

MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Tuesday 15 March 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Farah (LB Brent) (Chair), Councillor Khatri (LB Barnet) (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Hart (LB Barnet), Kay (LB Barnet), Langleben (LB Barnet) and Ahmed (LB Brent) and Dale Langdale (Hendon Rifle Club), Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust), Dianne Murphy (London Wildlife Trust), Johnson (Local Agenda 21), Phil Atkinson (Phoenix Canoe), Judy Shepherd (West Hendon Community Forum), Derrick Chung (West Hendon Residents' Association / Friends of York Park) and Geoffrey Johnson (Woolmead Residents' Association)

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Crane (LB Brent) and Mashari (LB Brent) and Neale Hider (Environment Agency) and Neil Winter (Environment Agency)

1. Declarations of pecuniary interests

Councillor Langleben – Trustee, West Hendon Community Trust.

2. Deputations

None.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 November 2015 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendments;
Add Julie Johnson to the list of those who gave their apologies for absence.
Clause 4: S106 funding had been received for a new warden with minor changes to the job description.

4. Matters arising

Terry Gardner (Town Planning Manager, Barnet) in updating the Committee on the swales, informed members that Barratts Homes had put in attenuating tanks to address the run off of rain water, a matter that would be reviewed at a later date. In noting the update, the members emphasised that swales be re-introduced in the next phase of the development.

5. Membership application - Friends of Welsh Harp

The Committee considered an application from Friends of Welsh Harp for membership of the Consultative Committee to be represented by Daniella Lavene. In its application, Friends of Welsh Harp stated that its main goal was to improve the environment for all users and wildlife and that since June 2015, its members had removed about 357 bags of rubbish. The organisation aimed to run regular

monthly voluntary events, engaging the community to take active part in the conservation of Welsh Harp.

RESOLVED:-

that the membership application from Friends of Welsh Harp on the Consultative Committee to be represented by Daniella Lavene be agreed.

6. **Management Plan (Barnet)**

Tracy Sawyer (Parks and Open Spaces Officer, Barnet) presented the report which updated members on the on-going site management issues and the position on the Local Nature Reserve. She stated that rough sleepers had been identified with associated litter near the abandoned car park off Cool Oak Lane as well as St Andrews Church yard and outside the sailing club in Birchen Grove. Members heard that rough sleepers and a pile of rubbish had been seen in the Silk Stream area, near Halfords shop and in West Hendon Estate behind the billboard and advertising hoardings.

In response to Councillor Langleben request for measures to address the situation, Tracy Sawyer stated that in concert with UK Border Agency early morning raids to drive out the rough sleepers were being undertaken. She urged residents to send emails with pictures of further sightings of rough sleepers to her office to enable a swift action to be taken. She undertook to visit the Silk Stream and other areas where rough sleepers had been identified.

Councillor Khatri advised details of where residents could report incidence of rough sleepers or to complain about them should be shared with residents and suggested that these be included in the minutes, for ease of reference. Contact by email to Parks Department (Barnet) and Police

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Welsh Harp Management Plan (Barnet) be noted
- (ii) that the Parks and Open Spaces Manager provide further update and information to the next meeting of the Committee.

7. **Management Plan (Brent)**

Members received a progress report on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan since the last meeting of the Committee and during the 2015/16 year to date. The Management Plan, jointly managed by the three main land-holding organisations of Brent Council, the London Borough of Barnet, and the Canal and River Trust included an Action Plan for the current Year attached to the report as Appendix 1.

In summarising the progress to date, Leslie Williams (Strategy and Service Development Officer, Brent) highlighted the main salient points:

The transfer process of the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre to Thames 21 was completed in January 2016.

There had been recent changes in the national procedure for the approval of new park byelaws, however, it was anticipated that the byelaws would be implemented by 1 September 2016.

A replacement life buoy (ring) was installed at Neasden Recreation Ground in December 2015.

The public consultation stage for Brent Council's draft Physical Activity Strategy had been completed with the Strategy due to be published by 30 April 2016.

Since 1 April 2015, the new Active Lifestyles Team have had a focus on encouraging physical activity rather than of sports in particular.

The weekly walks programme at the Welsh Harp had continued into 2016 with walks generally attracting 15-25 people and were led by a walk leader. These take place on Thursdays from 10-11am meeting at Birchen Grove Car Park, Kingsbury NW9.

