

**AGENDA ITEM:**

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Meeting	<b>Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee (WHJCC)</b>
Date	09 December 2003
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Welsh Harp Management Plan</b>
Report of	Welsh Harp Management Plan
Summary	This report presents progress on the Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan and related issues.

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Officer Contributors	Mark Evison, Greenspaces Quality Officer, Tel: 0208 359 7826
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	West Hendon
Enclosures	Appendix A: Tree Report Appendix B: Plan – Area 4 Tree Management Proposals
For decision by	WHJCC
Function of	Executive
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	N/A

Contact for further information: James Rea – Greenspaces Quality Officer 0208 359 7381



## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1.1 That the following items be agreed:**

**Item 8.2 Area 4 Management Plan, trees to the rear of Woolmead Avenue and Dehar Crescent, the WHJCC is requested to agree the management proposals of the report at Appendix A.**

**Item 8.6 Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Designation, the WHJCC is requested to agree the proposed boundary of the LNR.**

## **2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- 2.1 7th April 1991, RLA Committee 9/7/90.  
DOE 9 May 1991, Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925  
15<sup>th</sup> May 2002, WHJCC Committee.

## **3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

- 4.1 None.

## **5. FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Tree management costs will be contained within existing budgets for such purposes.  
Local Nature Reserve declaration will incur legal fees and publicity costs of which LB Barnet will meet its own share, all costs to be contained within existing budgets for such purposes.  
Agreed Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) replacement project contained within existing HLF programme resources.

## **6. COMMENTS, IF ANY, OF THE COUNCIL'S STATUTORY OFFICERS (Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer)**

- 6.1 None.

## **7. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **7.1 Background**

- 7.2 Management Plan  
The management plan for 2002-07 is the agreed tool for management of this wildlife resource. The Welsh Harp (Brent) Reservoir is divided into management compartments. Separate prescriptions are written for management works for these compartments and the Management Plan is to be updated every five years in the light of comments from English Nature and other participatory organisations.

Compartment 4b is the northern shore marginal land. It is this compartment that is being addressed for tree management in 8.2 following.

The Committee is asked to discuss and agree the management options suggested.

### **7.3 Area 4b Tree and marginal land management options**

Residents have concerns about the effect existing trees have on the views from their properties, made through the Woolmead Avenue Residents' Association and independently.

- Meetings have been held on site and there has been clear disagreement between the residents and conservation representatives.
- Options for management have been discussed, including the traditional practices of pollarding, coppicing and canopy reduction/thinning, with all representatives on site. The new proposals forming Appendix A have been drawn up to provide a balance between safety, amenity, wildlife conservation and take due consideration of nearby properties.
- A temporary dead wood screen along the water margins and the planting up of osiers (not crack willow) and reeds will reduce disturbance to nesting birds.
- Residents do not want a 'tall' screen obstructing their views over the water body, or any new trees being planted up in the existing gaps.
- Conservation bodies do not wish trees to be heavily managed, as the presence of the trees give protection to wildfowl.
- It is clear that there are opposing views on the merits of carrying out any management, because of the status of the SSSI and the need to protect and enhance its conservation value for wildlife, especially breeding birds.
- Residents want the existing tree management to commence as soon as possible.
- The London Borough of Barnet has previously put forward a suggested tree management strategy for Compartment 4b, which was considered by the WHJCC to be inappropriate. A further report is attached, after further visits by council officers qualified in countryside, conservation and tree management. This is attached as Appendices A and B.

Members are asked to agree the management proposed.

### **7.4 Site of extension footpath, viewing platform and hide, as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid - Area 5b.**

#### **Progress to be noted**

Previous WHJCC Committee Decision 25 May 2002 agreed the revised HLF projects. Site selected at 5b is a replacement for the cancelled project in area 6a (C3 Edgware Road Access Improvements and B5 North Shore panorama), part of the original HLF bid. A sum of £59,000 is available within the existing HLF project and approval has been given by HLF for this scheme revision.

- An extension is proposed to the footpath on the west bank of 5b (narrow width, similar in width to the path to the hides at the eastern marsh 4b).

- This is to be extended from the end of the existing path, down the slope and along the side and perimeter of the bottom end of the old allotments, to the proposed site of the new hide.
- This will include a lateral path extension to the hide, the path extending past the proposed viewing platform, bearing sharp left up the slope to finish at the flat area of ground at top of slope.
- The path will need cross section reject stone drainage under the path, to take water away from the allotments and soak-away drainage pits on the water body side of the new path, to stop drainage from seeping directly into the Welsh Harp.
- The viewing platform to be 2 or 3 sleepers high, positioned close to the existing chain link fence.
- The exact location is to be situated in front of the existing bird breeding sign.
- The hide will be situated near to the new path, with a construction suitable to blend into the environment.
- Some members of the Committee have viewed this project at a site meeting last year.

The London Borough of Barnet's Landscape Section has produced design and construction costings. A Delegated Powers Report has been submitted to request the match funding element, subject to this approval the project will commence after Christmas with a completion date of 30 April.

