

Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

Wednesday 23 November 2022 at 7.00 pm

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Agenda Item 1

WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday 23 November 2022, 7.00 pm

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

AGENDA

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Contact: Corinna Demetriou Corinna.Demetriou@barnet.gov.uk 020 8359 2860

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Decisions of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

27 July 2022

Held as an online meeting on Wednesday 27th July 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 Mary Mitchell	London Borough of Brent
Councillor Andrea Bilbow	London Borough of Barnet
Councillor Ernest Ambe	London Borough of Barnet
Councillor Rishikesh Chakraborty	London Borough of Barnet
Councillor Liz Dixon	London Borough of Brent
Councillor Saqib Butt	London Borough of Brent
Neal Hider	Environment Agency
Neil Earnshaw	Canal and River Trust
Suzanne	Brent Parks Forum
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
Martin Francis	Member of the public
Freda Raingold	Silver Park Jubilee Residents Association
Leila Taheri	Friends of the Welsh Harp
David Stevens	Member of the public
Philip Atkinson	Phoenix Canoe Club

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR 2022/23

Corinna Demetriou asked the group to nominate a new Chair and Vice and Vice Chair for the year 2022/23. Cllr Parvez Ahmed nominated Cllr Anne Clarke to become the Chair of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee, this was seconded by Cllr Ernest Ambe. Cllr Parvez Ahmed nominated Cllr Mary Mitchell to become Vice Chair of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Clarke.

It was agreed that Cllr Anne Clarke is the Chair of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee and that that Cllr Mary Mitchell is the Vice Chair.

3. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence received.

4. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

5. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

6. LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET WELSH HARP UPDATE

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

Mr Gunyon informed the Committee that Barnet now has a new Labour administration in the borough after the May 2022 elections and his team are currently working through the Labour Manifesto to ensure their works are streamlined with the proposals within the manifesto in relation to greenspaces.

Mr Gunyon updated that the Council has re-commissioned the support of Parkguard Ltd to assist with park patrols throughout the summer over the weekends and 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.

On a final note, Mr Gunyon noted that the outline business case for the West Hendon Playing Fields Master plan was approved at Policy and Resources Committee 16 June 2021 and informed that the Council has appointed the Landscape Institute to coordinate a design competition whereby the procurement of this will enable the appointment of a Landscape Architect to assist with developing the design ready for planning.

Judy Shepherd commented in relation to the Parkguards and noted that residents had not seen a visible Parkguard presence in recent months. She continued that the water is likely to attract a lot of attention especially in the hot weather over the summer holiday and would like the Welsh Harp area to be a priority area for the Parkguard team to focus on. Mr Gunyon noted that his team regularly receive feedback on the services that Parkguard provide and ensure as part of resourcing arrangements they check this however he agreed to feed this back and encouraged anyone who is concerned with the services that Parkguard provide to email parks@barnet.gov.uk where a member of his team will follow this up.

Leo Batten commented on street cleansing and raised the suggestion of having countryside rangers to engage with the public and help improve the site. Mr Gunyon informed that the team are currently reviewing last year's patrol service and are potentially looking into having park rangers within the Borough, not just at specific locations. The team are trying to find a solution that will work for the whole Borough and there are a series of steps to go follow through on this options appraisal. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION: MR GUNYON

Leo Batten also asked about the West Hendon playing field master plan and when the WHJCC will be involved. Mr Gunyon commented that early engagement was carried out at the beginning of the scope and the Committee were informed of this at the time however later this year an architect and design in scope are to follow and the Committee will be made aware of this, there is no additional consultation proposed at the moment.

Ben Watt asked about the Master plan and if these plans will affect the outcome of the Silkstream footbridge. Mr Gunyon advised that the plans would not affect the footbridge, despite the plans showing where the footbridge will land, it is not a requirement of the masterplan and may well uncomplicate the issue of the levels to where the bridges are. He noted that any residents who want to walk from the estate onto the playing fields will not be affected by access issues.

