

# Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

AGENDA PACK



# Agenda Item 1

## WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday 27 July 2022, 7.00 pm

Virtual [Click here to join the meeting](#)

### AGENDA

| <b>Item</b> | <b>Timings</b> | <b>Title</b>   | <b>Lead</b> | <b>Page</b> |
|-------------|----------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| 1           |                | <b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>                                 |             | 3 - 8       |
| 2           |                | <b>Election of Chair and Vice Chair 2022/23</b>                    |             |             |
| 3           |                | <b>Absence of Members</b>  |             |             |
| 4           |                | <b>Disclosable Pecuniary interests and Non Pecuniary interests</b> |             |             |
| 5           |                | <b>Report of the Monitoring Officer (if any)</b>                   |             |             |
| 6           |                | <b>London Borough of Barnet Welsh Harp Update</b>                  |             | 9 - 14      |
| 7           |                | <b>London Borough of Brent - Welsh Harp Management Plan</b>        |             | 15 - 30     |
| 8           |                | <b>Any Other Business</b>  |             |             |
| 9           |                | <b>Any Other Items that the Chair Decides are Urgent</b>           |             |             |

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## MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Held as an online meeting on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 7.00 pm AGENDA ITEM 1

### Members Present (in remote attendance):

|                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Councillor Anne Clarke (Chair) | London Borough of Barnet          |
| Councillor Parvez Ahmed        | London Borough of Brent           |
| Councillor Roxanne Mashari     | London Borough of Brent           |
| Councillor John Hart           | London Borough of Barnet          |
| Councillor Helene Richman      | London Borough of Barnet          |
| Councillor Saira Don           | London Borough of Barnet          |
| Peter Eros                     | Cleaner Earth UK                  |
| Lucy Shuker                    | Brent River Catchment Partnership |
| Neil Earnshaw                  | Canal and River Trust             |
| Dianne Murphy                  | London Wildlife Trust             |
| John Shepherd                  | Welsh Harp Sailing Association    |
| Manfred Starkl                 | Welsh Harp Sailing Association    |
| Judy Shepherd                  | West Hendon Community Forum       |
| Andrew Haynes                  | Welsh Harp Conservation Group     |
| Leo Batten                     | Welsh Harp Conversation Group     |
| Ben Watt                       | Cool Oak Group                    |
| Liz Hall                       | West Hendon Residents Association |
| Dale Langdale                  | Hendon Rifle Club                 |

### 1. Apologies for absence and declaration of any alternate members

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Vincent Lo (London Borough of Brent).

### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations made.

### 3. Deputations (if any)

None.

### 4. Minutes of the previous meeting

AGREED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 17 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

### 5. Matters Arising

The following issues were raised under Matters Arising from the minutes of the previous meeting:

**Min 10. Any Other Business – Barratt’s Challenge- Construction of Silk Stream Bridge**

The Committee received an update from Ben Watt (Cool Oak Group), regarding the issue of the Construction of the Silk Stream Bridge in the Welsh Harp.

Members were updated that as part of the challenge, Cool Oak Group had met with Natural England, Councillors and local MPs in order to progress the work around the reservoir. It was updated that debris had been lifted off marshes of the reservoir, with £85,000 spent on restoration works in the east marsh during the winter. Council teams had also joined volunteers on various rubbish cleaning initiatives.

Moving on to speak around the Silk Stream Bridge, Members were updated that a challenge to this bridge was ongoing, and were referred to the letter written to the Senior Technical Manager at Barratt's, responsible for the West Hendon Regeneration project. This letter outlined whether the construction of the proposed bridge would be fully consistent with the approved planning permission which had been granted. Members were also updated that representatives from Natural England had visited the site, and indicated that the planning terms may have been contravened. To that end, a meeting had been proposed to take place in April to discuss the erection of the bridge, with representatives from Barratt's, Natural England and Barnet Council in attendance.

