



MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Thursday 20 March 2014 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Hopkins (Chair) , Councillor Hart (LB Barnet) (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Johnson (LB Barnet), Khatri (LB Barnet), Rayner (LB Barnet) and Hopkins (LB Brent). Also present Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), Derrick Chung (West Hendon Residents' Association/ Friends of York Park), Martin Hall (West Hendon Allotment Society), Neale Hider (Environment Agency), Geoffrey Johnson (Woolmead Residents' Association), Collette Murphey (Training Ship Broadsword), Diane Murphey (London Wildlife Trust), Julia Touloumbadjian (Welsh Harp Sailing Association), Brian Turner (Training Ship Broadsword) and Paul Turner (Training Ship Broadsword).

Apologies for absence were received from: Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust) and Harry Mackie (Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre)

1. Declarations of pecuniary interests

None.

2. Deputations (if any)

None.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 November 2013 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendments:

- (i) The list of those present be amended to remove the duplication of the word Councillor.
- (ii) References to silt stream be replaced with Silk Stream.

4. Matters arising

None.

5. Management Plan (Barnet)

The committee considered the report submitted by Tracy Sawyer (Parks and Open Spaces Officer, Barnet Council) which identified two on-going management issues regarding the Welsh Harp Local Nature Reserve (LNR); fly tipping and rough sleepers. The report detailed plans to repair the overhead barrier at Woodfield Park to prevent further fly tipping in that area and outlined the joint action taken by the Police and Barnet Council to locate and remove illegal encampments.

During the subsequent discussion, Roy Beddard advised that he had recently conducted a site visit with Tracy Sawyer, during which he had highlighted damage caused from the recent storms and areas of significant fly tipping, in particular the debris left following the dumping of large electrical cables which had been stripped for copper.

Roy Beddard further advised that under the new Barnet Allotment Strategy management of the allotment sites had been transferred to the respective allotment associations. He explained that there was some potential for concern in relation to the disused section of the West Hendon Allotment site. Martin Hall (West Hendon Allotment Association) advised that the association would work in co-operation with the relevant parties and would not seek to change the existing arrangements without appropriate consultation. Responding to further queries, Martin Hall advised that the association would investigate actions taken without its knowledge to clear certain areas where birds were nesting and would address issues relating to the management of the flow of water on the site.

The committee noted the report.

6. Update on the West Hendon Development

Nathan Smith (Project Manager, Barratt Homes West London) provided an update on the development of the West Hendon Estate, noting that construction had started in mid-January 2014. There were two different construction sites at present along Marriot's Close and Perryfield Way. Work had begun on the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and it was anticipated that an application for the CPO would be submitted to the Secretary of State in four to eight weeks. Similar work was being undertaken for those properties held under leasehold or secure tenancy, both of which also required an application to be submitted to the Secretary of State. It was considered likely that these applications would be submitted in the late Spring. Metropolitan housing had conducted a household needs survey to identify requirements for future accommodation and would shortly be writing to tenants to allocate properties.

Thomas Wyld (Planning Officer, Barnet Council) circulated an informal report regarding the noise monitoring that had been conducted on site and the draft minutes of a meeting of stakeholders at which the post of the SSSI Warden had been discussed. Responding to the committee's queries, Thomas Wyld explained that it was intended that the appointment of the SSSI Warden be made as soon as possible but it was expected to take between three and six months to achieve. It had been envisaged that the post would be for a period of seventeen years and would be funded via Section 106 monies. A total of £500k had been allocated to the Warden post and the cost of mitigation activities, with 60 per cent of this sum

directly funding the salary of the post. It was expected that one of the tasks of the post would be to identify further sources of funding. The London Wildlife Trust had agreed to support the Warden position and further work between key stakeholders would be undertaken to draw up a job description for the role. Barratt Homes had attended the meeting and was supportive of having a single point of contact for the management of environmental issues for the site. There had been some discussion regarding the potential for shared office space with the estate management group, which offered a possible solution to safety concerns regarding lone working.

The committee sought further information regarding the noise monitoring activity and bird surveys being undertaken at the site. It was particularly queried whether vibration level was taken into consideration and whether monitoring was constrained by the working week. It was also highlighted that there could be a protracted breeding season for birds nesting in the area, depending on rises in water level. Thomas Wyld advised that noise monitoring equipment was active on a continuous basis and was supplemented by manned observations undertaken between Monday and Saturday. Details of the noise monitoring scheme had been approved via Natural England and it was expected therefore, that issues such as disturbance resulting from vibrations would have been considered. The meeting was further advised that Bird surveys were being conducted on a rolling basis; bi-monthly during breeding season and monthly otherwise. Breeding seasons were not considered to be fixed and this was reflected in the plans for conducting the surveys.

