

Decisions of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

19 July 2016

Members Present:-

Chairman: Councillor Sury Khatri

Vice Chair: Councillor Amer Agha

Councillor John Hart

Also in attendance

Roy Beddard-Welsh Harp Conservation Group

Clive Cohen-London Wildlife Trust

Diane Murphy-London Wildlife Trust

Catherine Cullen-London Wildlife Trust

Nathan Smith-Barratt London

Derrick Chung-West Hendon Residents' Association/Friends of York Park

John Shepherd-Welsh Harp Sailing Association

Phil Atkison-Phoenix Canoe Club

Dale Langdale-Hendon Rifle Club

1. MINUTES

The governance officer from the London Borough of Barnet welcomed all attendees to the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee. She updated the Committee on the membership of the Committee. The London Borough of Barnet agreed in the last Annual Council on 24 May the membership of Barnet Councillors which remained the same as the previous municipal year. Members are Councillor Hart, Councillor Khatri, Councillor Langleben, Councillor Kay. The London Borough of Brent agreed in the last Council meeting on 18 May the new membership of the Welsh Harp. The new membership is Councillor Agha, Councillor Dixon, Councillor Crane and Councillor Mashari.

The governance officer then progressed to seek nominations for the appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Councillor Hart nominated Cllr Khatri to be Chairman and Councillor Agha seconded.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Khatri will be the Chairman of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee for the 2016-2017 municipal year.

Councillor Hart nominated Councillor Agha to be Vice Chairman and Councillor Khatri seconded.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Agha will be the Vice-Chairman of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee for the 2016-2017 municipal year.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2016 be approved subject to the following amendments:

- John Shepherd to be added as an attendee

- Include apologies from Roy Beddard

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor George Crane (London Borough of Brent)
Councillor Liz Dixon (London Borough of Brent)
Councillor Langleben (London Borough of Barnet)
Councillor Mashari (London Borough of Brent)
Councillor Kay (London Borough of Barnet)
Geoff Johnson – Woolmead Residents' Association
Julie Johnson -Local Agenda 21
Judy Shepherd-West Hendon Community forum

3. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None

5. LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET-WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee discussed matters arising before progressing to the Barnet Management Plan.

On item 7 in the minutes of the last meeting there was a follow up action for Councillor Khatri but due to the fact that the minutes were published quite late he agreed to report on this action in the next Committee.

Mr Cohen asked in relation to item 4 in the minutes whether there is a report that addressed the suitability of attenuating tanks and whether this measure has been effective and adequate. Councillor Khatri agreed to follow up on this point.

The Chairman welcomed Nathan Smith from Barratt London. Nathan stated that the tanks have been installed however, data is not available but can be collated. If data covered a 3-4 month period that would be more valuable for the next Committee.

Mr Cohen asked whether there have been any control measures around the red claw crayfish. Historically, there has been a belief that measures were not necessary. Leslie Williams clarified that there were no control measures currently in place. There is budget available currently to introduce a Kingfisher bank.

Mr Beddard mentioned that kingfishers are breeding in the reservoir and that he has seen people fishing there. Their evidence from regular bird watching led him to the conclusion that they are breeding successfully. He is not certain if this is territorial, they seem to be fairly well spread-out.

Councillor Khatri requested from Ms Williams to follow up on this point and report back to the Committee whether there is a need for these banks.

Mr Beddard questioned the need for a kingfish bank since there is currently breeding. An application for a grant needs to be well-thought before submission.

Councillor Khatri suggested considering this item at a future meeting and requested that the Welsh Harp Conservation and London Wildlife Trust make their own observations and report in the next few months.

Mr Beddard agreed to circulate in writing his observations regarding breeding.

Mr Williams also agreed to prepare a report with the advantages and disadvantages of having a kingfish bank and bring it to the next Committee. Mr Cohen also mentioned that crayfish is a prolific species and that is decimating other species and should not be ignored.

Ms Murphy mentioned that there is no effective control and the Canal and River Trust were going to look at that. Councillor Khatri agreed to follow up on this.

Mr Shepherd mentioned that when you observe on a hot day, there are thousands if not millions of crayfish.

Following discussion of matters arising the Chairman moved to Barnet Management Plan.

Ms Sawyer introduced the report which related to the Barnet Management Plan. She first referred to illegal encampments. They have identified 13 individuals during May and they have all opted to go back home. May was the last time they observed rough sleeping.

Mr Cohen requested whether the lead officer during these walks can report back any wrongdoing.

Ms Sawyer noted that they work with the police and monitor the park and nothing has been noted in the Welsh Harp.

She also mentioned that knotweed and hogweed have been treated. Mr Langdale asked whether there was going to be new fencing.

Ms Sawyer also noted that there have been new litter bins placed in the park.

Mr Beddard questioned whether they found those responsible for tree felling. Ms Sawyer responded that they tried to find out but this was not possible. The Chairman suggested that any concerns should be reported to Ms Sawyer who would then escalate. Ms Sawyer provided the generic email address (parks@barnet.gov.uk) for any enquiries, rough sleepers or anything suspicious and someone in the team would pick it up.

