



Brent

Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee – Agenda Pack

Thursday 4 March 2021 at 7.00 pm

Online meeting to be hosted by London Borough of Barnet

NB: A live audio stream of the meeting will be available from [HERE](#) on the London Borough of Barnet's website

VIRTUAL MEETING

WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

DATE AND TIME

THURSDAY 4TH MARCH, 2021

AT 7.00 PM

TO: MEMBERS OF WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (Quorum 3)

Barnet: Councillor John Hart
Councillor Nagus Narenthira
Brent: Councillor Roxanne Mashari
Councillor George Crane

Councillor Saira Don
Councillor Anne Clarke
Councillor Parvez Ahmed
Councillor Vincent Lo

Substitute Members: Barnet Council
Councillor Alex Prager

Councillor Helene Richman

You are requested to attend the above meeting for which an agenda is attached.

Andrew Charlwood – Head of Governance

Governance Service contact: Pakeezah Rahman Pakeezah.Rahman@barnet.gov.uk 020 8359 6452

Media Relations Contact: Tristan Garrick 020 8359 2454

ASSURANCE GROUP

Please consider the environment before printing.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
1.	Minutes	3 - 6
2.	Absence of Members	
3.	Disclosable Pecuniary interests and Non Pecuniary interests	
4.	Report of the Monitoring Officer (if any)	
5.	Actions for Current Issues and future Vision - Verbal Update	
6.	London Borough of Brent - Welsh Harp Management Plan	7 - 22
7.	London Borough of Barnet - Welsh Harp Management Plan	23 - 26
8.	Welsh Harp Waste Crisis Update - To Follow	
9.	Any Other Business	
10.	Any Other Items that the Chairman Decides are Urgent	

MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday 19th November 2020 at 7.00 pm

Members Present:

Councillor John Hart
Councillor Roxanne Mashari
Councillor Helene Richman
Councillor Anne Clarke
Councillor Nagus Narenthira
Councillor Parvez Ahmed
Matthew Gunyon
Leslie Williams
Lucy Shuker
Neil Earnshaw
Dale Langdale
Clive Cohen
Dianne Murphy
John Shepherd
Judy Shepherd
Liz Hall
Geoffrey Johnson
Andrew Haines
Phil Atkinson
Maria Bailey
Nathan Smith

London Borough of Barnet
London Borough of Brent
London Borough of Barnet
London Borough of Barnet
London Borough of Barnet
London Borough of Brent
Greenspaces & Leisure
Parks Service, Regeneration & Environ.
Brent River Catchment Partnership
Canal and River Trust
Hendon Rifle Club
London Wildlife Trust
London Wildlife Trust
Welsh Harp Sailing Association
West Hendon Community Forum
West Hendon Allotment Society
Woolmead Residents' Association
Welsh Harp Conservation Group
Phoenix Canoe Club
Environment Agency
Barratt London

AGENDA ITEM 1

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR 2020-2021

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Hart be elected Chairman for the municipal year 2020-2021.

That Councillor Mashari be elected Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2020-2021.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Saira Don, Amer Agha and George Crane.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th of January 2020 were approved subject to an amendment that should include the London Wildlife Trust to the scoping study discussion held on pg. 8, item 10.

4. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

5. LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT - WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr Leslie Williams presented his report. It was noted that works in relation to the speed restriction ramps in Birchen Grove car park and resurfacing of the Silver Jubilee car park had been completed in January.

The action plan highlighted the main issues affecting the Welsh Harp area. Marshland work had been carried out by volunteers from the Welsh Harp Sailing Club on the shore margins of the open space located on the northern Brent side of the reservoir.

The growth of scrubs in the area, which added value to wildlife, had a down side in that it shaded out some of the marshland and affected views of the reservoir. Trees also created a wind shadow. It was intended that species such as Alder and Silver Birch be retained.

Elm and Oak trees that obstructed the views to the reservoir had been removed and litter clearance in the surrounding areas had taken place. The Healthy Walks Programme had recommenced in August and ran weekly with social distancing measures in place.

Most bye laws with regards to cycling had been amended by the Council to encourage the activity. Appendix B showed signage which was implemented in the Neasden recreation ground.

Mr Gunyon noted that he had previously met with Mr Atkinson of the Phoenix Canoe Club and that Barnet Council would consider if works could be completed on the Barnet side to reduce the wind shadowing on the reservoir.

The Chairman thanked Mr Williams and the committee noted the report.

6. LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr Matthew Gunyon highlighted the key points of the report. Issues regarding litter and fly tipping had been raised with the Barnet Community Safety Team. It was noted that installation of CCTV cameras along Cool Oak Lane was still under consideration. Meanwhile, the Street Scene Team had carried out a deep clean along Cool Oak Lane.

