

MATTERS ARISING FROM WELSH HARP JCC MEETING 22 JULY 2015.

At the last meeting, as Chair, I undertook to follow up with relevant Officers on various issues that were raised. The responses received are as follows :

Q: CANAL WATER TRUST

an update before the next meeting of the committee on rough sleepers in the Welsh Harp Reservoir; Secondly at the meeting it was agreed that: this matter would be discussed between the LWT, Natural England and the Canal and River Trust to identify an appropriate way forward. Subsequently been asked "if the issue of including the Reservoir had been included in the existing trial (crayfish) as had been suggested it might had proved possible"

A: Good Morning Councillor Khatri,
Below is an update from Canal and River Trust

Rough sleeping:

- Over the past year we have built a strong partnership with Thames Reach and through regular joint outreach patrols we have been about to monitor these and made some improvements.
- The long term rough sleeper, who was nearby to the JVC building on Priestly Way moved on in April, after several outreach visits.
- Another two large camps were also discovered at this time also. It is thought that around 5 - 8 people were using these sites but on our last visit (6 weeks ago) these seem to have been abandoned and it is thought that there are no current rough sleepers at this time.
- Three or four "dens" (probably used for drinking or taking drugs) remain, but it's clear from the debris left they are not used for sleeping.
- One round sleeper continues to use the site where the Brent Feeder meets the North Circular near Ikea. Thames Reach are aware and will continue to visit offering outreach services.
- Now that the area is not being used by persistent or entrenched sleepers it's a good time to consider clear up events and possible project to "design" out the secluded nature of the spaces and discourage further rough sleeping. Again our partners Thames Reach are happy to advise on this and the Canal and River Trust are keen to speak with groups locally who would like to join us in working on long term solutions.

Crayfish trapping:

A response from our Environment Manager

I believe 'Water Patrol' (which gets sent out in local papers) was done with our input, but by a separate agency/contractor. I'll find out who LWT needs to contact extra copies.

Re the crayfish- thanks for the offer of help. There should be no crayfish trapping being done- and I think it will be a matter of trying to enforce this – but currently I'm following it up with our fisheries team- John Ellis- to see if going through the angling clubs might be effective. Related to this is

an initiative we are working on in London (inc EA, Queen Mary Univ and others) which is looking at whether commercial trapping of crayfish can be effective in helping deal with the populations of invasive crayfish species we have. This is not the general position around the country, but is a trial.

The trial has not yet started: I'm not sure if it was clear from my previous messages- but the principal of trapping non-native crayfish in order to manage their populations and protect native white-clawed crayfish is not at all fully supported in conservation terms. If done in an ad-hoc or piecemeal way- all evidence indicates that it is counterproductive(<http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/C209050.pdf>)
For that reason, the trial needs to be very comprehensive, and this is what the group we have engaged with for the River Lea intends to try. The trial has not yet begun- and the group has not met recently, but I believe the will is still there.
I will see if there is scope for it – when/after it has started on the ground – to extend to other locations and including Brent Reservoir.

In the meantime- we should discourage all illegal trapping, and promote the check, clean, dry campaign to minimise spread of disease <https://www.buglife.org.uk/crayfish-for-everyone> from equipment (eg fishing tackle) used in the reservoir.

This might not be 'action on the ground' as soon as people may wish- so sorry for bringing this news.

Q: WELSH HARP CONSERVATION GROUP

"the outcome of the monthly monitoring surveys of bird populations"

A: Dear Cllr Sury

Attached (**ATTACHMENT 1**) are the wildfowl and waterbird counts for Brent Reservoir 2014-15. These are carried out on a specific date each month as part of the National WEBS Count (Wildfowl and Estuary Birds). a long-term monitoring system. We have many years of counts to monitor changes in populations both locally and nationally. Counts take place on the same date each month across the whole of the British Isles.

As you can see numbers vary a lot during the year due to natural effects such as migration, breeding, cold weather etc. The counts are for the whole site, ie both reservoir basins and there is a lot of interchange between the two waters especially due to disturbance from recreational sailing and canoeing. So you can see that the Northern Basin (next to WH Estate) is important to the birds as a refuge during these periods.

Best Regards
Roy Beddard
(Chair Welsh Harp Conservation Group)

FOLLOW UP Response:
Dear Cllr Khatri

You may also be interested in the attached (**ATTACHMENT 2**) which is the WHCG Annual Report for 2014, just published.

It covers all birds seen at the site in 2014, not just water birds. Feel free to pass it on to committee members etc.

Best regards
Roy Beddard

Q: BARNET COUNCIL - PLANNING

- (i) further information on the outcome of the public enquiry regarding the Compulsory Purchase of the West Hendon Estate and circulate this via Brent Democratic Services;*
- (ii) update regarding the impact of the Brent Cross Regeneration works on the Brent River Stream.*
- (iii) explanation of the process undertaken with respect to the decision to remove the swales and why the relevant authorities were not consulted as required.*

A: Dear Cllr Khatri,

Thank you for your recent email.

