

MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 9th December 2003 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Harrod (Chair, London Borough of Brent), and Councillors McGovern (London Borough of Brent), O'Sullivan (London Borough of Brent), Sodha (Vice-Chair, London Borough of Barnet) and Ghosh (London Borough of Barnet). Leo Batten (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), Jon Bell (Princes Park Youth Football Club), John Bird (West Hendon Community Forum), John Colmans (London Wildlife Trust), Rebecca Goh (West Hendon Youth Club), Frank Hewlett (Barnet Council for Sport and Recreation), Jean Ivatt (Woolmead Avenue Residents and Welsh Harp Area), Julie Johnson (Local Agenda 21), Haydn Matthews (Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base), Malcolm Scott (Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre Action Group), Brian Turgoose (Welsh Harp Sailing Association) and Peter Walker and Mary Norden (British Waterways) were also present.

The following officers were also in attendance:

Mark Evison (Barnet Greenspaces Officer), Karen Tyerman (Brent Council, Assistant Director of Life-Long Learning) and Leslie Williams (Brent Council, Parks Service).

The following Councillors were also in attendance:

Councillors Fox (Brent Council, Lead Member for Health and Social Care) and Lyon (Brent Council, Lead Member for Education, Arts and Libraries).

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Burton and Offord (London Borough of Barnet), Mike Walker (British Waterways) and Dorothy Jakes (Birchen Grove Residents' Association).

1. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 2nd September 2003

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September 2003 be approved as a true and accurate record subject to corrections to misspelt names of two attendees.

3. Matters Arising

Item 7 – Welsh Harp Eco-Park Feasibility Study

Councillor Sodha reported that she was aware that Barnet had their own plans for an education centre at Welsh Harp. The Chair suggested that there may be economies of scale if both councils joined

forces to provide one single centre. After discussion there was general agreement that a single joint centre was potentially a good idea.

Item 10 – Birchen Grove Car Park

Brian Turgoose reported that the Welsh Harp Sailing Club had not heard from Brent Council regarding reimbursing the club for the cost of car parking signs. The Chair reported that he had received a response from the Council stating that there were no funds available in the current financial year to refund the club.

Item 10 – Committee Attendance

Jean Ivatt raised the issue of committee attendance and enquired as to whether organisations had been requested to attend frequently at the time they were asked as to whether they wished to be a member of the Committee. The Chair responded that they had not but that he was always grateful when they were present at meetings and he expressed confidence that they would be present on those occasions when the agenda was relevant to their organisation.

4. **Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan**

Leslie Williams presented an update report on the Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan and related issues. It was reported that the Management Plan was reviewed by officers once a year in July and that the changes to the plan were now being outlined in this current report. Attention was drawn to the new Emergency Contacts sheet to allow local people and groups to contact the relevant authorities to deal with any problems that arose. This Contacts Sheet had been made available as an appendix to the Management Plan.

It was also reported the Council was looking for tenants who had a long-term and relevant plan for Neasden Pavilion.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted.

5. **West Hendon Regeneration**

Yvonne Harrison (Metropolitan Housing Trust) gave a verbal presentation providing an update on the Trust's plans for the West Hendon area. A draft version of the non-technical summary of the Environmental Statement for the proposed scheme was presented to the Committee. During the presentation it was reported that little in the plans had changed since they were last presented in June. However, one of the planned bridges had been moved away from the ponds area at the northern end of the reservoir site and there was likely to be a

small amount of development on the sailing base site whilst maintaining the sites sailing use.

In answer to a question regarding the disturbance to breeding birds whilst construction was taking place, it was reported that the usual mitigation steps would be taken and that it was felt there would be no significant long term impact to the bird life or to any other flora or fauna. Concerns were expressed as to the desirability of building on part of the sailing base car park but assurances were given that it wouldn't effect the current uses significantly. A view was also expressed that it would be a dangerous precedent to set if parts of the open land were to be built on, even if it was currently a car park. There were also concerns that some of the taller buildings in the scheme were situated close to the reservoir and would consequently have an adverse effect on the view.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted.