Members were then invited to ask questions on this update, which are summarised below:

- It was clarified that the proposals contained in the West Hendon Masterplan project were not directly linked to the construction of the Bridge.
- It was raised that a thorough analysis of the construction of the Bridge would be welcomed, including the ecological impact, as well as the impact on the local community. It was clarified that an ecological assessment of the area had been undertaken at the time of planning.

It was **AGREED** that Ben Watt and Leo Batten attend the meeting with Barratt's, Natural England and Barnet Council on behalf of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee.

## 6. Management Plan (Barnet)

Matthew Gunyon (Greenspaces Manager, Barnet Council) introduced the report providing an update relating to on-going site management issues affecting Welsh Harp Reservoir.

The Committee noted the updates provided in relation to the following issues:

- A restructure and recruitment of new staff was ongoing as part of the Barnet Greenspaces Service; two members of staff had been appointed for the two constituency areas within the Barnet areas of the Welsh Harp Reservoir.
- The parks patrol pilot, which ParkGuard had been commissioned to provide during summer 2021 at key hotspot locations, including Welsh Harp. It was expressed that it was planned to implement this again during 2022.
- The ongoing work being undertaken to develop the West Hendon Playing Fields Master Plan, following the outline business case and capital funding having been approved. This project was now seeking specific and specialist

advice from landscape architects and design developers, which the Committee would be updated on in due course.

Questions and comments were then invited on the update, with the following issues raised:

- It was asked what impact the West Hendon Masterplan project would have on the SSIs and nature reserves around the Welsh Harp, and it was clarified that this had been considered from a spatial planning perspective from the inception of the project. This work was also ongoing as the project developed in the future.
- The deployment of the Parks Patrol was noted, and it was asked why this was being implemented. It was answered that this was aimed at decreasing anti-social behaviour around the Welsh Harp.

As no further issues were raised it was **AGREED** to note the Management Update from Barnet.

## 7. Management Plan (Brent)

Leslie Williams (Project Officer, Brent Council) presented a report outlining progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan since the last meeting of the Committee and during the 2021/22 year to date. The Management Plan was jointly managed by the three main land-holding organisations: Brent Council, the London Borough of Barnet, and the Canal & River Trust.

The Committee noted the current progress in relation to the Management Action Plan, as had been detailed within Appendix A of the report, with further updates provided in relation to the following items:

- Marshland conservation work had been ongoing since September 2021, focussed on the southern Neasden Recreation Ground side of the reservoir. A meeting had taken place with local volunteers, and were supportive of the work which had taken place. The consultation process on further works had been aimed at improving the balance of habitats within the area, reducing the wind shadow across the reservoir for water sports and enhancing the landscape and amenity in terms of views across the Reservoir.
- The Healthy Walks programme was continuing, and the Welsh Harp environmental education centre, it had been agreed for Thames 21 to continue activities for a further year, with a full programme to be confirmed. It was noted that the centre required some infrastructure work in order to make the centre viable, which would incur a revenue cost. The Committee would continue to be kept updated regarding progress on the ongoing discussions regarding the future of the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre.

Questions and comments were then invited on the update, with the following issues raised:

- It was noted that expressions had been raised to extend the remit of classes at

the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre, including sessions for secondary schools and evening classes for adults. It was asked if these plans were still in place to be explored. It was explained that this was still being explored and had worked in other similar centres in London, but would rely on a viable consortium to bring people, resources and organisations together to make it happen.

- It was asked what the process was for reporting litter and rubbish around the Marshland, to which it was clarified that this could be reported via the website or the case emailed directly to the Brent Service/Leslie Williams.

As no further issues were raised it was **AGREED** to note (subject to the actions identified above) the Management Update from Brent.

## 8. Welsh Harp Vision- Verbal Report

Neil Earnshaw (Canal and River Trust) was then invited to provide the Joint Consultative Committee with an update on the Welsh Harp "Vision" project which involved both Brent & Barnet Councils, the Trust, London Wildlife Trust, Thames 21, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and Natural England and had been established to develop an overarching vision for the Welsh Harp and review of the Management Plan.