Following public consultation, the West Hendon Playing Fields master plan had been reported to, and approved by, the Environment Committee in March. The key changes related to do with the relocation of the car park and the extension to the existing redundant car park in Woodfield park along with the proposed high ropes course.

New pedestrian routes had been included throughout the site and some sports pitches were moved away from the local nature reserve and the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The bird hides had also been placed in more suitable locations. Quotations were being sort for a tarmac surface and court lines for a basketball court. The master plan which was in its business phase was due to be taken forward.

Ms Hall was advised to contact the Parks team with regards to the overgrown tress around the West Hendon allotments site. Ms Murphy commented that overgrown areas were useful for wildlife.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gunyon and the committee noted the report.

7. CANAL RIVER TRUST - UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES IN THE WELSH HARP

Mr Neil Earnshaw informed the committee of the implementation of improved signage and interpretation panels around the reservoir in conjunction with Brent Council. The reservoir statutory inspections were to be carried out in the week commencing 11th

January 2021 to draw down water levels in the reservoir. This would have no impact on aquatic life. The work would allow engineers to inspect the valve house building using divers. The date of completion was estimated to be the 26th February 2021 when water levels would return to normal. CCTV cameras had been installed at the bottom of the embankment to counter trespassing vandalism. An application to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund had been made to tackle Japanese Knotweed along the banks of the reservoir.

It was noted that a collaborative approach would be required to research and build a comprehensive record of flora and fauna life on the Welsh Harp. Information could be found on the Welsh Harp Conservation Group website as a starting point for ensuing research.

8. BARRATT LONDON PROPOSED WORKS - SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Mr Nathan Smith informed the committee that the regeneration had gone very well. Mr Smith said that following a discussion with the West Hendon Partnership Board, he noted that residents and visitors would benefit from views of the water throughout the year. It was agreed that some vegetation and scrub would be reduced and a waterside perimeter of approximately 20m in width would be retained around the West Hendon estate.

The representative from Natural England welcomed this reduction of scrub to assist the regeneration of marshland. The project ecologist had advised that no significant loss to trees would occur. The cleared area would not be accessible to the public. Any concerns with regards to fly tipping in that area would be handled by the management company of the estate.

In discussion, members suggested that low level vegetation be planted to maintain the openness of the views and to reduce the regrowth of willow. It was noted that an SSSI officer would be appointed to oversee the development of the proposed works. As part of developers' obligations, quarterly reports from the project ecologist showed no adverse effects on wildlife as a result of the tower block. Mr Shepherd said that the tower block was used as a perch by peregrine falcons.

With regards to the ecological impact on the proposed works, Natural England had been consulted.

The committee was in support of the minor works proposed in the SSSI.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A note of thanks was offered by Councillor Clarke on behalf of the committee to the litter-picking volunteers around the Welsh Harp. The growing problem of rough sleepers in the Welsh Harp was noted. Greenspaces worked closely with the Barnet Homes Rough Sleeper team, Barnet Community Safety and local Police to engage appropriately with individuals to find more suitable lodgings following which clearance of the area would be coordinated. Reporting from local residents was heavily relied upon.

The meeting finished at 8.50pm

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Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

4 March 2021

AGENDA ITEM 6

Report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration & Environment

WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	1
Background Papers:	▪
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Leslie Williams, Project Officer, Environmental Services, Brent Civic Centre. Email: Leslie.Williams@Brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 5628

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report presents progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan since the last meeting of the Committee and during the 2020/21 year to date. The Management Plan is jointly managed by the three main land-holding organisations: Brent Council, the London Borough of Barnet, and the Canal & River Trust.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the Report.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The current version of the Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan, (dated 15 March 2016) is available on the Brent Council website at <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/culture-leisure-and-parks/parks-and-allotments/park-finder/welsh-harp-reservoir/>
- 3.2 The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan includes an Action Plan that lists current year progress and actions that may require a longer time-frame and/or for the resources to be identified to undertake the action. For

this committee the Action Plan is updated as Appendix A. The 'Progress' column indicates current progress. For Brent Council, additional notes are provided in the following paragraphs:

- 3.3 Welsh Harp 'vision': This item will be covered in a joint report, elsewhere on the Agenda to the Committee. In brief, officers of the three main public authority landowners and other organisations are continuing to progress discussions for a vision for the Welsh Harp area. The Council are also aware of the recent public concern about litter and waste in the reservoir, amongst other issues. The discussions involve also Barnet Council, the Canal and River Trust; the London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority and Thames 21.
- 3.4 Marshland work: Marshland conservation work continued during November and December 2020 on the northern shore of the main arm of the reservoir. All works were arranged to conform with Covid-19 regulations. The work has been led and undertaken by volunteers of the Welsh Harp Sailing Association. The large majority of work is in the margins of the reservoir, on Canal and River Trust land, with some of the works within Brent Council's, Welsh Harp Open Space. The Canal and River Trust, and the Welsh Harp Sailing Association have obtained consent from Natural England for a programme of works over five years.
- 3.5 The work involves the reduction of shade from scrub and from coppiced (previously cut and regrown) trees, to enable the marshland flora to regenerate. A range of trees are retained, particularly less common species locally, for example most of the Alder, Silver Birch, Apples, clumps of Osier, regenerating Elms and large Willows. The work is in the marshland and on paths alongside the marshland, which often coincide with a belt of acid grassland. The works aim to improve:
- Habitat and wildlife: The marshland and the marshland flora are valuable for wildlife. The marshland is typically 5-20 metres wide.
 - Water wind-sports: Trees on the edge of the reservoir create a wind shadow that can extend over the reservoir and which reduces the wind for water sports.
 - Landscape and amenity: The growth of the trees can reduce the view of the reservoir and the views across the reservoir.
- 3.6 The work during the autumn and early winter of 2020/21 extended to the boundary with Barnet (the trees of the boundary have all been retained).
- 3.7 Work commenced on the southern shore, at Neasden Recreation Ground, in mid-December 2020, but was then postponed due to assessments in line with changing Covid-19 Tier and lockdown precautions. Note that the tree works are not undertaken during the bird breeding season, from 1st March to the end of August. The opportunity has been taken to discuss the detail with The Welsh Harp Group of volunteers who are active at Neasden Recreation Ground. The southern shore is possibly more intricate than the northern shore in terms of tree species and features. In particular, the method of working to re-open views and the stacking of the cut material will be considered.
- 3.8 Litter. Brent Council have been involved in discussions following the recent public concern about litter and waste in the Reservoir. The marshland work has enabled easier access to some of the shore for litter removal; while

reduced seasonal foliage has enabled a check for litter in the adjacent open spaces.

3.9 Healthy Walks programme:

The walking programme recommenced during the late summer and autumn of 2020 with walkers following social distancing guidelines. Details may change depending upon the Covid regulations and guidance current at the time of the walk: See:

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/culture-leisure-and-parks/sports-and-wellbeing/sport-activity-finder/healthy-walks-in-brent-welsh-harp-nature-walk/>

- 3.10** Cycling in Neasden Recreation Ground: Safer cycling signage to facilitate cycling in some areas of Neasden Recreation Ground and for information for other park users has now been installed.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1** The Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan provides recommendations for works to be undertaken. Works are only undertaken when approved by the service responsible for delivering the works within existing approved budgets.
- 4.2** The Action Plan 2020/21 (Appendix A) actions are achievable over varying time-frames, though many are not affordable within existing budgets in the short term. More details of works are included in Appendix A. Officers of the main land-holding organisations at the Welsh Harp and some other organisations are currently (early 2021) working on a 'vision' exercise which will include a review of possible sources of funding and income.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1** Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp is a designated 'Site of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI')'. Section 28E of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 ('CROW') and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) sets out the duties in relation to SSSIs. Land owners or occupiers, and also public bodies, are required to give notice to and consult with Natural England where they wish to carry out, or cause or permit to be carried out any operation in an area of land that is of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features (this requirement applies to operations within a SSSI, and to operations outside the SSSI that may affect the features of interest). Natural England will issue consent, which may have conditions or refuse consent. It is a criminal offence to carry out a listed operation without Natural England's consent or to ignore any conditions of a consent which may result in an unlimited fine and a restoration order. CROW (and section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) places a duty on all public bodies to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of the authority's functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of a SSSI. When advice is obtained from Natural England prior to carrying out the works, an explanation of how the Council has taken into account any advice Natural England has given should be provided –

The Council must be able to show that it considered alternatives that could reduce the impact on the SSSI and the methods being used are those that cause as little damage as practicable to the land:-

The Council should demonstrate how it has assessed differing interests (including the special interests of the SSSI) before deciding to go ahead with the works.

