



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

Thursday 14 March 2024 at 6.00 pm

This meeting will be held as an online virtual meeting.
The link to view the proceedings is available [HERE](#)

Membership:

Members

Representing

Councillors:

Ernest Ambe Esq

London Borough of Barnet

Andrea Bilbow

London Borough of Barnet

Alan Schneiderman (Vice-Chair)

London Borough of Barnet

Rishikesh Chakraborty

London Borough of Barnet

Krupa Sheth (Chair)

London Borough of Brent

Saqib Butt

London Borough of Brent

Parvez Ahmed

London Borough of Brent

Mary Mitchell

London Borough of Brent

Substitute Members (Barnet Council)

Councillors:

Nagus Narenthira, Sara Conway, Humayune Khalick and Andreas Ioannidis

Substitute Members (Brent Council)

Councillors:

Amer Agha, Harbi Farah, Arshad Mahmood and Liz Dixon

Membership Continued

Organisations

Brent River Catchment Partnership
Canal and River Trust
Cleaner Earth UK
Cool Oak
Environment Agency
Friends of Welsh Harp
Hendon Rifle Club
London Wildlife Trust
Natural England
Phoenix Canoe Club
Silkstream Friends
Silver Park Jubilee Residents Association
Thames 21
Thames Water
Training Ship Broadsword
Welsh Harp Conservation Group
Welsh Harp Sailing Association
West Hendon Allotment Society
West Hendon Residents' Association / Friends of York Park

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For electronic copies of minutes, reports and agendas, and to be alerted when the minutes of this meeting have been published visit: [Council meetings and decision making | Brent Council](#)

Provisional Meeting Dates for the Next Municipal Year:

Monday 22 July 2024

Monday 25 November 2024

Thursday 20 March 2025

Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also a Prejudicial Interest (i.e. it affects a financial position or relates to determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission, or registration) then (unless an exception at 14(2) of the Members Code applies), after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

***Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences**- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

****Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

(a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party or trade union).

(b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision, the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who employs or has appointed any of these or in whom they have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000, or any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are a director
- any body of a type described in (a) above.

Agenda

Item	Page
1 Apologies for Absence and Clarification of any Alternate Members	
2 Declarations of Interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.	
3 Deputations (If Any)	
By prior arrangement with the Chair, persons who are not members of the Committee may attend to address the Committee on a particular issue or item. Any members of the public wishing to address the committee should submit their request at least 3 days in advance of the meeting to the contact officer named on the agenda. The request will then be passed to the Chair for consideration.	
4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting	1 - 10
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 23 November 2023 as a correct record.	
5 Matters Arising	
To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.	
6 Brent Reservoir Project Update - Canal & River Trust	Verbal Update
To update Committee members regarding the ongoing works at the Brent Reservoir.	
7 Investigations and Project Updates - Environment Agency	Verbal Update
To update Committee members regarding investigations and ongoing projects conducted by the Environment Agency.	
8 Management Plan (Barnet)	11 - 16
This report provides an update to the committee in relation to Barnet Council activities during Quarter 4 (Jan-March 2024) in respect of the Welsh Harp and West Hendon Playing Fields.	

9 Management Plan (Brent)

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This report presents progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan since the last meeting of the Committee and during the 2023/24 year to date.

10 Any Other Urgent Business

No business other than that appearing on the agenda shall be transacted at the meeting unless the Chair decides that it is urgent. Any member of the Committee wishing to raise an item of urgent business should provide sufficient notice to permit consideration by the Chair.

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Agenda Item 4

MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Held as an online meeting on Thursday 23 November 2023 at 6.00pm

Members Present (In Remote Attendance)

Councillor Alan Schneiderman (Chair)	London Borough of Barnet
Councillor Ernest Ambe Esq	London Borough of Barnet
Councillor Saqib Butt	London Borough of Brent
Councillor Parvez Ahmed	London Borough of Brent
Harriet Duffield (Officer)	London Borough of Barnet
Leslie Williams (Officer)	London Borough of Brent
Adam Woods (Governance)	London Borough of Brent
Ben Carroll	Canal & River Trust
Mark Pearson	Canal & River Trust
Ben Watt	Cool Oak Group
Feargal Sharkey	Cool Oak Group
Lewis Elmes	Environment Agency
Daniella Levene	Friends of Welsh Harp
Leila Taheri	Friends of Welsh Harp
Dale Langdale	Hendon Rifle Club
Dianne Murphy	London Wildlife Trust
Phil Atkinson	Phoenix Canoe Club
Matt Merkies	Silkstream Friends
Diane Mitchell	Silver Park Jubilee Residents Association
Hannah Reid	Thames 21
John Shepherd	Welsh Harp Sailing Association
Manfred Starkl	Welsh Harp Sailing Association
Liz Hall	West Hendon Allotment Society
Leo Batten	Welsh Harp Conservation Group
Derrick Chung	West Hendon Residents Association