(i) You requested information as to the current position with the determination of the Compulsory Purchase Order enquiry, I can confirm that at present we have had no formal response or determination of the enquiry, we were however informed that the decision had a good probability of being sent by the end of October 2015, we are therefore awaiting this being forwarded to us and as soon as I am made aware of its receipt I will inform you. I would also mention that the Planning Inspectorate will normally inform any participants involved with the enquiry or any third party representatives of the final decision.

(ii) The alteration and diversion works to the River Brent were submitted in detail with the Phase 1A (North) reserved matters application **15/03312/RMA**. Details of the Landscaping and appearance of the central part of the Brent Cross River Corridor were also submitted under application **15/03315/RMA**. (Landscape and Appearance for the eastern and western reaches will require submission under Phase 1B (North)).

Both planning applications were considered at the September Planning Committee where councillors voted unanimously to support the officer's recommendation to approve the applications subject to conditions.

The proposals for the River Brent corridor create a more natural channel and bank profile along its entire length as it passes through the Brent Cross Application site including a series of marginal and riparian habitats. Proposals take an area of river from a situation of limited biodiversity, low ecological value and minimal public access and landscape amenity and improve the water quality, the resilience to flooding and the range of available habitats. The application therefor improves biodiversity whilst providing a key pedestrian and cyclist route to and from the Brent Cross Shopping Centre and the wider regeneration area. The restoration of the river to a more natural state includes the provision of Bird and bat boxes, Bird tunnels and insect Hotels.

The Alteration and Diversion works were approved subject to a S106 requirement for £200,000 towards the naturalisation of an area of Mutton Brook, upstream of the application site, this is still within the Dollis Brook catchment area. Such provision would add further Ecological improvements to the wider water body.

In relation to potential detrimental impacts upon the SSSI. Concern was raised by the Environment Agency relating to the risk of pollutants entering the River Brent during construction activities. A

condition has accordingly been applied to the Alteration and diversion works under the Infrastructure Reserved Matters Application (15/03312/RMA):

“Prior to commencement of the development within Phase 1a (north) a detailed surface water pollution construction method statement shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The construction method statement will demonstrate how pollution to surface water will be prevented during the alteration and diversion works to the river Brent.

Reason: To prevent pollution of surface water from accumulated pollutants during the construction phase.”

The Existing S73 Permission is also subject to condition **44.10**.

This requires that:

“No development shall begin within any Phase or Sub Phase until a detailed Water Framework Directive Assessment examining the impacts to the watercourses on site and associated mitigation measures has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To protect the Dollis Brook water body. Development that encroaches upon watercourses has a potentially severe impact on their ecological value. The River Brent and Clitterhouse Stream on this site make up part of the Dollis Brook catchment, which is currently classified as being of poor ecological potential. The Thames River Basin Management Plan requires the restoration and enhancement of water bodies to prevent deterioration and promote recovery.”

The Water Framework Assessment must demonstrate that the proposal will:

- Promote sustainable water use
- Aim to achieve at least ‘good’ status for all waters.
- Prevent deterioration and enhance status of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands.
- Reduce pollution from priority substances.
- Prevent deterioration / reduce pollution of groundwater Contributing to mitigating effects of floods and droughts

The above approval and controls will ensure that the impacts downstream from the BxC Development site will be beneficial.

(iii) I can confirm that the removal of the swales from the scheme was undertaken as a result of a considered assessment by the council’s arboriculturist, who reviewed the need to retain a number of lime trees present on the side of the lake against their loss and the installation of the swales.

It was decided that the trees provide a considerable level of amenity value and whilst their loss would have allowed for the installation of the swales, it was decided that the installation of attenuations tanks and the retention of the trees would be a much more acceptable solution.

The retention of the lime trees would retain the considerable amenity value and continue to enhance the character of the area, the installation of the attenuation tanks would then allow for the necessary infrastructure for the flood alleviation scheme to be installed.

Kind Regards
Terence Garner

Q: ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

the impact of the development on water quality and suggested that officers explore funding opportunities to enable regular monitoring to be conducted. A member highlighted that the Environment Agency (EA) did undertake monitoring of water quality.

A: Dear Cllr Sury,
All being well I intend to attend the next meeting.

I have commented on water quality testing before at the WHJCC but the Agency's position on this may change due to a change in the way the Brent Catchment is being monitored overall under the Water Framework Directive. The Agency do not monitor water quality for private concerns and the Welsh Harp is an asset owned by the Canal & Rivers Trust. We only sample for WFD and pollution incident investigations.

Under water Framework Directive every catchment is divided into parts deemed significantly different in character and termed water bodies. Each water body is monitored to assess its physio/chemical status (phosphate, nitrogen, dissolved oxygen) and bio (invertebrate/fish populations). There is at least one sample point in each water body.