## **7.5 Local Nature Reserve**

### **London Boroughs of Barnet and Brent to declare a Local Nature Reserve**

#### **Progress Report**

Discussions on the declaration have been ongoing for at least seven years between both boroughs. The land under consideration as follows is detailed on the enclosed map (appendix C). The boundary shown will allow the most rapid progress to LNR declaration:

#### **Allotment Land**

- An area of disused allotment land abutting Cool Oak Lane and West Hendon Playing Fields, has been declared surplus to requirements with effect from 7th April 1991 by Barnet Council, Recreation Leisure and Arts Committee 9/7/90. The decision was made that the area consisting of 3.5 acres, and the future use of the land to be decided by the Policy and Resources Committee.
  - This was cleared by the former Department of Environment (DoE) 9 May 1991 as Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925, consenting to the appropriation to recreational open space.
  - This area can be included in the LNR.

#### **Old Welsh Harp Open Space**

- Welsh Harp Open Space Areas 9a and 9b - this is currently unkempt land, used in the past as a 'bund' area for silt disposal, but part of the SSSI boundary. The Legal Department have investigated and found that LB Barnet do not have title on this land, it cannot be declared as an LNR.

### **Area 10**

- Welsh Harp Management Plan compartment 10 is part of the SSSI and the Council has internal objections to declaring this land as an LNR.
- The existing SSSI status provides protection for this land under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) exclusion from the LNR will not diminish this existing protection.

### **LNR status**

- LNR status will incur obligations on the Council to manage the land for conservation any additional costs will have to be found from existing financial resources.
- Local Nature Reserves may attract funding from English Nature.

The Committee is asked to note the progress and agree the boundary as depicted on appendix C and ask the Head of Leisure and Youth Services to progress this matter.

## **8. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8,1 All Local Nature Reserve, Management Plan and management issues, together with Heritage Lottery Fund details and papers are held in the Greenspaces Section of the Leisure and Youth Service and Environmental Services.
- 8.2 Any persons wishing to inspect the background papers should telephone 020-8359 7826.

## **10. AUTHORS**

- 10.1 James Rea, Greenspaces Quality Officer (Environmental Services) telephone 020 8359 7381
- 10.2 Mark Evison, Greenspaces Quality Officer (Leisure & Youth) telephone 020 8359 7826

MO: PJ

## Appendix A Welsh Harp Tree Management Area 4b

	Welsh Harp SSSI					Re-Survey Date: 17/09/2003
Location	Species	DBH	Stems	Cond	Year	Recommendations/Works
T1	Common Oak	37	1	Good		None, left for biodiversity
T2	Willow (multi stem)	49	6	Fair	1	High Pollard to 3 meters, coppice trunks overhanging water line
T3	Willow (multi stem)	45	3	Fair	1	
T4	Willow (multi stem)	33	8	Fair	1	
T5	Willow (multi stem)	31	8	Fair	1	
T6	Willow (multi stem)	32	3	Fair	2	
T7	Willow (multi stem)	69	4	Fair	2	
T 8 (group of 6 stools)	Willow (multi stem)	27	22	Poor	3	
	Willow (multi stem)	27	11	Poor	3	
	Willow (multi stem)	23	2	Poor	3	
	Willow (multi stem)	23	6	Poor	3	Pollard to 3 meter, to give low level regrowth, providing screen and bird nesting. Allow views at house level.
	Willow (multi stem)	27	7	Poor	3	
	Willow (multi stem)	15	14	Poor	3	
	Silver birch	19	1	Fair		None, left for biodiversity
T 9 (group of 2 stools)	Willow (multi stem)	23	16	Fair	4	Pollard to 1 meter, to give low level regrowth, providing screen and bird nesting. Allow views at house level.
	Willow (multi stem)	43	5	Fair	4	
T10	Sycamore	31	1	Fair		None, left for biodiversity
T11	Willow (multi stem)	63	3	Fair	4	Pollard to 1 meter, to give low level regrowth, providing screen and bird nesting. Allow views at house level
T12	Ash	28	1	Fair		None, left for biodiversity
T 13 (group of 11 stools)	Willow (multi stem)	38	6	Fair	5	Sensitive area. Trees overhanging gardens and path (health and safety and fire break requirements) reduce back from fence line x 4 m by coppicing to 1m.  Remainder of group 50% high canopy retention,  25% high pollarding at 4m  25% high canopy thinning
	Willow (multi stem)	63	1	Fair	5	
	Willow (multi stem)	48	12	Fair	5	
	Willow (multi stem)	48	14	Fair	5	
	Willow (multi stem)	64	3	Fair	5	
	Willow (multi stem)	14	10	Fair	5	
	Willow (multi stem)	31	14	Fair	5	
	Willow (multi stem)	28	4	Fair	5	
	Willow (multi stem)	27	4	Fair	5	
	Willow (multi stem)	30	1	Fair	5	
	Willow (multi stem)	23	4	Fair	5	
<b>General</b>	Control seedling trees regeneration, control sycamore regeneration, maximise species and diversity, control alien and garden escapes (leave existing mature specimens).  Japanese knotweed must be controlled especially where canopy thinning may lead to more vigorous growth.					

## Appendix B Welsh Harp Tree Management Area 4b