Members were updated that since the last meeting, the joint vision had progressed and was nearing publication status, alongside a series of engagement activities to support this. It was explained that the publication came in two parts; the first being a joint atlas from a variety of sources, many of whom were involved in the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee. The final version of the report was being worked through with comments from strategic partners, including Councillors and the Canal and River Trust. It was updated that after this process, a 'beta' version of the final report would be shared with a limited group of stakeholders, with the Joint Consultative Committee invited to view the report before it was finalised and shared with the public. It was highlighted that the forthcoming Local Elections presented further restrictions on the publication date, and therefore it would not be published until the completion of the Local Elections. Brent Council had supported the cost of a public exhibition upon publication of the Vision, which would be held at the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre, which would be attended by a range of stakeholders.

Looking forward, there was a view to use the joint vision and support from stakeholders to then make funding bids on behalf of the Welsh Harp. Discussions had already taken place with the Heritage Lottery Fund, which could involve considerable sums of funding. The Chair of Natural England had also lent his support to any future funding bids, and the joint vision was attracting national attention.

In terms of practical matters, it was updated that several skip loads of debris had been recovered from around the Welsh Harp. As it was breeding season for birds, it was highlighted that this may result in damage to reed beds, with work ongoing to limit the impact of the damage. Around the East Marsh of the reservoir, signage was



being designed to inform people around issues being addressed to preserve the SSSI, including removal of self-seeded willow and encroaching vegetation  
Questions and comments were then invited on the update, with the following issues raised:

- It was asked whether details around the heritage of the Welsh Harp were included in the vision, to which it was answered that this had been taken into account, with heritage specialists and partnership groups feeding into this report.

With no further issues raised, the Committee thanked Neil Earnshaw for the update provided and **AGREED** that further progress updates should continue to be provided on development of the vision.

## **9. Dates of Future Meetings**

Members were asked to note the provisional dates identified for future meetings of the Joint Consultative Committee during 2022/23 (Subject to final confirmation by each respective authority as part of the approval of their 2022/23 calendar of meetings):

- Wednesday 27 July 2022 at 7pm – to be held online hosted by London Borough of Barnet.
- Thursday 24 November 2022 at 7pm – to be held online hosted by London Borough of Barnet
- Thursday 16 March 2023 at 7pm – to be held online hosted by London Borough of Barnet.

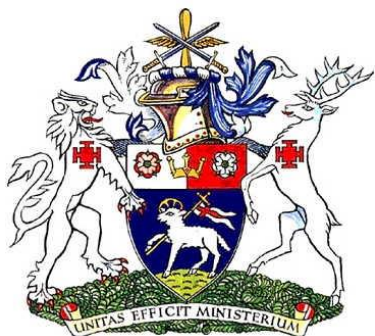
## **10. Any other urgent Business**

As this was the final meeting of the Municipal Year, Councillor John Hart was thanked for his long service and support to the Welsh Harp, and the Committee joined the Chair in wishing him well in his retirement.

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm

Councillor Anne Clarke  
Chair

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## Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

27 July 2022

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Title</b>                   | London Borough of Barnet Welsh Harp Update  |
| <b>Report of</b>               | Executive Director, Adults and Health   |
| <b>Wards</b>                   | West Hendon   |
| <b>Status</b>                  | Public  |
| <b>Urgent</b>                  | No  |
| <b>Key</b>                     | None  |
| <b>Enclosures</b>              | None  |
| <b>Officer Contact Details</b> | Matthew Gunyon, Head of Greenspaces<br><a href="mailto:matthew.gunyon@barnet.gov.uk">matthew.gunyon@barnet.gov.uk</a> 0208 359 7403 |

### Summary

To provide an update to the committee in relation to Council activities during Quarter 1 (April-June 2022) in respect of the Welsh Harp / West Hendon Playing Fields.

### Officers Recommendations

1. That the committee note the contents of this report.

## **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

1.1 The Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee (WHJCC) 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 and meets on a quarterly basis.

