homes, stated that work at the Welsh Harp had not yet begun, due to the difficulty of securing contractors to agree to take on the work. This was due to the work being very specialist and quite minimal. However, he explained that they had met with a contractor that day and expected to receive a quote from them.

Warren Reid then informed the Committee that Barratt Homes could supply photographs of the area before and after the work had been completed for those who could not attend the site visits. He also detailed that Barratt Homes had applied for an extension of time, and the work was now due to be completed by March 2013 as opposed to December 2012, as originally intended.

Thomas Wyld from Barnet Council informed the Committee that there would be a pre- planning exhibition on 27 March 2012 at 7:30pm at 189 the Broadway. The plans would be presented as they were at this stage; he reiterated that it was not a planning stage exhibition.

Councillor Johnson enquired as to whether the plans had been agreed with Natural England and Warren Reid stated that they had.

The Committee stated that only being given 24 hours' notice of the exhibition was not sufficient. Thomas Wyld replied that he believed that letters had been sent to local residents informing them of the exhibition, but that he would try and get an extension of the exhibition to ensure adequate consultation.

The Chair encouraged anyone who was available to attend the exhibition and also to come to the site visits that Barratt Homes were planning.

5. Management Plan (Barnet)

Jenny Warren, Greenspaces Manager at Barnet, in her verbal report to the Committee stated that there was nothing major to report on. She informed the Committee that Phoenix Outdoor Centre had applied to set up an orienteering course around Woodfield Park. This would incorporate a small section of the Welsh Harp. It was envisaged orienteering would take place once a week and have around 40 participants and that Phoenix Outdoor Centre would self-manage the course. She wanted to gain the Committee's opinion of the proposal.

Roy Beddard enquired what the precise route would be and what part of the Welsh Harp it incorporated. Jenny Warren replied that she would circulate the map to the members of this meeting and that the route only went round the outer edge of the Welsh Harp.

It was noted that there had been an increase in the amount of litter on the Barnet side of the Welsh Harp. Jenny Warren stated that it had been Iranian New Year at the weekend that might account for the increase in the litter. She explained that they had prepared crews of litter pickers however they had been called to another site, but she would send them back to the Welsh Harp after this weekend, which was the second part of the Iranian New Year.

The Chair advised Jenny Warren that the committee would gladly give their feedback on the orienteering proposal; however they would need further information to give detailed feedback. He also reminded her that Thames21 had offered assistance with cleans up at the Welsh Harp at the last meeting.

6. Management Plan (Brent)

Leslie Williams, Strategy and Service Development Officer Brent Sports and Parks Service, began by explaining that the work due to take place at the reservoir was

behind schedule. He stated that it would now take place in the autumn as it was currently the bird breeding period.

He then went on to inform the Committee that they had issued a notice of three proposed dog control orders that would come into effect on 9 April 2012. Order one restricted the maximum number of dogs to be controlled by one person to six dogs and this applied to all of the borough's parks or open spaces. Order two prevented dogs from being able to enter all playgrounds, multi- use games areas, tennis courts and bowling greens. This order would not apply to trained assistance dogs. Order three stated that dogs must be kept on leads in all of the smaller/ pocket parks, flower beds, walled gardens and other such areas where the walking of dogs 'off lead' would be deemed inappropriate. Again this did not apply to trained assistance dogs.

Leslie Williams stated that there would be a road show touring the borough to educate the public about the new dog control orders. The road show was expected to be at the Welsh Harp open space on 24 April 2012 between 10am- 2pm. He informed the committee that the road show would be going to all other parks in the borough as well.

The Chair of the Committee enquired how the three proposed dog orders would be enforced. Leslie Williams replied that the sanction for breaking any of the three orders would be an on the spot fine. However, he informed the committee that the new dog orders were being introduced to primarily promote responsible dog ownership as opposed to issuing fines. Yet, if there were people who continued to contravene the orders then they would be monitored and could be subject to a penalty.

Clive Cohen commented that if these orders were not enforced, then people would continue to flout them. Leslie Williams explained that these orders were not being introduced alone and that they were supported by other orders and by laws.

The Chair stated that in the report it detailed that the healthy walks programme was to run until March 2013, and the Chair wanted to know what would happen beyond that time. Leslie Williams informed the committee that he was not aware what would happen past March 2013.

Leslie Williams then revealed the map of the Welsh Harp zones that he had updated. He had updated it because the original zones had been agreed in the 1990's and had now lost their meanings. He stated the colours could be changed, and that the map was not overly concerned with detail or accurate boundaries as the features on the ground were too complex to be mapped. Similar features were assigned the same colours whether they were in Barnet or Brent or on British Waterways Land and therefore particular colours did not represent ownership. The map attempted to be inclusive and included 'Green Grid' links. The different areas identified by different colours were the reservoir, the reedbed, the freshwater marshland, the dam wall, wet woodland, acid grassland and sport pitches.

Leslie Williams confirmed that the zones were a work in progress and were not confirmed. The intention was to make the map simpler and to ensure Brent, Barnet and British Waterways were identifying habitats in the same way to avoid confusion.

7. Environment Agency - Verbal Report

The Environment Agency submitted their apologies for the meeting. The chair read out the two emails that had been received from the Environment Agency regarding the water quality at the Welsh Harp. The environment agency had informed the chair that if the WHJCC wanted the water quality tested that they would have to fund it themselves.

Clive Cohen stated that there had been an outburst of green algae and deterioration in water quality and that this had happened progressively over time. It was agreed that the WHJCC should try and seek funding to resolve these issues.

Jenny Warren explained that most of the grants available were only available to voluntary groups and as such the council could not access them. Therefore she recommended that the members of WHJCC created a community group, that had a constitution and then the council would be able to provide support to that group. It was noted that any group established would also need a bank account and be established in a certain way to make it eligible to receive grants. It was agreed that the Councillors from Barnet would talk to community Barnet on how to draw all of the stakeholders together into one group that would then be able to apply for grants.

8. Planning Issues (if any)

Geoffrey Johnson of Woolmead Residents' Association enquired as to whether there was an update on the problem at old Hendon Nursery. Tom Wylde explained that there was still no determination on this issue; however he believed that the process was getting to the end of the appeal.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Welsh Harp was subject to both the Brent and Barnet's Annual Council Meetings and would take place in Barnet.

10. Any Other Urgent Business

Derrick Chung suggested that, to raise funds for the Welsh Harp, a children's railway could be added to the area as had been done at other local parks. The committee agreed that this was a good fund raising initiative but due to the Welsh Harp being a SSSI, it would not be appropriate to introduce such a feature.

The Vice Chair expressed his gratitude to the current Chair, Councillor Ashraf, for all of his hard work over the past year.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm