



Brent

## MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE Thursday 19 November 2015 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Farah (LB Brent) (Chair), Councillor Khatri (LB Barnet) (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Hart (LB Barnet) and Ahmed (LB Brent) and Dale Langdale (Hendon Rifle Club), Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust), Dianne Murphy (London Wildlife Trust), Phil Atkinson (Phoenix Canoe), Brian Turner (Training Ship Broadsword) and John Shepherd (Welsh Harp Sailing Association)

Also present: John Bryden (Thames 21), Daniella Levene (Friends of the Welsh Harp), Eric Holroyd (Barratts) and Nathan Smith (Barratts).

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Kay (LB Barnet), Langleben (LB Barnet), Crane (LB Brent) and Mashari (LB Brent) and Terry Garner (Barnet Planning, Sam Thomas (Canal and River Trust), Neale Hider (Environment Agency), Commander G Beck (Training Ship Broadsword), Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), Judy Shepherd (West Hendon Community Forum), Derrick Chung (West Hendon Residents' Association / Friends of York Park) and Geoffrey Johnson (Woolmead Residents' Association)

### 1. **Declarations of pecuniary interests**

None made.

### 2. **Deputations**

None.

### 3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 July 2015 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting. The Vice-Chair (Councillor Khatri) also thanked all concerned for the reports that were provided following the last meeting which was very much appreciated and which had been circulated to all committee members.

### 4. **Matters arising**

A query was raised regarding AWA Water patrol and where could they be obtained.

The committee asked for an update on the position regarding wardens in time for the next meeting. The committee heard that funding for the position had been delayed as part of a review of Section 106 funding in Barnet and Dianne Murphy agreed to ensure the relevant details were provided so that the Vice Chair could progress the matter.

Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust) advised that the white clawed cray fish were under threat in the London Area.

The committee noted the response on water quality and the difficulties involved in bringing about improvements due to agricultural pollution and combined sewers. It was suggested that comparisons be made with testing data before the Brent Cross development to establish the extent to which any new pollutants were present.

The committee reiterated disappointment over the removal of the swales and the lack of consultation with either the JCC or Natural England. It was agreed to ask for confirmation of plans for future consultation and that consideration be given to reintroducing the swales which provided a valuable function.

#### 5. **Management Plan (Barnet)**

Councillor Khatri introduced the Barnet Welsh Harp Management Plan and referred to the update position on rough sleepers in particular those sheltering under bill boards on which discussions were taking place. It was reported that there was a permanent encampment by the water edge near the recreation area, which had been reported,.

#### 6. **Management Plan (Brent)**

Leslie Williams (Strategy and Service Development Officer, LB Brent) introduced the Brent Management Plan report. He invited members to consider and send any further updates which he would circulate. Reference was made to the Welsh Harp Education Centre which the Brent Council's Cabinet had agreed to transfer to Thames21.

Leslie Williams commented on the rough sleepers occupying the Welsh Harp and Neasden recreation grounds, referred to earlier in the meeting. The position being monitored and he asked that the reporting continue. He thanked all for their contribution to the draft Physical Activity Strategy. The committee noted that a report on by-laws affecting the open spaces on the Brent side was in preparation to be reported in February and come into force in the summer. Finally Leslie Williams drew attention to the visitor risk assessment by the Canal and River Trust that was underway with the aim of deterring people from swimming as the water was considered toxic and not safe due to currents and weeds. It was noted that the Canal and River Trust were considering the use of lifebuoys but these would only be effective if correctly used.

The committee discussed the issue of water quality and the extent to which it should be considered unsafe drawing comparisons with its condition in previous years and agreed that any signage needed to be clear.

Dale Langdale (Hendon Rifle Club) drew attention to the weekly Welsh Harp walks programme referred to in the report and advised that 15 to 25 walkers were usually in attendance, more than the 10 to 15 stated in the report.

Leslie Williams agreed to give consideration and discuss the suggestion from Clive Cohen for the building of a Kingfisher bank on the Brent side, a soil bank in which Kingfishers could burrow to nest.

**7. Environment Agency - verbal report**

None.

**8. Planning Issues**

The committee received from Eric Holroyd and Nathan Smith (Barratt Homes) short presentations on the phases of the Barrett Homes project, ecology activities over the past and coming months including acoustic monitoring and sound monitoring which indicated that water fowl had not been affected by the construction. Members were referred to the Avon Life which had featured the West Hendon estate as an exemplar and proposals for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge planning permission for which had recently been granted. Also circulated was the construction newsletter containing information on the demolition including plans for asbestos removal.

Members were invited to submit feedback.

The Barratt representatives agreed to take back the suggestion that the bridge should be constructed so as to absorb noise external to the bridge. He agreed to send information on plans for the bridge which was still at design stage.

The committee noted that the project would hopefully start in March April 2016 however discussion with existing residents were on-going. Clive Cohen reminded of the need to bear in mind the hibernation season and bats and to make efforts to avoid disturbance.

Councillor Hart made representations on behalf of residents Woolmead regarding parking on their streets both during the construction and plans for afterwards once the development was complete when the ratio of cars per property was 0.8. Nathan Smith advised the contractors were not permitted to park on the estate or adjacent roads and would be fined. He encouraged residents to continue reporting. Nathan Smith agreed to speak to the Planning Department in Barnet and report back on plans for parking and also pavements which he assured would be disabled access compliant. He assured that the parking provision on the new estate would have considerable blue badge areas.

Concerns were also raised about any bat population and that investigation should initially be carried out before any demolition took place. Nathan Smith undertook to check the position and then revert to the Chair. Nathan Smith also agreed to confirm that the credentials of the bat consultant were properly licensed.

**9. Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on 15 March 2016.

**10. Any other urgent business**

There was no urgent business but the committee considered the following items.

*Training Ship Broadsword*

Brian Turner (Training Ship Broadsword) made representations for his organisation to be able to sail on the reservoir, having not been able to do so for the past 20 years and asked members to intervene and assist in bringing the discussions to a conclusion. Phil Atkinson (Phoenix) advised that some talks had taken place to date and offers made and John Sheppard (WHSa) encouraged the TSB to join an existing association. Councillor Khatri offered to mediate.

#### *Friends of the Welsh Harp*

Daniella Levene (Friends of the Welsh Harp) addressed the committee and introduced the work of her organisation which would like to be an associate member of the JCC. Friends of the Welsh Harp ran clean up campaigns staffed by volunteers and Phil Atkinson paid tribute to their work which was much valued. It was noted that a membership report would be submitted to the next meeting in accordance with the constitution.

#### *Thames21*

John Dryden, representing Thames21 advised that the organisation had been successful in tendering for the Welsh Harp Education Centre as a community asset, for a seven year renewable lease. Legal processes were still on-going. The organisation intended to work with young people within the catchment area and also use the premises as a community facility. Thames21 was part of the Rivers Trust and hoped to use the base to expand its profile and enable other groups to use the site to be balanced with nature conservation issues. John Dryden outlined work Thames21 had been involved in with the GLA and woodland management, Lea Valley, Stanmore Marshes and Queensbury, engaging with schools and he looked forward to getting children involved.

The committee welcomed the involvement of Thames21, the confirmation that the centre had been saved and suggested bird watching as an additional activity.

#### *Future meetings*

The committee agreed to receive a presentation from Phoenix Centre at the next meeting.

Clive Cohen repeated past requests for presentation documents to be circulated in advance of the meeting. He also sought clarification on the policy for skating in the event of severe weather and reminded members of advice from the Rivers Trust that boat bottoms should be cleansed and dried to help stop the spread of cray fish.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

H FARAH  
Chair