1.2 During April – June 2022 (Quarter 1), the Council progressed a series of activities in relation to the management and operation of West Hendon Playing Fields / Welsh Harp. The committee are requested to note the following;

### **1.2.1 New Administration Priorities**

- 1.2.1.1 On the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022, the Councils new administration declared a climate and biodiversity emergency in Barnet and a commitment to establish a citizens assembly on climate change.
- 1.2.1.2 A further report was presented to the Councils Environment and Climate Change Committee (ECC) on 9 June 2022 in which Committee approved drawing up such proposals for an Assembly which will inform the development of the Councils emerging Sustainability Strategy.
- 1.2.1.3 A report providing an update on the Councils Parks and Open Spaces Strategy was also presented at ECC, setting out the proposed approach in delivering the new Administration's priorities in respect of parks and open spaces.
- 1.2.1.4 ECC approved the creation of a new Parks and Open Strategy for Barnet which will consider future statutory duties relating to open space, biodiversity, climate change, conservation, ecology and the environment.
- 1.2.1.5 It is recognised that open spaces form part of a vital biodiversity network and any emerging strategy will also take into consideration the development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Barnet, which includes the recruitment of a Biodiversity and Conversation Officer to support future implementation.
- 1.2.1.6 A programme of work is currently under review in relation to creating these policies (Parks and Open Spaces and a Biodiversity Strategy) and the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee will be a key stakeholder as part of any future consultation and engagement process.

### **1.3 Management and Operations**

There have been no reported illegal encampments during Q1, the Councils Greenspaces and Leisure Team continue to work closely with the Barnet Community Safety Team, the Local Police and other partners to identify and remove encampments when notified.

In response to the increased attendances and operational pressures throughout the

pandemic, the Council appointed ParkGuard to deliver a pilot parks patrol service. The pilot focused on key objectives to engage with residents, inform of any relative information (such as booking processes) and support enforcement operations.

The Council has re-commissioned the support of Parkguard Ltd to assist with park patrols (Fri-Sun) throughout the summer. Their primary role will be to support current public service provision, focusing on delivery that supports Council core services in fulfilling responsibilities. This will be achieved by providing visibility patrols with an emphasis engaging with the public, increasing public reassurance, and improving community safety.

Barnet's Street Cleansing Team will continue to be supportive in providing litter clearing equipment (litter pickers and bags) and will collect all / any arising from the organised group activities around the Welsh Harp.

#### **1.4 West Hendon Playing Fields Master Plan**

- 1.4.1 The outline business case for the West Hendon Playing Fields Master plan was approved at Policy and Resources Committee 16 June 2021. This included capital funding of £18.8m to deliver the scheme.

The Council also remains in dialogue with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and the Football Foundation in relation to the submission of future funding applications to deliver court and pitch improvements at West Hendon Playing Fields..

- 1.4.2 Through reasonable means of selection, the Council has appointed the Landscape Institute to coordinate a design competition. This procurement will enable the appointment of a Landscape Architect to assist with developing the design in preparation for planning.

#### **1.5 Welsh Harp and SSSI management**

- 1.5.1 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.

Full update is subject to a separate agenda item.

### **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 N/A

#### **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

4.1 The Council will continue to develop the new and emerging policies as set out in section 1.2.1 of this report.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

##### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

5.1.1 Following the declaration of a climate emergency, delivering and implementing the Sustainability Strategy, Climate Action Plan, Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy is a key corporate priority for the Council.

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

5.2.1 The programme of activities listed within this report are delivered within existing resources, some initiatives or tasks may require additional investment which will be considered in the development of new policies and assessed through the Councils budget setting process.

##### **5.3 Legal and Constitutional References**

5.3.1 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.

5.3.2 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 Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT) 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”.

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.

##### **5.4 Insight**

5.4.1 None

## 5.5 **Social Value**

- 5.5.1 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.

