



MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Tuesday 18 July 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Agha (London Borough of Brent) (Chair), Councillor Khatri (London Borough of Barnet) (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Dixon (London Borough of Brent), Hart (London Borough of Barnet) and Langleben (London Borough of Barnet) and Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust), Dianne Murphy (London Wildlife Trust), Phil Atkinson (Phoenix Canoe), Haynes (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), Hall (West Hendon Allotment Society) and Derrick Chung (West Hendon Residents' Association / Friends of York Park), Billy Coburn (Thames 21), Sam Ho (Environmental Agency), John Shepherd (Welsh Harp Sailing Association)

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Ahmed (London Borough of Brent), Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), Nathan Smith (Barratts), Julie Johnson (Local Agenda 21)

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2017/18

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Councillor Agha be elected as the Chair for the municipal year 2017/18;
- (ii) That Councillor Khatri be elected as the Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2017/18.

2. Declarations of pecuniary interests

Councillor Langleben declared a pecuniary interest as a Trustee of West Hendon Estate Community Trust Fund.

3. Deputations

None.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 March 2017 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following amendments in clause 6;

Attendees: Diane Murphy to read "Dianne Murphy".

Item 6 paragraph 1 – insert after joint management plan "for Barnet, Brent and Canal and River Trust".

Item 6 paragraph 5 – delete "Brent Council" and replace with "Thames21".

Item 6 paragraph 6 – in last line after ‘endeavour’ add “and advise as appropriate” at the end of the existing paragraph.

Item 6, paragraph 7 – line 2 to read “dam wall”

Item 6, paragraph 8 – regarding RSPB should be set out as **Action** point

Item 6, paragraph 15 – regarding Canal & River Trust should be set out as **Action** point

5. **Matters arising**

Cool Oak Lane Bridge

Councillor Khatri updated the Committee that bids for the repair work to Cool Oak Lane bridge had been received from contractors. He understood that these were being evaluated by Highways officers prior to the final selection of a successful contractor.

Action - Cllr Khatri undertook to follow up on current status and report back to the next meeting.

Clearance of wood cuttings

Matthew Gunyon informed the Committee that the tree contractors and in house teams had been informed that any timber or logs from works around the Welsh Harp should be removed site.

Ball Court

Matthew Gunyon advised the Committee that the site for the new ball court had not yet been identified as officers were currently examining all options and consulting with all interested parties.

6. **Management Plan (Brent)**

The Committee received a report that provided progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan since its last meeting. The current version of the management plan including the annexe appended to the report was available on the Brent Council website at

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16404048/brent-reservoir-welsh-harp-management-plan-15-03-2016.pdf>

Leslie Williams (Brent Council) introduced the report. Members heard that the sawn logs, reported at the last meeting, and potentially close to the shore line near to Cool Oak Lane bridge, were reported to Barnet Council to investigate and an update had been provided by Matthew Gunyon.

Rough sleepers had been reported by the Council’s Parks Services to the outreach team responsible for rough sleepers. The report of a caravan on Birchen Grove was forwarded to the Public Realm team. . Mr Williams advised that any such incidences should be reported to 020 8937 5619 or to parks@brent.gov.uk

On the issue of rat infestation, Leslie Williams advised the Committee that Welsh Harp, being such a large area with historic landfill sites, industrial and discarded

waste site, it would not be possible to target rats without serious adverse impact on other mammals living on site. . He added that feeding of birds etc. added to the problem. He added that there was no budget provision to undertake such an operation on such a large scale however, consideration would be given where infestation was localised and putting out messages discouraging feeding of birds etc.. A request was made that as Pest Control was a specialised activity that a report on what safety measures are possible and available be made available at the next meeting.

Action - Matthew Gunyon undertook to ask the Pest Control Team if there was suitable treatment that would not affect other mammals.

Promoting Sport and Physical Activity sessions: The Council are encouraging organisations who organise sport or physical activity to promote their contact details and/or activities on the Open Sessions portal at <https://app.opensessions.io/>

The weekly walks programme at the Welsh Harp was proving popular and which generally attracted 15-25 and led by a walk leader was taking place on Thursdays from 10-11am, and met at Birchen Grove Car Park, Kingsbury NW9. The walks were free of charge. He advised the Committee that a review of the walks programme including public consultation via the Brent Council website on Healthy Walks and Outdoor Gyms had been undertaken. Options to consider included a possible reduction in the number of walks offered and the use of volunteers to lead walks. He continued that Brent may pilot a walk with a volunteer to gauge its effectiveness before rolling it out across the whole walks programme. He assured members that there would be a walk on offer at Welsh Harp, in some capacity.