Leila Taheri asked in relation to the outcome of the enforcement operations and if any fines were distributed out. She also asked what steps have been put in place to ensure Parkguard engage with the public and noted that their presence had been minimal in the surrounding areas of the Welsh Harp. Mr Gunyon advised that the Parkguard team were not issued delegated powers from Barnet to issue fines and that they were only permitted to capture information which was then passed to the Community Safety Team (CST) for enforcement. In relation to Parkguards presence, the team are monitoring the activity and evidence that has been provided suggests that Parkguard are present and on foot in many of the parks they patrol, however this may not be the case in every visit they carry out and Mr Gunyon asked the Board to be mindful that the surrounding area of the Welsh Harp is a large space to cover.

Cllr Mitchell asked in relation to the new Biodiversity and Conservation Officer role and asked if the role would include working borough wide and collaboratively with neighbouring boroughs. Mr Gunyon advised that the role had been agreed and has been appointed to with the new member of staff starting in August. The role will include collaborative working throughout the borough and with neighbouring ones and noted that joint working is key between Barnet and Brent and the future review of the Management Plan.

Ben Watt asked for the new officer to be invited to the WHJCC and Mr Gunyon confirmed that they would be in attendance for the next meeting.

ACTION: Corinna Demetriou

Mr Gunyon gave an additional update on the West Hendon Allotments and highlighted the intention to bring back the usage of two derelict plots within the land the allotment sits on due to high waiting lists in this area. The team are currently working up concepts and plans and estimate costings and potential funding routes. The area will also include an orchard area and a pond with a focus on a balance around the allotment land and the natural area. Mr Gunyon will bring a further update at the next meeting.

ACTION: MR GUNYON

Leila Taheri asked if this is a definite piece of work or at the proposal stage. Mr Gunyon advised that is currently at the proposal stage until funding is found, however the team are keen to deliver this piece of work.

7. LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT - WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN

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 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.

Mr Williams highlighted the key issues to note of concern include the wildlife around the Welsh Harp and litter continues to be a concern despite many volunteer groups being involved to try to work to clear the problem. There are also problems with invasive species, and these are trying to be contained via the River Brent catchment.

Marshland conservation work on the southern shore has been temporarily paused to enable discussions with community groups and Mr Williams noted that visits take place have 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.

Mr Williams advised that discussions have continued between Brent Council and external partner organisations who have an interest in creating a viable environmental education centre. He noted that 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.

Cllr Mitchell thanked Brent Council for their commitment to the Welsh Harp Education Centre and noted that all initiatives are very important especially in the current times and is keen to keep the narrative around this going. She asked if any expressions of interest have been received to date and what efforts have been made to advertise the education centre. She also highlighted the community engagement element and asked what the current process of informing residents of the ongoing conversations surround the education centre. Mr Williams commented that Brent Council have put out many enquires to local organisations however this has not proved fruitful, and the main issue is finding a viable way of resourcing the centre, especially when it is in need of capital works and general maintenance.

Manfred Starkl asked in relation to the vision project and if the consultation exercise was carried out at the earliest part of the vision and going forward he would like to be involved in this. Mr Williams noted this request and thanked Manfred for all the work carried out on the marshland and conservation of the area.

Suzanne noted that her organisation had previously put forward proposals to Brent Council a working group partnering with other local organisations to assist with the taking over of the education centre, in particular organisations who care of animals and nature which would enrich the local environment and would do as much or as little as we would need them to. Mr Williams agreed to make contact to further explore this option.

ACTION: MR WILLIAMS

Martin Francis, a local resident from Brent asked about the education centre and the various campaigns to save it many times. He suggested a local company, Carys who previously were interested in getting involved when Thames21 took over and suggested making contact with them. He also asked what Thames21 are offering in terms of resource for the additional year they will be available and if this is being marketed in the borough. He also asked about the status of Planet House. Mr Williams advised the

Planet House will need significant investment as much of the building is beyond repair. He continued those discussions are ongoing with Thames21 about what activities they can cover and Mr Williams will update the Board once these are confirmed. He noted that any further information in relation to the education centre can be directed to Brent.Parks.Services@brent.gov.uk and all emails will be picked up and dealt with.

ACTION: MR WILLIAMS

Leo Batten asked about the education centre and noted he had made requests to Brent Council on the possibility of exploring the use of the centre to hold adult lectures in the evening on environmental issues. A lot more seriousness needs to be given to the centre, would like to see more serious discussion going on around it, children need to be made more aware of this.