- 5.2 It is good practice for landowners or occupiers to produce Management Plans for the SSSI, which when approved by Natural England, enable the carrying out of the works specified in the Management Plan. This can reduce the administrative work inherent in obtaining consent for individual items of management work.
- 5.3 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires that all public authorities in England and Wales, when exercising their statutory functions, must have regard to the conservation of biodiversity, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions.
- 5.4 Section 28Q of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 requires the owner of land included in a SSSI to inform Natural England within 28 days of any changes in ownership or occupation of the site, including leases, easements and rights.

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 Decision makers must have due regard to the public sector equality duty in making their decisions. The public sector equality duty is set out at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and is as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In terms of advancing equality of opportunity, this means to:

- (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (iii) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

In terms of

- (a) Tackling prejudice, and
- (b) Promoting understanding,

The relevant protected characteristics are:

- ☐ Age
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Gender reassignment
- ☐ Pregnancy and maternity
- ☐ Race,
- ☐ Religion or belief
- ☐ Sex
- ☐ Sexual orientation
- ☐ Marriage and Civil partnership

6.2 At this stage, no potential adverse impact arising from the recommendations in this report has been identified. However, the equalities implications identified in the Equality Analysis will continue to be considered and assessed as further data / information is obtained or becomes available during the implementation process.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 None specific.

8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

8.1 None specific.

ALAN LUNT

Strategic Director of Regeneration &
Environment

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APPENDIX A. WELSH HARP / BRENT RESERVOIR MANAGEMENT PLAN: ACTION PLAN FOR 2020-2021

The Management Plan outlines the management considered necessary to sustain the Welsh Harp for wildlife, recreation, landscape, flood-control, economic and other benefits of the reservoir. These are achievable over varying time-frames, though many are not affordable in the short term. Officers of the main land-holding organisations at the Welsh Harp and some other organisations are currently (early 2021) working on a 'vision' exercise which will include a review of possible sources of funding and income. This Action Plan tracks current year progress while also highlighting projects with a longer timeframe.

RAG colour coding is subjective and may take account of the significance of the issue and also of any progress.

Action	Lead	Budget	Approximate timetable	RAG status (text column provided for use if plain printing)	Progress: 2020-21 to 23rd February 2021
Dam wall and reservoir: statutory responsibility to maintain dam wall, associated structures and the dam	Canal and River Trust (Canal and River Trust)	Canal and River Trust	Maintain. On-Going	GREEN	Dam wall and mechanism maintained to operational and statutory standards. Statutory inspection and works in progress: January to February 2021.
Maintain open water for water sports	Welsh Harp Sailing Association (WHSA)	Undertaken by volunteers of the (WHSA)	On-Going	GREEN	Monitoring and actions by Welsh Harp Sailing Association.
Sailing Infrastructure: club-houses, boats, and service areas.	Sailing Clubs	Maintained by the Canal and River Trust; and by the sailing clubs.	On-going	GREEN	The Welsh Harp Sailing Association and clubs maintain the water sports infrastructure. See also Phoenix Canoe Club.
Bird hides: maintenance of the hides; the surrounding vegetation (sightlines) and habitats.	Welsh Harp Conservation Group / others		On-going	GREEN	The WHCG organise winter projects at and near to the hides.

Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre	Thames 21, Brent Council		Thames 21 have managed the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre since January 2016.	AMBER	Activities at the Centre have been affected by the restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Discussions are underway to understand the opportunities at the location as an education centre.
Allotments	Brent, West Hendon Allotment Society	Brent: refer to Allotments and Food Growing Strategy. Barnet: West Hendon Allotments are self-managed by the holders.	Allotments are maintained. There are some areas for biodiversity within the Dors Close Allotments.	GREEN	Barnet Council: West Hendon Allotments: self-managed. Brent Council: Allotments Strategy: Birchen Grove Allotments and Dors Close Allotments.
Open spaces, pitches, paths, Capital Ring, interpretative signage, and other parks furniture. Litter collection.	Barnet, Brent	Existing maintenance resources. Barnet; and Brent public realm budgets.	On-going.	AMBER	Maintained; and well-used. Signage is in variable condition. The Canal & River Trust are currently reviewing the interpretative panels, located on lecterns at three locations (Neasden Recreation Ground, Welsh Harp Open Space, Cool Oak Lane).
Signage	Brent / Barnet.			AMBER	Maintained. The Canal & River Trust are currently reviewing a selection of the signage. Part of the review extends beyond the Canal and River Trust land to other areas of the Welsh Harp.