Queries were also raised regarding mitigation measures planned in relation to the colony of House Martins that would undoubtedly be disturbed due to demolition works at the West Hendon Broadway. The committee noted several options for increasing the wildlife sustainability of the development such as the inclusion of swift bricks and peregrine boxes. Nathan Smith advised that Barratt Homes did make provisions of this nature but he was not able to comment on the particulars. However, he would liaise with Thomas Wyld regarding the issue of the colony of House Martins.

The committee thanked Nathan Smith and Thomas Wyld for their contribution to the meeting and noted the update.

7. Management Plan (Brent)

Leslie Williams (Strategy and Service Development Officer, Brent Council) presented a report detailing the progress achieved against the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan. He updated the committee on works undertaken at Neasden Recreation Ground, noting that a hedge of *Rosa rugosa* had been planted near the newly completed Multi Use Games Area. The committee was further advised that a multi agency response to the on-going issue of rough sleepers was in progress. Turning to the issue of Brent's Public Realm (street maintenance) contract, Leslie Williams advised that it had been awarded to Veolia and would become operational from 1 April 2014. From 1 September 2014, all the public realm and parks grounds maintenance works would be carried out by Veolia. At the Welsh Harp this would apply to the Welsh Harp Open Space including the car park, to Neasden Recreation Ground, and also to Silver Jubilee Park to the north.

During the subsequent discussion, the committee queried the impact of the recent torrential rain and questioned whether dredging would be necessary or appropriate. It was explained that the reservoir had performed well and that the main impact had been the fresh deposit of silt. Roy Beddard advised that it was no longer possible to dredge the site due to changes in legislation which required the material to be treated as contaminated waste. Referencing the aspiration to attract otters to the area which had been raised at the previous meeting, Neale Hider (Environment Agency) suggested that work could be undertaken to make the area suitable for Water Vole re-introduction and noted that this was also a protected species. It was hoped that the SSSI Warden due to be appointed to the West Hendon Estate could possibly assist in this endeavour. The committee endorsed this suggestion.

8. Broadsword: use of motor launch safety vehicle on the welsh harp

Representatives of Training Ship Broadsword sought the committee's support in obtaining a site on which to keep a motorboat for use on the Welsh Harp. It was explained that Training Ship Broadsword was a voluntary organisation which provided training by qualified and experienced staff to local young people.

Julia Touloumbadjian (The Welsh Harp Sailing Association (WHSA)) advised that the lease permitting the use of the Welsh Harp reservoir held by the WHSA required that all activities be approved via a membership structure. It would therefore be necessary to submit the proposal to the WHSA.

RESOLVED:

That the committee's broad support of the proposal made by Training Ship Broadsword be noted.

The Welsh Harp Sailing Association abstained from voting on this issue.

9. Environment Agency - Verbal Report (if any)

Neale Hider (Environment Agency) noted that a question had been raised at the previous meeting of the committee regarding the intention to install floating islands on the reservoir. He advised that these did not represent a flood risk but it would be necessary to ascertain how the units would be connected together, what their structural composition would be and any implications for maintenance. Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group) had undertaken a site visit with Leela O'Dea (Canal and River Trust) regarding the islands and had proposed an alternative location. Thomas Wyld (Planning Officer, Barnet Council) explained that a broad specification for the islands had been submitted by Frog Environmental and this would be made available to the Environment Agency. This information included details of the target species.

Councillor Johnson noted that it had previously been indicated that water testing would be conducted on the Welsh Harp. Neale Hider advised that the Environment Agency would respond to pollution incidents but water quality was the obligation of the landowner. The European Union Water Framework Directive did require that targets be set regarding water quality and the Environment Agency was engaging with landowners as well as other interested parties regarding this process. It was

expected that river base management plans would be issued in 2015 and a raft of different measures were being undertaken.

10. **Planning Issues (if any)**

None.

11. **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting would be confirmed following the annual meetings of Barnet Council and Brent Council.

12. **Any other urgent business**

The committee considered a membership application from Phoenix Canoe Club. Though the Club was a member of the Welsh Harp Sailing Association (WHSA), it was based on London Borough of Barnet ground (with North Circular Sailing Club). It was therefore asserted by the Club that it may have issues to address which fell outside the WHSA areas of interest.

RESOLVED:

That the membership application submitted by the Phoenix Canoe Club be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.21 pm

Cllr A Hopkins
Chair