## 5.6 **Risk Management**

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

## 5.7 **Equalities and Diversity**

- 5.7.1 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

## 5.8 **Corporate Parenting Principles**

- 5.8.1 N/A

## 5.9 **Consultation and Engagement**

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

## 5.10 **Environmental**

- 5.10.1 N/A

## 6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

6.2 [West Hendon Playing Fields Outline Business Case – Policy and Resources Committee 16 July 2021, Agenda Item 9](#)

6.3 [Parks and Open Spaces Update – Environment and Climate Change Committee 9 June 2022, Agenda Item 9](#)





**Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee**

27<sup>th</sup> July 2022

AGENDA ITEM 7

**Report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration & Environment**

**Welsh Harp Management Plan**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>  | All  |
| <b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>   | Non-Key  |
| <b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b><br><small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small> | Open   |
| <b>No. of Appendices:</b>   | 1  |
| <b>Background Papers:</b>   | ▪  |
| <b>Contact Officer(s):</b><br><small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>   | Leslie Williams, Project Officer, Parks Services, Brent Civic Centre. Email: <a href="mailto:Leslie.Williams@Brent.gov.uk">Leslie.Williams@Brent.gov.uk</a> 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 2022/23 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.

**2.0 Detail**

3.1 Welsh Harp 'Vision':

The Canal & River Trust and other partner organisations will update the Committee on the Welsh Harp Vision' project that involves also Barnet Council, the London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority and Thames 21.

3.2 Management Plan:

The current version of the Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan, (dated 2016 but a long-term management plan) is available from Brent Council.

Website links to parts of the Welsh Harp are at:

[Neasden Recreation Ground | Brent Council](#)

[Welsh Harp Open Space | Brent Council](#)

[Welsh Harp Reservoir | Brent Council](#)

### 3.3 Action Plan:

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. Note that the assessments of need / progress are subjective, but explained also by the text comments. The 'Progress' column indicates current progress. For Brent Council, additional notes are provided in the following paragraphs:

### 3.4 Marshland work:

Marshland conservation work on the southern shore (adjoining Neasden Recreation Ground) has been temporarily paused to enable discussions with community groups.

Visits during the summer of 2021 and 2022 indicated that the previous work on the northern shore at the Welsh Harp Open Space has benefited a wide range of plants within the marshland vegetation along the edge of the reservoir while retaining a variety of trees on the shoreline landscape.

### 3.5 Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre:

Discussions have continued between Brent Council and external partner organisations who have or may have an interest in creating a viable environmental education centre. Thames 21 have agreed to provide some services for another year while discussions continue for a longer-term solution for the future of the Centre.

### 3.6 Healthy Walks programme:

The walking programme has continued 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/>

### 3.7 London Nature Trail:

The Greater London Authority (GLA) are organising a 'London Nature Trail' over the Late Summer Holiday weekend of 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> August 2022. This will feature the Welsh Harp. As at late June, the Welsh Harp partner organisations have provided the GLA with summaries of the open spaces, local information websites and of known events.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan is primarily a land-use document to guide land managers and others in the maintenance, management and legislative issues affecting the land management of the Brent Reservoir and associated land. The Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan also has a forward planning role, particularly in identifying the needs of land management over timeframes into the future.
- 4.2 The actions in the accompanying Action Plan (Appendix A) 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. Where those works are not currently achievable, the Action Plan highlights key issues. Works are only undertaken when approved by the service responsible for delivering the works within existing approved budgets.
- 4.3 As is being reported to the Committee, the main land-holding organisations at the Welsh Harp and some other organisations are currently working on a 'vision' exercise, which will include a review of possible sources of funding and income for those works currently not affordable

## **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 2022-2023

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 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.

Note also the draft of a Forward Work Programme for the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee that has been tabled by Barnet Council.