1. Apologies for Absence and Clarification of any Alternate Members

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Krupa Sheth (London Borough of Brent), Councillor Mary Mitchell (London Borough of Brent), Councillor Rishikesh Chakraborty (London Borough of Barnet), Councillor Andrea Bilbow (London Borough of Barnet), Matthew Gunyon (London Borough of Barnet), Sian Palmer-Ferry (Canal & River Trust) and Eashani Haria (Canal & River Trust).

2. Declarations of Interests (If Any)

There were no declarations made.

3. Deputations (If Any)

None.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was **AGREED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 27 July 2023 be approved as an accurate record.

5. Matters Arising

None.

6. Update from the Canal & River Trust

Ben Carroll (Project Manager, Canal & River Trust) provided an update to the Committee regarding the Winter works at the Brent Reservoir, which was commencing imminently and was expected to be completed by February 2024 to avoid bird nesting season and minimise impact on the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Members were advised that the Canal & River Trust had been given permission for carry out the works by Natural England and were legally required to carry out the works in the interest of safety, with planned work including painting and repairing the bell tower, inspecting sluice's, general inspections of the Reservoir dam and necessary repair works.

In order to complete the required work, it was explained that the Reservoir would have to be fully dewatered, with the Committee noting that the required gear and equipment was currently being mobilised and water quality monitoring had begun in preparation for the dewatering. Ben Carroll also detailed that the Canal & River Trust expected their application for a Flood Risk Activities Permit to be approved in the near future, meaning that the drawdown of the Reservoir would likely commence in the week beginning 27 November 2023.

In discussing next steps, Ben Carroll informed members that the dewatering process would take approximately four to six weeks and would involve a fish health check and rescue, with native fish relocated elsewhere in the water network. In addition, silt mitigations would be replaced where necessary and, once the Reservoir had been fully dewatered, the aforementioned inspections and works could take place which would continue over weekends and the Christmas period to progress the programme as fast as possible.

To conclude the update, Ben Carroll stated that the Reservoir was expected to be refilled by the end of February 2024 and reassured the Committee that regular dialogue was ongoing between the Canal & River Trust and Natural England. Furthermore, members were advised that the silt on the bed of the Reservoir was very dangerous and therefore the Committee was warned to not enter the Reservoir, to warn others of the dangers and to call 999 if they saw anyone going on the silt or were stuck. Lastly, the Committee noted that a virtual webinar was being held by the Canal & River Trust on 30 November which would provide a much deeper overview of the planned Winter works. Members were encouraged to register for the webinar and submit questions in advance.

Having thanked Ben Carroll for the update, the Chair invited comments and contributions from Committee members, with questions and responses summarised below:

- In response to a question relating to the silt measures, members heard that the silt measures were gabion baskets which stopped silt flowing downstream which were a temporary measure and would be removed before the reservoir was refilled. Moreover, it was explained that the gabion baskets would be arranged in a triangle shape which would form a stable base and therefore would not require stakes. However, retrospective works could be carried out in the case of unforeseen problems.
- The Committee was informed that the Canal & River Trust was reviewing invasive species as part of the Winter works and that there was a process in place to remove any identified species humanely and to not accidentally spread invasive species through the transportation of equipment.
- Regarding rubbish collections over the Winter, it was detailed that the Canal & River Trust had organised volunteer collection days around the perimeter of the Reservoir and had hired a contractor to support in the rubbish collection. However, the true scale of the rubbish would not be known until the Reservoir had been fully dewatered and members were advised that large amounts of rubbish came from upstream which was difficult to control.

- In response to a query concerning the impact of microplastics from rubbish that coated mudflats and marshes, the Committee noted that experts at the webinar on 30 November could provide detailed responses to these complex concerns.
- Given that much of the wildlife in the Welsh Harp relied on the fish in the Reservoir for survival, the Committee questioned how the Canal & River Trust would ensure that enough fish stock was returned to the Reservoir in time for the breeding season in March. In response, members were advised that there were ongoing conversations between the Canal & River Trust and Natural England regarding when and how fish would be restocked. The Committee was reassured that comments and concerns would be passed onto experts and in-depth responses would be given at the webinar on 30 November.