Parks infrastructure	Brent / Barnet			GREEN	<p>Parks infrastructure is checked at appropriate frequencies.</p> <p>Birchen Grove Car Park: Installation of mini-humps to deter excessive speeding and other anti-social behavior in car park: January 2020.</p> <p>Silver Jubilee Park Car Park: resurfaced and line-marked: January 2020.</p>
Monitoring: wildlife, and indicators	WHCG; and public authorities.	Mainly by volunteers of WHCG.	On-going	AMBER – diverse wildlife but potential for improvements.	<p>See the most recent (2019) report on wildlife produced by the Welsh Harp Conservation Group, available on their website and via the following link (try Ctrl and double click if it does not open immediately):</p> <p>https://brentres.wordpress.com/publications/</p> <p>Programme of activities led by Welsh Harp Conservation Group for: refer to the website.</p>
Grasslands and cutting	Barnet, Brent	Maintenance: within existing resources. Restoration work is currently unfunded. Current path cutting estimated at £5,000 / year.	Spring to autumn.	GREEN	<p>Grasslands: A grassland maintenance schedule introduced by Brent Council across the Borough (including the Welsh Harp) in spring 2018 includes emphasis on improving biodiversity value of amenity grassland. Sown areas of bee-friendly plants were added in 2019. See the following link for areas for areas of spring and summer grassland at Neasden Recreation Ground:</p> <p>https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16413216/neasden-recreation-ground.jpg</p>

Grasslands: paths cutting	Barnet, Brent	Maintenance: within existing resources. Restoration work is currently unfunded. Current path cutting estimated at £5,000 / year.	Spring to autumn.	AMBER	<p>Paths maintained but some have narrowed with scrub growth, particularly at Neasden Recreation Ground (see notes on Marshland).</p> <p>The lower grassland path at the Welsh Harp Open Space is narrow. Work in 2020 aimed at reducing encroaching scrub, but the path width could benefit from occasional cutting.</p>
Sailing and sports development	WHSA: Welsh Harp Sailing Association and constituent clubs.	Undertaken by volunteers of WHSA.	On-Going	AMBER	Led by the sailing and water sports clubs. Phoenix Canoe Club are proposing improvements to their club facilities for water sports, particularly for educational use; and for a café accessible from the Welsh Harp / Capital Ring path.
Litter	Brent Council. Barnet Council. Canal & River Trust. Thames 21. Environment Agency.	Landowners: Brent Council, Barnet Council, Canal & River Trust. Leaseholders. Also much volunteer involvement.	On-going.	RED	<p>The January to February 2021 temporary partial drawdown of the water level within the Reservoir has revealed large quantities of litter, waste and alluvium (silt). Of the alluvium, the Canal & River Trust have stated that the removal is logistically beyond any resources that are currently available to the Canal and River Trust.</p> <p>Of the litter, there has been much activity by the wider community to clear, where it is safe to do so; and also within Covid-19 regulations, material near on the shorelines.</p> <p>The Canal & River Trust have indicated that some of the larger items have been mapped for later removal.</p>

River trash traps: at inflows of Dollis Brook, and Silk Stream	Environment Agency	Budget provided by the Environment Agency	Maintain, On-going.	AMBER / RED	<p>The Environment Agency have been contacted to check on the clearance of accumulations of litter from the trash screens on the tributary rivers entering the reservoir, at the Silk Stream and at the River Brent.</p> <p>The Environment Agency clear and remove the material on a maintenance schedule but accumulations of material have been evident during recent months.</p>
Clean up projects.	The community		On-going but with increased projects while the shoreline has been exposed due to lowered water levels.	AMBER / GREEN: Much has been achieved, but much is beyond the safe reach of shore work.	As noted above, where safe to do so, litter clean-up projects have been organized over several years by the Welsh Harp Litter Pickers and by residents near to Neasden Recreation Ground. More recently that has involved also the Welsh Harp Group at Neasden Recreation Ground and a range of other volunteers organized via social media.
Bird rafts, islands. There are approximately 20 rafts.	Welsh Harp Conservation Group (WHCG)	Volunteer projects are held annually to maintain, repair or renew rafts. .	On-going. Autumn / winter.	AMBER	WHCG have a programme for maintenance of bird rafts. Works are outside of the bird breeding season of March to August inclusive. Recent problems with access to the rafts for maintenance due to alluviation.
Reedbeds: remove young trees	WHCG	Volunteer projects are held annually to maintain the reedbeds.	Remove young trees. On-going. Autumn / winter.	AMBER	Led by the WHCG.