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

| Action   | Lead  | Budget   | Approximate timetable | RAG status (text column provided for use if plain printing) | Progress: 2022-23 to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022   |
|--|---|--|-----------------------|---|---|
| Welsh Harp Vision  | Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council, Thames 21, London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority. | Funding and/or resources for the Vision have been provided by the partner organisations. | In progress.          | Amber – in progress   | Developing a vision and options for the Welsh Harp. Appointed in 2021, the consultancy has been preparing information and consulting with the local communities and others. |
| 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 conducted in January to February 2021.                             |

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| 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.<br><br>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.           | Red   | Discussions are continuing with a range of potential partners to investigate the future of the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre. Thames 21 are continuing to provide some services from the Centre on a temporary basis into 2022. |
| 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 are Self-Managed.<br><br>Brent Council: Allotments Strategy: Birchen Grove Allotments and Dors Close Allotments.   |
| Open spaces, pitches, paths, Capital Ring, and parks furniture.                             | Barnet, Brent                          | Existing maintenance resources. Barnet; and Brent public realm budgets.   | On-going.  | Amber | Maintenance, particularly of the well-used paths and features.  |



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| Signage; and interpretative signage. | Brent / Barnet.               |                               |          | Amber   | Maintained. The Canal & River Trust are currently reviewing a selection of the signage, though that may now be extended to await the outcome of the 'Vision' project. 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: The mini-humps, installed in January 2020, are deterring excessive speeding and other anti-social behavior in the car park.</p> <p>Cool Oak Lane Car Park: Barnet.</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 (2020) report on wildlife produced by the Welsh Harp Conservation Group, available on their website and via the following link:</p> <p><a href="#">Publications – Welsh Harp Conservation Group (wordpress.com)</a></p> <p>Programme of activities led by Welsh Harp Conservation Group for: refer to the website.</p>       |

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| Grasslands and cutting         | Barnet, Brent   | Maintenance: within existing resources. Restoration work is currently unfunded.  | Spring to autumn. | Green | Grasslands: A grassland maintenance schedule introduced by Brent Council across the Borough (including the Welsh Harp) from spring 2018 includes emphasis on improving biodiversity value of amenity grassland. Sown areas of bee-friendly plants were added in 2019. Cutting of these areas is usually in September or October. |
| 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 | Paths maintained but some have narrowed with scrub growth, particularly at Neasden Recreation Ground (see notes on Marshland).<br><br>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.               |
| 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 working on proposed improvements to their club facilities for water sports, particularly for educational use; and for a café accessible from the Welsh Harp / Capital Ring path.   |

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| Litter | Brent Council.<br>Barnet Council.<br>Canal & River Trust.<br>Thames 21.<br>Environment<br>Agency. | Landowners: Brent<br>Council, Barnet<br>Council, Canal &<br>River Trust.<br>Leaseholders.<br>Also much<br>volunteer<br>involvement. | On-going. | Red | <p>The January to February 2021 temporary partial drawdown of the water level within the Reservoir revealed large quantities of litter, waste and alluvium (silt). Of the alluvium, the Canal &amp; River Trust have stated that the full removal is logistically beyond any resources that are currently available. Resources are focusing on removing the more accessible and the more conspicuous material and/or where removal could provide other benefits.</p> <p>The Canal &amp; River Trust mapped some of the larger items and those were subsequently removed.</p> <p>There has been much activity by the wider community to clear, where it is safe to do so; material near on the shorelines.</p> <p>During the summer and early autumn of 2021, volunteers of The Welsh Harp Group moved approximately 200 previously fly-tipped tyres from the woodland on the southern side of the Reservoir, to an open area for subsequent collection by the Canal &amp; River Trust.</p> <p>There remains, in addition to litter and rubbish in the reservoir; one area of fly-tipped waste in the wooded wetland on the southern shore of the reservoir; areas of less-accessible waste around the reservoir; and issues related to the inflow of waste on the Silk Stream and River Brent. A proportion of that waste is of materials fly-tipped into the rivers upstream.</p> |
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| 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 clear 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 as the screens collect waste that has been deposited in the river upstream, frequent and large quantities of waste can continue to accumulate in the river upstream of the screens.</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 Friends of the Welsh Harp; and The Welsh Harp Group at Neasden Recreation Ground and a range of other volunteers.  |
| 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.<br>Canal & River Trust. | Volunteer projects are held annually to maintain the reedbeds.             | Remove young trees. On-going. Autumn / winter.   | Amber   | The Canal & River Trust reduced and removed in early 2022, some willows in the reed bed in the eastern marsh.   |