Councillor Agha asked how littering was reported in Barnet and mentioned that Brent Council had an app. Ms Sawyer said that littering can be reported via call or email. The Environment Committee has also employed an agency for flytipping, litter that could also enforce fines if necessary.

Mr Shepherd requested that following tree works carried out that the council should pick up both trees and all chunks because these cause damage to their boats. Alternatively that the logs and branches are secured as well as possible. However, this has an implication of increased costs if logs were to be removed from the site given the limited access at the Reservoir open spaces. Decaying wood is also a valuable habitat for

invertebrates, so adds value to the Welsh Harp. Securing the wood as best as possible, rather than removing could help reduce the risks of damage to boats etc.

Mr Beddard asked whether anything has happened regarding mending the bridge. There are parts of the bridge missing, it looked like something had hit it quite hard. Ms Sawyer mentioned that this is a highways responsibility. Councillor Agha said that he has noticed some work signage so that there might be works for maintenance. Mr Smith agreed to check whether there is any work to assess the damage and would report back.

Mr Shepherd said that he made a note of the registration number of a very large truck which went to the nursery that barely went through and asked where this can be reported. He was advised that in the future he should note and to provide details (e.g. Company markings) and the registration number to Ms Sawyer.

6. LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT - WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr Williams introduced the report which related to the Brent Welsh Harp Management plan and said that the updated action plan was attached to the report. This includes control of the invasive species (knotweed and hogweed) which has been a long-term project to control the spread.

Brent Council has not been aware of many rough sleeper reports since the last meeting. As soon as there is an incident this is reported.

There has been a draft physical activity strategy and action plan on Brent Council's website which is being implemented.

Mr Williams informed the Committee that Thames 21 is holding a Friends of Welsh Harp event on Saturday 23 July between 10am-2pm.

Mr Williams informed the Committee that Brent had received reports on rats infestation and if Brent received any enquiries he could arrange for the enquiry to be passed onto the relevant service. It is possible that waste food is one of the causes. Previously there have been problems at the Cool Oak Lane bridge, as people have fed the birds and inevitably discarded food is available for rats to feed on. The birds probably don't need feeding.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman welcomed an update from Mr Nathan Smith from Barratt's.

Mr Smith stated that they are delivering 300 new homes between 2016-mid 2018.

They are in the process of submitting a planning application for the pedestrian and cycling bridge which is envisaged to be built in 12-18 months from now.

Ms Murphy asked when the consultation for the bridge would take place.

Mr Smith responded that this would take place in autumn time since the planning application has not been submitted yet. The Chairman added that if it was a wider consultation then that would probably take place during November-December.

Mr Smith explained that they were having further discussions with the environment agency regarding the bridge design that was previously presented as it would not meet the 100 year requirement.

Also their ecologist is preparing a report and will be submitted to the Committee. There is no evidence that works or the demolition would have any consequences on the species.

The ecologist has noted that dog walking has been a disturbance which has been recorded.

Mr Cohen asked whether Barratt's intended to design a bridge that would be sound proofed and whether they were advising the residents who are going to be living in these flats on activities (e.g. fireworks etc.) which would cause disturbance to the wild life in that area. Mr Smith stated that the new bridge would create much less noise than the current one. They envisage informing existing and new residents of any issues.

It was agreed that Mr Smith or Mr Eric Holroyd will be attending from Barratt's to the next meeting.

Mr Cohen mentioned that in a previous meeting there was a suggestion that a report could be provided informing the committee of unusual species sighted at the Welsh Harp.

He also asked whether there is an ongoing rat control and if it exists in what form does it exist in because rats cause considering problems. Chairman agreed to follow up on those points and report back to the next Committee.

Mr Chung mentioned that residents in Ramsey Close have asked for help regarding rough sleepers who can be heard closer to their homes and is causing anxiety among the residents. Ms Sawyer agreed to inform Sergeant Tuffing regarding this so they can include this area during their operations. Mr Chung agreed to email the incidents he has noticed to Ms Sawyer. Mr Chung also mentioned that there has been littering in the stream flowing from the sailing base under the A5 Edgware Road bridge behind Sainsbury's. He mentioned of a stench that could be from items thrown in the water blocking the flow. Ms Sawyer agreed to get in contact with the environment agency and inform Mr Chung.

Chairman agreed to check whether the 2015 report from the Welsh Harp Conservation Group has been circulated to Committee members.

Mr Langdale asked what the amount of dogs allowed in one group was. Ms Sawyer said it was six. Mr Langdale responded that he observed ten dogs in the Barnet area of the Welsh Harp and sometimes with two walkers.

Ms Sawyer noted that she would inform the local SNTs. She also stated that they will update the signage in the Welsh Harp but in the meantime she will contact local SNTs.

Mr Langdale mentioned that he has observed dog walkers on a Thursday, he also added that he has seen someone fishing and that there were no 'no fishing' signs.

Ms Sawyer confirmed that there are signs in place across the Welsh Harp for no swimming and no fishing and that signs will be replaced with new ones in a few months.

Mr Cohen asked what was the procedure of tackling illegal fishing and Ms Sawyer responded that the police assist them in tackling both rough sleepers and illegal fishing. The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting would take place on 29 November and invites would be sent out early.

8. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None

The meeting finished at 20.45