ACTION: MR WILLIAMS

Cllr Liz Dixon noted the need to come up with some proposals and solutions.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair introduced Ben Watt from Future Habitats – new initiative by Cool Oak aimed at restoration projects at the Welsh Harp, some doable by guided volunteers and some with funding. To improve wetland and flood resilience and installation of dead hedges. Each project is accompanied by a detailed map showing the scope of works. A good launch and good interest this month and CEO of Canal and River Trust has given good feedback. Brent is also a national lottery funded priority area. All encouraged to look at the website Cool Oak. About people, mental wellbeing in cared for greenspaces and in an era of climate change it is about heatwave relief, a sponge in rainfall. All is very crucial.

Manfred Starkl highlighted the importance of ensuring the public know exactly where they can canoe on the Welsh Harp and suggested some clear signage to highlight this. Judy Shepherd agreed and suggested that the organisations who support the Welsh Harp could put information on their websites also to make this clear to those planning on using the facilities.

Manfred Starkl also highlighted the issue of stuck sailors of the reservoir and requested a further conversation to discuss his request that a section of the harp should be kept as a training area. He also asked for the owners of the land to be responsible for necessary signage and not the environmental groups.

Leo Batten asked for an update on Barratt and The Chair noted she would like to look at the impacts of what has already been decided before a wider update would be given to the Board.

Dale Langdon highlighted the recent problems Hendon Rifle Club has faced in relation to large numbers of dogs being walked which is causing worry for some children using the Welsh Harp. Mr Gunyon advised that Barnet currently do not have restrictions on the number of dogs that can be walked, however Brent has a restriction of 4. He continued that there is nothing in the law to restrict numbers however this is currently being looked at by the Barnet Community Safety and Licensing Teams. Mr Gunyon advised he would bring an update to the next meeting.

ACTION: MR GUNYON

Neil Earnshaw gave a brief update on the Welsh Harp joint vision and noted that most members were aware that landowners have been developing a vision which has been

been ongoing for the last year. The joint vision includes vegetation clearance work, hydrographic surveys, and other key pieces of work. Neil commented that he had met with the National Lottery and the reservoir will qualify as a priority area for funding, so he is exploring this. There is a review session on the visionary document scheduled for 18th August where everything included will be discussed, including improving signage around the Welsh Harp Looing at improving signage also.

Leila Taheri noted that the Environment agency was not in attendance and would like an update on the trash screens as there is an ongoing issue with these. Neal Hider from the Environment Agency was in attendance however advised that the main issue with this is the public putting rubbish into the river in the first instance. Neal confirmed he would make contact with colleagues and an update will come to the next meeting and would make contact with Leila on this issue.

ACTION: NEAL HIDER

Fly tipping was also raised and it was agreed that an update on this issue from both Barnet and Brent would come to the next meeting, in particular enforcement and prosecution. The Chair noted that CCTV was high on the agenda for the new Labour administration in Barnet, and would discuss this with the Chair of the Communities, Leadership & Libraries Committee, Councillor Sara Conway for a further update.

ACTION: CORINNA DEMETRIOU

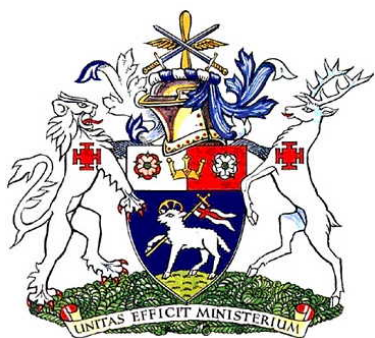
9. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 23rd November 2022

The meeting finished at 8.40 pm

Councillor Anne Clarke
Chair



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

23 November 2022

Title	London Borough of Barnet Welsh Harp Update
Report of	Executive Director, Adults, Communities and Health
Wards	West Hendon
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	None
Enclosures	None
Officer Contact Details	Matthew Gunyon, Head of Greenspaces matthew.gunyon@barnet.gov.uk 0208 359 7403

Summary

To provide an update to the committee in relation to Council activities during Quarters 2&3 (July-Nov 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 July – November 2022 (Quarter 2&3), 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;

1.3 Management and Operations

There have been no reported illegal encampments during Q2 & Q3, the Council's 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.