6. **Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre: Bid to the New Opportunities Fund for Centre Improvements**

Karen Tyerman (Brent Council – Assistant Director of Life Long Learning) reported on the bid to the New Opportunities Fund. As part of its portfolio of bids to the New Opportunities Fund PE and Sports in Schools stream, the London Borough of Brent submitted a bid for £96,000 to make improvements to the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre. This would involve the introduction of some low impact physical activities, the replacement of the temporary toilet block and minor improvements to the appearance of the Centre. It was reported that the Centre would be closed during the Spring 2004 school term due to staffing issues but that arrangements were being made to keep the site and all equipment secure during this time.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted.

7. **Welsh Harp Management Plan**

Mark Evison presented a report regarding plans and ongoing works by Barnet Council. Attention was drawn to plans to manage the trees and marginal land on the Barnet side of the reservoir in particular in the Woolmead Avenue area. Progress was also noted on works relating to the Heritage Lottery bid including plans for path extensions and a new bird hide.

It was reported that progress has been made in the project to declare much of the site a Local Nature Reserve. Appendix C of the report indicated the areas that were being considered and highlighted issues concerning two sections of the site which could, at least initially, prevent them being included in the nature reserve.

In response to questions it was reported that one of the two areas causing problems was not owned by either council and that it was proving difficult to ascertain ownership. Without the approval of the owner it was not possible to include the area in the nature reserve proposal. The second area, it was suggested in questioning, also did not belong to Barnet Council and that as well as work needing to be done on the site, more research was needed to determine ownership of the land before it could be included in the nature reserve. British Waterways representatives offered assistance in determining ownership of the land.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted.

that the proposals for the management of trees to the rear of Woolmead Avenue and Dehar Crescent be agreed.

that the proposed boundary of the Local Nature Reserve be agreed.

8. **British Waterways**

Peter Walker and Mary Norden (British Waterways) gave a presentation on the environmental aspects of British Waterways' plans for Brent Reservoir (Welsh Harp). They provided a brief summary of the engineering plans that were reported on at the last meeting and then spoke about the environmental impact of the works and the mitigating actions British Waterways was preparing to take.

It was reported that a certain amount of disruption to wildlife was both inevitable and also necessary to ensure that proper inspections of the dam walls would be possible in the future and to enable strengthening work on the downstream wall of the dam. The environmental considerations took into account the statutory and non-statutory designations of the reservoir, the views of consultees, the flora and fauna on the site and also the impact on the general public, in particular, local residents.

Planned actions to help fauna included, sympathetic clearance rather than complete removal of vegetation along the wall of the dam, planting new hedges and sowing mixed seeds to help encourage diversity. It was reported that there had been bat surveys and habitat assessments for other wildlife including reptiles. It was not expected that the works

would have an overall negative impact on local fauna. Local people would be kept informed of developments by frequent leaflet drops and they would have a single point of contact through which to raise any concerns. Clearing work would commence in January 2004 with the main works starting in the Spring continuing for approximately 8 months.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted.

9. **Proposed Ecology Park**

Malcolm Scott (Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre Action Group) reported that there had been some early successes in fundraising activities with a total of £6,000 so far raised from two sections of the Metropolitan Housing Trust. A fundraiser had been appointed who was actively pursuing further donations. In discussion it was agreed that the scheme looked to be developing positively and it was noted that the Chair had agreed to send a letter to the relevant Executive member requesting the funding that had been suggested at the previous Welsh Harp JCC meeting.

10. **Attendance at Committee**

The Committee received a report detailing the responses received from organisations regarding their interest in remaining on the Committee. It was noted that all those who had responded indicated a desire to remain on the Committee. It was proposed that similar letters be sent out periodically to ensure that the Committee membership list remained up to date.

RESOLVED

that the report be noted.

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

RESOLVED:

that it be noted the next meeting of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 24th February 2004 at Brent Town Hall.

12. **Any Other Urgent Business**

Fireworks Night

The Chair commented on the large number of complaints he had received regarding fireworks going off at or near the reservoir very late on fireworks night. The Chair reminded all relevant organisations that all fireworks displays should be completed before 11 pm so as not to cause undue disturbance to local residents.

The meeting ended at 9:45 pm

R HARROD
Chair

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