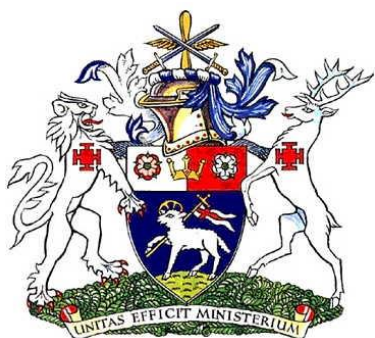
Reedbeds: increase	All	Natural growth is encouraged, so costs are low, but need to remove young trees.	Periodic reviews as part of Biodiversity Action Plans.	AMBER	Habitat maintained. Estimates from GIS aerial images suggest that the area of reedbed has increased by 0.09 ha between 2008 and 2016. As at February 2021 there are reedbeds on the main arm of the reservoir in the eastern marsh, on the shore of Neasden Recreation Ground near to the dam wall; and on the shore of the Welsh Harp Open Space.
Wet woodland	Canal and River Trust, Barnet, Brent	Largely self-managing.	On-going.	AMBER	Largely self-managing. Rubbish noted in (during the water drawdown of Jan-Feb 2021) and in the vicinity of the woodland.
Woodland	Brent, Barnet, WHCG, Canal and River Trust	Largely self-managing. Un-funded: management of woodland to increase diversity, but potential for creative use of material.		AMBER	Largely self-managing, but control of willow and other scrub required in marshland at edge of Reservoir.

Marshland: maintain	Brent Council, Welsh Harp Sailing Association, Canal and River Trust.	Increase the extent of the marshland around the shores of the Reservoir for nature conservation, landscape, and to increase wind for water sports (by reducing excess growth of trees).	Reduce young tree growth on shores of Neasden Recreation Ground, Welsh Harp Open Space.	AMBER	<p>Willow and scrub growth is exceeding management work on the shoreline. Estimates from GIS aerial images suggest that the area of marshland (including fen, marsh and swamp) has reduced by 0.3 ha between 2008 and 2016, due to succession to scrub woodland.</p> <p>Discussions from autumn 2018 onwards by Canal & River Trust, Welsh Harp Sailing Association, Brent Council; and from summer 2020 with Barnet Council and Welsh Harp Conservation Group.</p> <p>Welsh Harp Open Space: trial marshland works by Welsh Harp Sailing Association, February 2019.</p> <p>January and February 2020: Continuation of work in marshland edge by Welsh Harp Sailing Association on north shore (Welsh Harp Open Space).</p> <p>2020-21: Works commenced in September 2020 organised by Welsh Harp Sailing Association (with the Canal & River Trust; and Brent Council). Northern shore.</p>
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Marshland: increase	Brent, Barnet, Brent Catchment Partnership	Investigate sources of finance for long-term restoration of river catchment; and for flood alleviation.	Increase the extent of the marshland around the shores of the Reservoir for nature conservation, landscape, and to increase wind for water sports.	AMBER	Marshland habitat at risk of scrub encroachment. See the comments for 'Marshland maintain', above.
Marshland: orchids	WHCG, Brent	Marshland work by Brent Council. Volunteer work by WHCG.	WHCG to provide information.	STATUS CURRENTLY NOT KNOWN	As for Marshland, above. Several of the species of marshland orchids present at the Reservoir would benefit from relatively open (un-shaded) situations or may have other specific requirements.
Marshland (northern arm of Reservoir)	Barnet, Barratt PLC		Restoration of shore by Phase 1 of West Hendon redevelopment.	GREEN	Refer to Barnet.
South-bank boardwalk	Canal and River Trust	Canal & Rivers Trust budget: periodic work.	As required.	RED / AMBER	The Canal and River Trust have plans to restore a boardwalk in 2021. The Canal & River Trust are looking at options.

Invasive species: Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and other invasive species. Invasive species at the Welsh Harp extends also to a number of other species where growth is across paths, excessively shading marshland or causing other issues.	Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council	Brent Council Parks actions: Knotweed reduced at the Brent Reservoir including at Neasden Recreation Ground; and Giant Hogweed at the Welsh Harp Open Space. Barnet Council have reduced Knotweed near to Cool Oak Lane bridge. Thames 21 are investigating possible systems for mapping of invasive species.	Control of these species requires continuing attention: timely short-term control; control at the time of other works; and as part of longer term management.	RED	On-going by Brent Council and Barnet Council. The Brent River Catchment Partnership are investigating how to improve control along the whole catchment. Operational knowledge is also shared via the River Brent Catchment Partnership.
Cool Oak Lane bridge. Cool Oak Lane bridge and Wood Lane traffic.	Barnet Highways (leading) in consultation with Brent Highways.	See the proposals as part of the West Hendon re-development.	Works in progress: early 2020. Bridge/s: refer to plans for construction works in 2017 (Barnet; Barrett). Damage to existing brickwork by vehicles, 2017.	GREEN	Pedestrian footbridge alongside historic, vehicular footbridge.