He then gave an update on crayfish at the Brent reservoir. He stated that several other species of crayfish mostly North American Signal Crayfish had been released into UK waterbodies which could cause extensive burrowing into river banks leading to erosion and releasing sediment into rivers. Current control measures included import and legal controls; education of the risks; and guidance on the need to check, clean and dry equipment and watercraft that were being moved from one water body to another.

In reference to a suggestion raised at the last WHJCC meeting to include in the Management Plan the construction of a 'Kingfisher bank' at the Welsh Harp, Leslie Williams stated that Kingfisher banks provided an additional structure similar to the riverside banks that Kingfishers use for nesting. Discussion suggested that while desirable, the construction of artificial banks for Kingfishers was not a current priority and in any case would require riparian regulatory approval and involve construction and maintenance costs.

He then highlighted the policy on ice skating, contained in the safety guidance of the management plan and cautioned against skating near the reservoir due to the inherent dangers involved and the risk to human lives.

There then ensued discussions on signage, warden service on the Welsh Harp and the validity of the claim that kingfisher nesting had been identified. It was confirmed that kingfisher had been identified but no evidence of nesting had been found. It was noted that Barnet had installed signage and that Leslie Williams would follow up the issue of signage and report back to a future meeting. Councillor Khatri undertook to look into how best to progress the issue of part time warden service.

RESOLVED:

that the management plan be noted.

8. Environment Agency - Verbal Report

None as it was noted that the Environment Agency had given their apologies for absence.

9. **Presentation - Phoenix Canoe Club**

Representatives of Phoenix Canoe Club gave a presentation (a copy of which was circulated to Committee members) in which they gave an outline of their services, acknowledged the design services offered by Barratts Homes and went on to seek general support for their services. They highlighted the problems being encountered with the existing antiquated building from which they operated including characterised by lack of adequate facilities and unfit for their service delivery. They sought support for the rebuilding of the centre, member agreement for an application for a Section 106 funding or Community infrastructure Levy (CIL), lease or asset transfer of the car park, among others.

Whilst welcoming the request and expressed support for water sport, members generally felt that the car park ought to be kept in public ownership for use by the public particularly children as public amenity space in the wider community. Councillor Katri urged members to contact their ward councillors urging them to register the plot of land as an asset of community.

10. **Planning Issues**

Eric Holroyd of Barratt London gave an update on West Hendon regeneration scheme. In respect of the regeneration programme, he informed members that Phase 3A was scheduled for completion in summer 2016 to rehouse residents from Phase 3B/C. Demolition of Phase 3B/C (RM application approved in April 2015) was due to start in spring 2016, with construction work moving away from Welsh Harp/SSSI. He continued that under Phase 4, work had commenced on the RM application and the second Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and once the RM application under Phase 4 had been approved, residents would be re-housed in Phase 3B/C.

On Cool Oak Lane Bridge, Eric Holroyd stated that RM application was being prepared for submission in June 2016. He clarified that the design and methodology which would respect the existing Grade II listed bridge would provide easy and safe means for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the Welsh Harp. In order to minimise on-site construction it would be built off-site (prefabricated) with construction planned for spring/summer 2017.

In respect of Acoustic Monitoring, he stated that Barratts London had commenced a voluntary ornithological and acoustic monitoring of the northern and southern arms of the Brent Reservoir in order to assess any effects of recreational activity around the reservoir. He continued that initial findings suggested that the scheme was having a negligible impact and that the most significant disturbance was being created by professional dog walkers on the southern part.

Members heard that the new retaining wall and pedestrian footpath bordering the SSI had been completed and that the 3 day litter pick undertaken by a specialist contractor and overseen by Brett Associates, saw 53 bags rubbish removed from the Welsh Harp. In terms of community investment, he advised members that Barratts London in partnership with Phoenix Canoe Club had submitted an application for a new centre.

In the ensuing discussion, members expressed thanks to Barratts London for the commemoration of the 75 year celebration. They however raised a number of issues including rodent and mice infestation, security and telephone communication lines not properly working. Eric Holroyd undertook to look carefully into the issues of concern raised by the residents.

11. **Date of next meeting**

The date of next meeting which would take place in Hendon Town hall would be confirmed at Barnet Council's AGM on 24 May 2016.

12. **Any other urgent business**

Members noted that the footpath was muddy and requested Tracy Sawyer to follow that up and address the situation. They also requested Leslie Williams to address the overhanging tree on Brent side.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

S KHATRI
Vice Chair in the Chair

Note: Councillor Farah had to leave during the meeting. The meeting was thereafter chaired by Councillor Khatri (Vice Chair).