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| Reedbeds: remove young trees and marginal encroachment | Canal and River Trust                      | £85,000 PPL funding  | Removing young trees and vegetation overhanging margins | Amber | In early 2022, The Canal & River Trust made improvements in the eastern marsh including removal of some debris and reduction of willow growth where that is causing obstructions or affecting other habitats. There is potentially more to be done.  |
| 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.<br>As at 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. Unfunded: management of woodland to increase diversity, but potential for creative use of material. |   | Amber | Where permanent, woodland at the Welsh Harp is largely self-managing. If resources were available, some areas could be enhanced. However, where willow and other tree species are encroaching onto other habitats, for example marshland or reedbeds, then management is required to maintain the mix of habitats, particularly at the margins of the Reservoir. |

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| <p>Marshland: maintain</p> | <p>Brent Council, Welsh Harp Sailing Association, Canal and River Trust.</p> | <p>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).</p> | <p>Reduce young tree growth on shores of Neasden Recreation Ground, Welsh Harp Open Space.</p> | <p>Amber</p> | <p>During the past two decades, Willow and scrub growth has exceeded the rate of management work on those sections of the shoreline with marshland habitat. 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 2018 onwards by the Canal &amp; River Trust, the Welsh Harp Sailing Association and Brent Council, led to a consent for works from Natural England and a programme of winter works from 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). Works continued from September 2020 to late 2020.</p> <p>2020: Northern shore. Due to Covid restrictions, work was postponed in January to February 2021. Works have temporarily paused for discussions with partners.</p> <p>2021/22: Discussions with community groups.</p> <p>2022/23:</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 and habitats (northern arm of Reservoir) | Barnet, Barratt PLC                        |   | Restoration of shore by Phase 1 of West Hendon Redevelopment.  | Amber                       | Refer to Barnet. A section of the shoreline near to Cool Oak Lane bridge, has previously been completed.<br><br>Discussions are in progress regarding other works in the northern arm of the Reservoir. |
| South-bank boardwalk                               | Canal and River Trust                      | Canal & Rivers Trust budget: periodic work.   | As required.   | Red / Amber                 | The Canal and River Trust had plans to restore a boardwalk, though now awaiting the outcome of the Vision exercise.   |

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| <p>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.</p> | <p>Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council</p>           | <p>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 and Giant Hogweed elsewhere.</p> | <p>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.</p> | <p>Red</p>  | <p>On-going by Barnet Council, Brent Council, and the Canal and River Trust. The Brent River Catchment Partnership are investigating how to improve control along the whole catchment; and knowledge is shared between partners of the River Brent Catchment Partnership. Thames 21 working with Brent Council and others, have treated some Knotweed and Giant Hogweed on the River Brent section downstream of the dam wall (spring / summer 2021). There are similar projects upstream in Barnet.</p> <p>Spring 2022:<br/>Brent: Control of Giant Hogweed at the Welsh Harp Open Space near to Wood Lane.<br/>Barnet: Similar work on invasive species.</p> |
| <p>Cool Oak Lane bridge. Cool Oak Lane bridge and Wood Lane traffic.</p>  | <p>Barnet Highways (leading) in consultation with Brent Highways.</p> | <p>Barnet Council and others.</p>  | <p>New pedestrian bridge in place.</p>   | <p>Green</p>  | <p>Pedestrian footbridge alongside historic, vehicular footbridge.</p>   |
| <p>River Brent Catchment Management Plan</p>  | <p>All; led by Environment Agency / Thames 21.</p>                    |  | <p>2011 - ongoing</p>  | <p>Amber – in progress, with large challenges to improve the River catchment.</p> | <p>Action Plan published at: see website: <a href="https://www.thames21.org.uk/catchment-partnerships/brent/">https://www.thames21.org.uk/catchment-partnerships/brent/</a></p>  |