River Brent Catchment Management Plan	All; led by Environment Agency / Thames 21.		2011 - ongoing	AMBER – in progress, with large challenges to improve the River catchment.	Action Plan published at: see website: https://www.thames21.org.uk/catchment-partnerships/brent/
Welsh Harp Vision	Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council, Thames 21, London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority.		In progress.	AMBER – in progress	Developing a vision and options for the Welsh Harp.



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

4 March 2021

Agenda Item 7

Title	London Borough of Barnet Welsh Harp Update
Report of	Executive Director - Environment
Wards	West Hendon
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	None
Enclosures	None
Officer Contact Details	Matthew Gunyon, Greenspaces Service Manager matthew.gunyon@barnet.gov.uk 0208 359 7403

Summary

To update the committee regarding the on-going site management issues and report the position on the Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Officers Recommendations

1. That the committee consider and note the contents of this report and to invite the committee to make comments on the contents of the report.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee is comprised of Canals and Rivers Trust, Brent Council, Welsh Harp Conservation Group, Welsh Harp Sailing Association and Barnet Council. The committee is a consultative committee only and meets on a quarterly basis.
- 1.2 The committee is invited to note and make comments on the on-going site management issues during this quarter as follows:
- 1.3 Illegal encampments
The Greenspaces Team continue to work closely with the Barnet Community Safety Team, the Local Police and other partners to identify and remove encampments;
- 1.4 Litter and Flytipping
 - 1.4.1 A request has been put to the Barnet Community Safety Team to consider the need for CCTV along Cool Oak Lane.
 - 1.4.2 Fly Tipping should be reported to the BarnetCST@barnet.gov.uk
- 1.5 West Hendon Playing Fields Master Plan & Replacement Ball Court
 - 1.5.1 The Sports Hub Master Plans which covers West Hendon Playing Fields and Barnet/Kind George V Playing Fields Master plans which were presented and approved at Environment Committee 12 March 2020 (<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=695&MId=9910&Ver=4>),

A budget has been allocated to the project to further progress the scheme through to a full technical design which would lead to a developing a planning application for the whole scheme.
- 1.6 Welsh Harp and SSSI management
 - 1.6.1 The council in partnership with Brent Council, Canals and Rivers Trust, The GLA, The London Wildlife Trust and Thames 21 is developing an overarching Vision for the Welsh Harp and a review of the Management Plan.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The terms of reference of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee include that it considers and co-ordinates all the interests of recreation, leisure, maintenance and nature conservation with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp Reservoir and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 None

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The committee note the actions being implemented as set out under section one.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The Councils Corporate Plan 2015 – 2020 identifies as one of its Corporate Priorities that Barnet's parks and open spaces will be amongst the best in London. The need to develop more innovative ways of maintaining its parks and green spaces, including through greater partnerships with community groups and focus on using parks to achieve wider public health priorities for the borough.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 Any costs incurred from the programmes and initiatives will be met within the existing Greenspaces budget.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to safeguard, protect and enhance sites of special scientific interest. The Local Authority has the power under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to acquire, declare and manage nature reserves. However, English Nature must be consulted by the Authority in the use of the powers given by section 21. The 1949 Act states that a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) must be managed in such a way to ensure that use of the site does not result in any damage to its natural features.

5.4.2 As set out in the Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee:
 “to consider and co-ordinate all the interests of recreation / leisure / maintenance / nature conservation and statutory requirements of the British Waterways Board and the Environment Agency at the Welsh Harp; with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp Reservoir and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation”.

- 5.4.3 Barnet's Constitution – Article 8 – Joint Arrangements- states at paragraph 8.1 that the Council may establish joint arrangements with one or more Local Authorities. Such arrangements may involve the appointment of a Joint Committee with these Local Authorities.

5.5 Risk Management

- 5.5.1 *There are no risk management issues associated with this report.*

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.6.1 Parks and Open Spaces benefit all sectors of the community by improving the local environment. Maintenance is carried out according to the management plan and takes into account requests from residents, users and Members. Improvements are made, wherever possible, to ensure equal access for all users.

The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services

5.7 Corporate Parenting Principles

- 5.7.1 N/A

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.8.1 The Consultative Committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis, the committee comprises the land owners, legislative bodies, and third sector volunteer groups who work within the reserve to deliver positive outcomes.

5.9 Insight

- 5.9.1 None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan can be found on Brent Council's website: www.brent.gov.uk/parks in the biodiversity section.

VIRTUAL MEETING

WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

DATE AND TIME

THURSDAY 4TH MARCH, 2021

AT 7.00 PM

Dear Councillors,

Please find enclosed additional papers relating to the following items for the above mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda.