As no further issues were raised, the Committee **AGREED** to note the update.

7. Management Plan (Barnet)

Prior to the presentation of the report, the Chair informed the Committee that a separate meeting was being arranged regarding the proposed construction of the Silkstream bridge to provide further information and have a more in-depth discussion on the concerns and queries of the Committee and local residents. The Chair then handed over to Harriet Duffield (Biodiversity and Conservation Officer, Barnet Council) who introduced a report that provided an update to the committee in relation to Council activities during quarter two & three (July-November 2023) in respect of the Welsh Harp and West Hendon Playing Fields.

To begin, Harriet Duffield detailed the work completed by the Community Safety Team during quarter two and three, which included removing illegal encampments and substances and completing intelligence-led weekend patrols. Furthermore, members noted that the Community Safety Team had been briefed regarding the public safety concerns arising from the planned Winter works and therefore they were carrying out patrols along the Reservoir in tandem with the security provided by the Canal & River Trust.

The Committee also heard that the new Volunteer Handbook had been distributed through the Barnet Green Spaces Network, with the Council actioning feedback from stakeholders to inform an updated version of the document. However, it was explained that in the meantime the processes outlined in the document would ensure that volunteering work conducted on London Borough of Barnet land was safe and covered by the Council's insurance.

Members were advised that the contractors Maydencroft were undertaking survey work to inform the proposed extension of the West Hendon Allotments into their disused tenanted land. The scope of the project included ecological surveying before the production of a landscape concept plan then specification

for works. It was outlined that the proposals would include new allotment space as well as conservation areas, a pond, orchard, apiary, and event space.

The Committee was informed that the Council had arranged contractors to undertake a winter deep clean of the site in January 2024; focusing on the site's paths and areas of congregation. Moreover, the Barnet Greenspaces Team were working with the Canal & River Trust to aid litter removal during the Reservoir draw down and had contacted Natural England to investigate options to mitigate bankside litter around the Silkstream trash screen. Members were also made aware that two Canal & River Trust litter picks had occurred so far, and a litter pick organised by Friends of the Welsh Harp was scheduled for the near future.

In outlining the Council's ongoing partnership work, members noted that the Council continued to work with Thames21 and the members of the Brent Catchment Partnership on catchment-wide projects such as the London Water Vole Recovery Program and were currently scoping survey locations at the Welsh Harp for American mink and water voles as part of this research, funded by the Mayor's Rewild London Fund.

Regarding the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, the Committee heard that a review would soon commence so that the Council can collect and review baseline data which would include field surveys involving habitat mapping. It was explained that a consultation on the topic was planned for the new year and members' involvement was welcomed.

In discussing the West Hendon Playing Fields Masterplan, it was detailed that the first two formal community engagement activities took place in November 2023, with these activities aimed to actively involve the community in informing the design development for the playing fields. However, members were advised that the online engagement platform, which included a survey, an interactive map and memory map, was still accessible and would continue to be open until 17 December 2023. In addition, statutory consultation meetings had been conducted with key entities such as the Metropolitan Police, Natural England and Sport England. Ongoing consultations were in place to ensure comprehensive engagement with relevant authorities.

Members were informed that the Planning Enforcement Team were working with Natural England to resolve the issues relating to damage to the SSSI from a development on neighbouring properties. In August, a retrospective application for the construction work was refused by the London Borough of Barnet Planning Department. On the week commencing 13 November 2023, Barnet Planning Enforcement served a notice to the property owner requiring the demolition of the outbuilding and the removal of the constituent materials from the property within four months of the date of the notice. The Committee was reassured that the Council was continuing to monitor the situation to ensure the required action was taken and no further damage was done to the SSSI.

In finalising the update, Harriet Duffield outlined that the Council were working with the Canal & River Trust and Brent Council to secure external funding to deliver the Council's 'Vision'.

In thanking Harriet Duffield for the update, the Chair welcomed questions from Committee members, with contributions summarised below:

- In response to a query on the location of the illegal encampments, members were advised that further information on the whereabouts of the encampments could be provided outside of the meeting.
- Members thanked the Canal & River Trust for removing and destroying rafts from the Reservoir and highlighted that the Canal & River Trust was also removing debris on the marshes and had placed an order for new rafts to be installed once the water had been refilled for the breeding season.
- Regarding the vision for the West Hendon Playing Fields, the Committee was informed that the illustration used during the first round of engagement was used as part of a design competition and at the current stage of the project there was no concrete design proposals. It was explained that designs would be developed after the engagement period had closed.
- Members noted that concerns relating to HGV traffic near the Broadway would be passed on to colleagues in the Highways Team.