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 In partnership with the Landscape Institute the Council has been delivering a two-stage design competition to secure a multi-disciplinary design team. Stage 1 has been completed and evaluated; the council is shortly due to announce the three successful design teams who will be move forward to Stage 2 of the competition process.

1.5 Welsh Harp and SSSI management

- 1.5.1 Repair works for Woodfield Park car park are due to be completed by mid-November and repair works to the bird hide walkway have been completed.
- 1.5.2 Pathway repair works are being planned for paths near the canoe club for Spring 2023.
- 1.5.3 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.

- 1.5.4 An update on the Vision was reported to the Environment and Climate Change Committee on 6 September 2022.

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 Social Value

- 5.3.1 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.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 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.

5.4.2 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.

5.5 Risk Management

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

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 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

5.7 Corporate Parenting Principles

5.7.1 N/A

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

5.8.1 The Consultative Committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis, the committee comprises the land owners, legislative bodies, and third sector volunteer groups who

work within the reserve to deliver positive outcomes.

5.9 **Insight**

5.9.1 None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan can be found on Brent Council's website: 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](#)

6.4 [Welsh Harp Vision Update – Environment and Climate Change Committee 6 September 2022, Agenda Item 14](#)

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Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

23rd November 2022

AGENDA ITEM 6

Report from the Corporate Director of Resident Services

Welsh Harp Management Plan

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	1
Background Papers:	None.
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Leslie Williams, Project Officer, Parks Services, Brent Civic Centre. Email: Leslie.Williams@Brent.gov.uk 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. Refer to the Action Plan (3.3).

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. The Action Plan provides notes and updates on issues and projects, rather than listing the details in this covering report. The 'Progress' column indicates current progress. Note that the assessments of need / progress are subjective, as also explained by the text comments. For Brent Council, additional notes are provided in the following paragraphs:

3.4 Marshland work:

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 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:

The Council is continuing to consider options for the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre site. Officers from Commercial Property are also liaising with enquirers to understand their aspirations and requirements on a non-committal basis. Thames 21 are providing some limited services for the year of 2022/23 while discussions continue for a longer-term solution for the future of the Centre. While discussions continue, any potentially new enquiries will continue to be forwarded for Brent Council to consider 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: contact:

Email: healthyliving@brent.gov.uk

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. The actions will be closely monitored, prioritised and re-profiled to ensure there are existing resources available to mitigate against any possible overspends. 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.

<p>Peter Gadsdon Corporate Director Resident Services</p>
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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 view of the future of the Welsh Harp.

The Action Plan here tracks current year progress on the existing Management Plan 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 previously tabled by Barnet Council.

RAG colour coding is subjective and may take account of both 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 th October 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.	Publication expected late autumn of 2022.	Amber – in progress	Developing a vision and options for the Welsh Harp. Appointed in 2021, a consultancy has been preparing information and consulting with the local communities and others, reporting to the Vision's Strategy Group (see list of 'Lead' organisations).

River Brent Catchment Management Plan – the Brent Reservoir is on the River Brent.	All; led by Environment Agency / Thames 21 / London Boroughs within the River Brent Catchment.		2011 - ongoing	Amber – in progress, with large challenges to improve the River catchment.	River Brent Catchment Partnership Action Plan published at: see website: https://www.thames21.org.uk/catchment-partnerships/brent/
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.
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. 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 limited services from the Centre on a temporary basis into 2022/23.

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	<p>Barnet Council: West Hendon Allotments are Self-Managed.</p> <p>Brent Council: Allotments Strategy: Birchen Grove Allotments and Dors Close Allotments.</p>
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.
Signage; and interpretative signage.	Brent / Barnet.		In progress: October 2022.	Amber	Maintained. The Canal & River Trust are currently preparing a set of new interpretative panels.
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.	See the most recent 2021 report (published in July 2022) on wildlife produced by the Welsh Harp Conservation Group, available on their website and via the following link: Publications – Welsh Harp Conservation Group (wordpress.com) Programme of activities led by Welsh Harp Conservation Group for: refer to the website.
Grasslands and cutting	Barnet, Brent	Maintenance: within existing resources. Restoration work is currently unfunded.	On-going – seasonal effects with various cutting frequencies for different types of grassland.	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. At the Welsh Harp the grasslands have been introduced at Neasden Recreation Ground; and complement existing rough-grassland habitats both at Neasden Recreation Ground and at the Welsh Harp Open Space.
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). 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. Barnet Council. Canal & River Trust. Thames 21. Environment Agency.	Landowners: Brent Council, Barnet Council, Canal & River Trust. Leaseholders. Also much volunteer 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 & 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 & 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 & 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	Maintenance of Priestley Way trash screen - weekly.	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; which for the Priestley Way (Staples Corner) trash screen is once weekly. 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. Inevitably, some smaller items will flow through the screens into the reservoir.</p>
Clean up projects	The community		On-going.	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. 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.