Leslie Williams referenced the comments made by Committee members on erosion of the bank of the reservoir at Neasden Recreation Ground, near to the south side of the dam wall. He advised that the Parks team were suggesting the possibility of a design for a platform, near to the interpretative panels and above the shore. The relationship with land under the responsibility of the Canal & River Trust; and the proximity to the SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) would need to be investigated. This could enable visitors to view while causing less erosion than at present. For wheelchair accessibility to the platform, there would be some form of edge and upstand

7. **Management Plan (Barnet) Verbal update**

Matthew Gunyon gave a verbal update on Barnet's management plan. Members were informed that no illegal encampments had been reported thus far this year although there had been incidents in West Hendon Playing Fields which were being managed through a joint operation with the Police and UK Border Agency. He continued that due to caravan incursions in the Barnet recently, all staff had been advised to be extra vigilant and to report any issues or potential risks immediately.

Matthew Gunyon provided an update on tree inspection, adding that the Tree Team had completed a safety survey and identified works that would be completed in line with the management plan. The survey identified Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) which was being reported to the Forestry Commission. He added that contractors had been asked to ensure that all debris should be removed from site.

Action – Matthew Gunyon to provide a map showing the location of OPM

On the issue of excessive bird feeding, he updated members that discussions with enforcement officers had taken place and that they would extend their engagement and enforcement into parks and open spaces later this year.

Discussions then centred on fly tipping and recycling. It was suggested that measures be taken to ensure that the frequency of bin collection was increased. Matthew Gunyon noted that a pilot had been completed in Scratchwood Open Space using larger bins and after its success Barnet is looking to introduce larger bins in certain parks including Welsh Harp. Concern was expressed about the level of fly tipping including furniture and rubble in the area around the silk stream on the main Edgware Road by the retail park.

Councillor John Hart questioned if recycling should be encouraged in parks and open spaces. Matthew Gunyon informed the committee that practical experiences in Victoria Park and Watling Park have demonstrated that the introduction of the recycling bins into a park works temporarily but proved to be a large drain on resources for such a small yield of recyclable materials.

Councillor Langleben asked who would be responsible for emptying the bins along the new park that is being provided as part of the housing development. Matthew Gunyon stated that unless the park was adopted, the responsibility for the bins rested with Barratts Home.

Action – Matthew Gunyon to confirm if the linear park is to be adopted by Barnet.

8. Any other urgent business

Thames21

Members were informed Daniella Levene, Chair of North-West London Clean Up Friends of Group, had expressed concern for the growing amount of plastic pollution in and around the banks of the Welsh Harp. This is an ever increasing problem leading to environmental hazards to both wildlife and human health. Daniella's Friends of Group is constantly looking for new recruits and consequently requested that attendees forward on groups and individuals to Daniella who would wish to volunteer for her project conserving the Welsh Harp

Enforcement of Dog Walkers

Members were informed that dog walkers in public parks in the area were walking about 18 dogs at a time, with obvious nuisance and potential risks to other park users and asked for a swift enforcement to control such risks. Matthew Gunyon advised the Committee that there was no policy on control of dog walkers and that it would be difficult to enforce any such nuisance via bye laws. The Chair said that both Brent & Barnet should respectively consider what policy changes can be made in this regard.

Fly tip

It was reported that there is a section of land alongside the A5 Edgware Road which it crosses the Silkstream (near Halfords) that suffers from fly tipping and rough sleeping. It is believed to be Barnet land.

Action – Matthew Gunyon to investigate the ownership of the land and arrange for the relevant body to clear it.

It was also reported that there was a shopping trolley in the water on the North side of Cool Oak Lane.

Action – Matthew Gunyon to arrange for it to be removed and disposed of.

Reports & Minutes

It was requested that in future reports to the Committee should be in writing only and that minutes of the meeting be circulated very soon after the meeting is held.

9. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on 28 November 2017 at 7:00pm at Brent Civic Centre.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

COUNCILLOR A AGHA
Chair