Following the consideration of the main report, Harriet Duffield provided an update regarding the proposed construction of the Silkstream bridge. It was detailed that a feasibility study reviewing the design and construction method of the bridge had been completed, identifying that the carbon footprint of the bridge could be reduced by c60% and that it could be built using a lighter weight design. Furthermore, whilst no final decision had been taken, it was likely that the upkeep of the bridge would remain the responsibility of Barratt. The same was also true for day-day management issues, although this would need to be handled in close liaison with the Council team managing West Hendon Playing Fields. Lastly, it was outlined that a number of documents needed to be drafted as conditions of planning, which had been approved by Natural England.

In opening the floor to any questions from members, the Chair reiterated that a further meeting would be scheduled to provide a forum for a more in-depth discussion regarding the proposals for the Silkstream bridge. Questions, comments and responses are summarised below:

- The Committee emphasised that the construction of the bridge would result in a disproportionate amount of damage to the SSSI due to the proposed position of the bridge, not the weight or construction method

used to build the bridge. Members highlighted that there were alternative routes available which would still serve the purpose of providing access to the sports and playing fields and would reduce the damage to the SSSI significantly.

- Members outlined the disturbance that the construction of the bridge would cause to wildlife in the area due to increased footfall, with the Committee explaining that surveys showed that birds were consistently taking flight due to high footfall.
- Although recognising and welcoming the Council's efforts to open further communication channels regarding the issue, the Committee stated that at the time in which the planning permission was granted the area had been wrongly evaluated as low-value wet woodland rather than historical wetland that had overgrown. Members explained that the area was not low-value land but rather a mosaic of habitats which supported the vitality of the SSSI which was not considered during the original planning application.
- The Committee raised safety concerns relating to the original proposal as there was not any provision for lighting in the area.
- Members highlighted that many local residents had signed a petition opposed to the construction of the bridge due to ecological and financial reasons, as residents had been informed by First Port that they would be responsible to pay for the upkeep of the bridge.
- In response to concerns that the Barnet Labour Group was reneging on promises made regarding the bridge during their time in opposition, the Chair explained that the Council still held concerns relating to the construction of the bridge and reiterated that Barnet Labour would not have granted planning permission for the bridge if they were in power at the time of the planning application. Nevertheless, the Council was now in a position where planning permission had been awarded for the development which could not be unilaterally reversed, but options were being explored to mitigate resident concerns and the bridge's environmental impact, such as exploring alternative designs.
- In response to a query as to why the Council had not utilised their power to revoke or modify planning permission in exceptional circumstances, the Committee noted that the question could be raised at the planned engagement meeting where planning experts could provide a more detailed explanation.

- Regarding whether too much money had been spent on the proposal to construct the bridge to abandon the plans, members were advised that this would be an issue to raise with Barratt rather than the Council.

In bringing the consideration of the agenda item to a close, the Committee welcomed Feargal Sharkey (Cool Oak Group) to the meeting who spoke on their fondness of the Brent Reservoir, River Brent and SSSI and welcomed the additional meeting on the Silkstream bridge to have an open discussion to progress the issue. In concluding the agenda item, the Chair reiterated that further details relating to the Silkstream bridge would be provided at the additional meeting and details of the meeting would be distributed once they had been arranged. As no further issues were raised, the Committee **AGREED** to note the report.

8. Management Plan (Brent)

Leslie Williams (Project Officer, Brent Council) presented a report that outlined progress on the Brent Reservoir/Welsh Harp Management Plan since the last meeting of the Committee and during the 2023/24. Firstly, the Committee was advised that the Action Plan, attached as Appendix 1 of the report, provided notes and updates on issues and projects.

Since the previous Committee meeting, a site visit was held with officers of the Canal & River Trust to explore options to re-start work to manage the growth of scrub on the marshland of the shores alongside Neasden Recreation Ground, as shade continued to reduce the marshland vegetation on the south-western shore of the Reservoir alongside Neasden Recreation Ground. Furthermore, a new grounds maintenance contract had commenced on 1 August 2023, with Continental Landscapes Ltd, for the operational works in Brent Council's parks and open spaces. This included the Welsh Harp Open Space, Neasden Recreation Ground and Silver Jubilee Park although it did not involve work on the marshland or woodland.