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. 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) which needs to be extracted; and the possibility of some additional materials since.
Woodland	Brent, Barnet, WHCG, Canal and River Trust	Largely self-managing. Un-funded: 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.

Marshland: maintain	Brent Council, Welsh Harp Sailing Association, Canal and River Trust.	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).	Reduce young tree growth on shores of Neasden Recreation Ground, Welsh Harp Open Space.	Amber	<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 & 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. 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. The remnants of the previous boardwalk have been collected up by volunteers. A section of the original boardwalk and a small footbridge remain in place after repairs.

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.	Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council	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.	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.	Red	<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: Brent: Control of Giant Hogweed at the Welsh Harp Open Space near to Wood Lane. Barnet: Similar work on invasive species.</p>
Cool Oak Lane bridge. Cool Oak Lane bridge and Wood Lane traffic.	Barnet Highways (leading) in consultation with Brent Highways.	Barnet Council and others.	New pedestrian bridge in place.	Green	Pedestrian footbridge alongside historic, vehicular footbridge.

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WHJCC MEETING
23RD NOVEMBER 2022, 7PM
FRIENDS OF THE WELSH HARP SUBMISSION

AGENDA ITEM 7

Since the last meeting, Friends of the Welsh Harp has continued with its grassroots conservation and community activities.

Activities since the last WHJCC on 27th July 2022:

- 28th August 2022: Monthly conservation event. Approx. 30 attendees, equating to 60 hours of volunteering (£717 assuming London living wage). Volunteers removed litter from the Eastern Marsh, Northern Marsh, and Cool Oak Lane. Barnet Council removed collected items.
- 2nd October 2022: Conservation event in collaboration with two local synagogues. Approx. 40 attendees, equating to 80 hours of volunteering (£956 assuming London living wage). Volunteers removed litter from the Eastern Marsh, Northern Marsh, public bird hide, and Cool Oak Lane. Volunteers also started work at the 'rat feeding station', removing plastic mesh and preparing the compacted soil for future planting (more on this below).
- Secured pro bono creative time from advertising agency to produce following posters/flyers, now around the Welsh Harp:
 - Bird feeding posters
 - Bird feeding leaflets
 - Anti-littering posters

Current / future activities:

- Initiated crowdfunding for two conservation projects. Exceeded our £1,500 target and raised £1,632 from 59 supporters.
 - Project 1: Bee garden. Current 'rat feeding station' at Cool Oak Lane to be turned into a bee garden, consisting of bee bank, native planting, log piles, interpretation panels.
 - Half day in Jan (coppicing), two half days in March (planting and bee bank). **Can CRT or Barnet Council assist with coppicing in January?**
 - Project 2: Public bird hide. Community sourced art inspired by birds of the Welsh Harp to replace/supplement current graffiti on the inside and outside of the hide, bench to be painted, bin installed, gabion baskets outside, signage at Cool Oak Lane bridge to increase footfall etc
 - Local schools (Fryent Primary School, Hyde School, Claremont Academy, Parkfield Primary) have expressed an interest to participate in an eco-art competition
- Barnet Council has pledged to match £1,500 for the creation of a pond on Barnet land in Q3 2023
 - Friends of the Welsh Harp would like to reline existing Bomb Crater Pond and Little Pond - **would Brent Council enable this by matching our funding as Barnet Council have done?**
- Next conservation event planned: 27th November 2022 with focus on Brent side (Birchen Grove)
- Meeting scheduled with St George to discuss sponsorship of habitat creation at entrance to Welsh Harp from the A5, next to SilkBridge Retail Park

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