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
4.1	PROPOSED WORK UPDATES - SSSI AREA	
8	WELSH HARP WASTE CRISIS UPDATE	3 - 6

Pakeezah Rahman Pakeezah.Rahman@barnet.gov.uk 020 8359 6452

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Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee Report

Title: Welsh Harp Waste Crisis Update

AGENDA ITEM 8

Meeting Date: 4th March 2021

Author: Ben Watt

Service/ Dept.: Independent campaigner

Report to be Presented By: Ben Watt (local campaigner allied to Friends of the Welsh Harp and Welsh Harp Conservation Group)

1. Summary

Lowering of water levels in January 2021 revealed stark extent of not just an 'unsightly litter' issue or waste crisis, but a widescale **environmental crisis**. This is **decades of neglect** threatening a SSSI both **offshore** (long-term plastic pollution, toxic silt, lack of selective dredging strategy, ongoing outfall, unchecked inflowing debris) and **onshore** (no council biodiversity plan, no mapping of invasive and rare plant species, no parks enforcement, tolerance of unlawful angling, tolerance of public tree-felling and greenery destruction, ineffective anti-fly-tipping strategy, lack of woodland, scrub and riverside clean-up schemes, absence of SSSI/Local Nature Reserve public signage and information).

All landowner and statutory bodies - Canal and River Trust, Barnet and Brent Councils and the Environment Agency - caught off guard by the **public outcry** and photo-stories on social media, **mass daily litter-picking** by volunteers, and **critical news reports** on ITV and BBC London. The central environmental crisis - **a broken window culture in a SSSI** - in not being adequately addressed.

2. Updates since last WHJCC

N/A

3. Impact

- **Equalities and Diversity**

N/A

4. Consultation and Engagement

Friends of the Welsh Harp
Welsh Harp Conservation Group
Good Law Project

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

CRT must reassess their hastily published Welsh Harp plan of Feb 2021 and (1) accept their responsibility to present a long-term intensive clean-up programme for both offshore and shoreline plastic pollution, (2) refrain from framing and trivialising the crisis as an 'unsightly litter' issue, as if mendable by family day-outs, kindly volunteers and #PlasticsChallenge hashtags, (3) confront, cost and timetable a staged programme of selective dredging around the wetlands for responsible habitat management making use of the experts in the WHCG who built it, and (4) consult with the WHCG and timetable regular breeding raft maintenance on the east and north marshes; all of these in line with their statutory duty.

The EA must (1) make repairs to the broken grill on the Dollis Brook trap and deliver a clear weekly maintenance schedule in line with their duty to keep the trash traps clear (2) consider installing a second trap nearer Brent Cross to alleviate build-up (3) make a full regular clean up of river channels *downstream* of both trash traps especially after heavy rainfall and overflows, and (4) act to mitigate and report on ongoing outfall pollution since the paint factory fire of 2018.

Barnet Council (and Brent Council where relevant) must use S106 windfalls and other funds to (1) deliver a comprehensive implementable biodiversity plan and not just await the upcoming new 'Vision for Welsh Harp' in which many initiatives may well be wishful thinking (2) begin immediate systematic mapping and management of invasive and rare plant species and wildlife (3) employ better methods to deter fly-tipping and begin a major woodland, scrub and riverbank scheme to clear dumped rubbish (4) begin zero tolerance of angling, discarded fishing equipment, public tree-felling and random greenery destruction and (5) create clear SSSI and Local Nature Reserve public information signage at all entrances to encourage best practice from the public.

Natural England currently class Welsh Harp's SSSI status as 'favourable', yet with key bird numbers down and rare plants unmapped, if not enough steps taken by landowners to maintain standards Natural England have the powers to step in and require necessary actions to be taken through a **management notice**. Public authorities also must be mindful of their "Biodiversity Duty".

Further public outrage and action, and even other acts and regulations potentially looming.

6. Background papers

Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan 2016 - <https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16404048/brent-reservoir-welsh-harp-management-plan-15-03-2016.pdf>

CRT Welsh Harp Reservoir Clean Up, Feb 2021 - <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/where-we-work/london-and-south-east/the-welsh-harp-reservoir-clean-up>

ITV News Report - <https://www.itv.com/news/london/2021-01-26/welsh-harp-reservoir-special-site-for-nature-being-plagued-by-litter>

BBC News Report - <https://www.dropbox.com/s/qxvfizx7cg4z18d/20210221%20BBC%20London%20News%20Brent%20Reservoir%20SMALL.mov?dl=0>

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