Until recently the Welsh Harp was included within the Dollis and Upper Brent water body (GB106039022980) and sampling for representation of this water body is currently done at two locations above where the Silk Stream and Brent enter the Welsh Harp. The Welsh Harp has now been deemed a separate water body (GB30641690) in its own right and a decision by our national office may dictate that it should be sampled from now on a regular basis. Firstly to acquire baseline data and establish a condition status. Subsequently to monitor change. Not all lakes are sampled, however, and because the Welsh Harp is on line and we already have ongoing data sets for points immediately above and below the water body it may not require independent testing. We do take quarterly samples from the Brent at Neasden Lane (TQ2060786451), which is just 500 metres below the outlet from Welsh Harp. We also take quarterly samples from the two rivers at the points where they flow into the Welsh Harp – Silk Stream at Silk Bridge (TQ2178388345) and Brent at Priestley Way (TQ2242487374).

Please see the attached file (**ATTACHMENT 3**) which shows all the results of samples taken from these points over the past year. Although it appears that we've been sampling two of the points monthly, we're only sampling for the basic WFD physchem parameters (DO, ammonia, phosphate etc) on a quarterly basis. The high ammonia levels in the Brent at Neasden Lane are more likely to be due to the polluted surface water outfall just upstream of the sampling point rather than something in the Welsh Harp itself. Monitoring data on our Water Information Management System (WIMS) can be accessed by the public by request.

Further more, To which 'development' is the enquirer referring to? West Hendon has gone through rigorous planning conditions. More of an issue I'd have thought could be the Brent Cross regeneration, involving a realignment and restoration of the River Brent, through what is deemed contaminated land on a site previously a sewage and gas works. There are also ongoing issues of misconnections throughout the Dollis and Silk Stream catchments which result in sewage and washing powders reaching the Welsh Harp where they settle behind the impoundment created by the dam wall. There is also an outfall which has frequently been identified as dispensing sewage into the Welsh Harp at TQ 21981 87546 in the past. This has been investigated I believe by Thames Water on a number of occasions. There are also concerns with regard to pollution issues from road run off and industry alongside and upstream of the Welsh Harp too.

Regards
Neale Hider

Q: BARRATTS – WESH HENDON ESTATE REGENERATION

*Issue of the continuing problem with use of prohibited roads by Contractors.
further information on the outcome of the public enquiry regarding the Compulsory Purchase of the West Hendon Estate.
Representatives from Barratt Homes would be asked and should attend committee meetings in the future.*

A: Good morning Cllr,

Prohibited Roads

Barratt London try hard to actively manage this problem. I am not personally aware of any recent incidents where a vehicle leaving our site has used, for instance, Herbert Road (where they should have instead made a left turn onto the A5). I will raise this issue with our Construction Management Team in order that this message is strongly relayed to all contractors again at their daily briefings and inductions.

Do note, there is a small construction site developing 18 flats at the previous "Deerfields Club" on Station Road, that is in close proximity to our construction site on the estate. I do not know what the access arrangements are for this site for works traffic, but Terry Garner should be able to advise further. It is possible incidences of construction traffic using Herbert Road are not related to the works at West Hendon estate – although I appreciate and accept in the past they have been. When we know we have a high volume of works traffic leaving the estate we have a dedicated banksman keeping watch on the exit of Perryfield Way gyratory onto the A5. We will continue to do this.

CPO Inquiry

There is no tangible feedback on this I'm afraid, save to say, the Planning Inspectors report is with the Secretary of State for consideration and has been for a number of weeks now. We were expecting an informal turnaround time of early November although this may be optimistic now. I'll seek to provide further clarity at the JCC meeting but have no direct power to influence this as I am sure you will appreciate.

Future Meetings

Barratt London want to actively participate in the JCC Welsh Harp forum. However, we received very late notice of the previous meeting from the administrator, which meant both me and the surveyor who works for me were both unable to attend due to other existing commitments. We are both looking forward however to attending the next meeting on 19 November 2015.

With regard to updates, we will be providing a verbal report on progress on the following;

- General progress of construction
- CPO Inquiry update
- Noise monitoring on the Harp
- The new cycle and footbridge that will cross the Harp alongside the existing bridge on Cool Oak Lane
- A general update from our Project Ecologist on her work at West Hendon and the Harp over the last 4 months

Anything else, do let me know.

Kind regards

Nathan Smith

Q: BRENT X REGENERATION PARTNERS (STANDARD LIFE & HAMMERSONS)

the issue of the impact of the Brent Cross Regeneration works on the Brent River Stream.

We would welcome a representative to attend meetings as this will be a subject being raised frequently.

A: Cllr Khatri

I am the right person, and will prepare a brief report for you. We are all busy on some design work this week and will prepare the report on over the next few weeks, issuing it to you before the end of the month, in plenty of time for your next meeting and will confirm who will be able to attend to present it.

Regards

Mike Nisbet

Standard Life Investments Ltd

Cllr Sury N Khatri

Vice Chair – Welsh Harp JCC

10 November 2015