The Committee was informed that the Council was considering the potential details for a Welsh Harp Post-16 Skills Resource Centre to replace the current portacabin building, which would provide young people and young adults with special educational needs with work experience and volunteering opportunities. In addition to its main proposed use, it was also explained that there was the potential for third sector and community organisations to use the building outside of curriculum time. However, confirmed details for the proposals were yet to be announced.

A reminder was provided to members that the Priestley Way trash screen should not be accessed by unauthorised personnel due to health and safety concerns that the site presented.

In handing over to Lewis Elmes (Environment Agency) to update the Committee on pollution incidents, Leslie Williams thanked members for their involvement in a range of volunteer activities such as the Healthy Walks Programme. In thanking Leslie Williams for the introduction, Lewis Elmes detailed that work relating to the sediment issues discussed in the previous Committee meeting was ongoing, with surveys identifying areas of further concern which were being rectified over the coming weeks. While the issue had seemed to be resolved as no sediment had been identified for a number of months, members heard that fresh sediment had been spotted in recent days. Once work had been completed to resolve the issue, a review of the site would be undertaken to search for any additional problems and updates would be provided to the Committee.

Lewis Elmes also informed members of ongoing issues upstream, with multiple misconnected properties identified at Edgware Brook which was resulting in fat, oil and grease blockages, in addition to 17 misconnected properties elsewhere upstream. It was explained that Thames Water was contacting impacted properties and both the Environment Agency and Thames Water were reviewing how many properties were incorrectly discharging into the water network. So far, the issue had been rectified at a few properties which included a business. However, work was still ongoing with the Environment Agency and Thames Water meeting weekly to discuss and review misconnections.

Following the conclusion of their updates, the Chair thanked Leslie Williams and Lewis Elmes and opened the discussion to Committee members, with questions and responses summarised below:


- Regarding the use of the Welsh Harp Skills Resource Centre, members expressed disappointment that the Centre would largely be used for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as the site had benefitted generations of young people who would now not be provided similar opportunities. In outlining that exposure to nature was both physically and mentally beneficial, the Committee queried the rationale behind the decision. In response, members were signposted to the report considered at Brent Council's May Cabinet meeting on the topic, as the report provided a holistic explanation for the decision. However, the Committee was informed that there would be scope for community organisations to use the facility outside of curriculum hours, although final details were yet to be confirmed.

Having thanked Leslie Williams and Lewis Elmes for the update, and with no further queries, the Committee **AGREED** to note the update.

9. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting ended at 7:18pm.
COUNCILLOR ALAN SCHNEIDERMAN
VICE-CHAIR

 <p>The coat of arms of the Welsh Harp, featuring a central shield with a harp, supported by a white lion and a white unicorn. Above the shield is a crown and a cross. A banner at the bottom reads 'UNITAS EFFICIT MINISTERIUM'.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee</p> <p style="text-align: center;">14 March 2024</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>	<p>London Borough of Barnet Welsh Harp Update</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Report of</p>	<p>Executive Director, Adults, Communities and Health</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wards</p>	<p>West Hendon</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Key</p>	<p>None</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Enclosures</p>	<p>None</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Officer Contact Details</p>	<p>Matthew Gunyon, Head of Greenspaces matthew.gunyon@barnet.gov.uk 0208 359 7403</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p>	
<p>To provide an update to the committee in relation to Council activities during Quarter 4 (Jan-March 2024) in respect of the Welsh Harp / West Hendon Playing Fields.</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">Officers Recommendations</p>
<p>1. That the committee note the contents of this report.</p>

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 Jan – March 2024 (Quarter 4), 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

1.3.1 There have been no reported illegal encampments during Q4, 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.

1.3.2 The council has launched a public consultation in relation to the development of the new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and a Local Nature Recovery Plan (LNRP replace Biodiversity Action Plans), this is being led by Land Use Consultants (LUC) on behalf of the council. The consultation can be found here <https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces-strategy-engagement>

1.3.3 A series of Volunteer litter picking events have been organised by local groups and The CRT over the winter period with collection and clearance resources provided by the Council.

1.3.4 As members of the Thames21 Brent Catchment Partnership, the council continues to work with stakeholders on the biggest issues facing the Brent River catchment, which includes the Welsh Harp. LBB attends the working group meetings, such as the invasive non-native species control group, which has recently set up an interactive map to show INNS locations and treatment plans. The long-term aim of the group is to eradicate Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed across the catchment, all of which are present at the Welsh Harp.

1.4 West Hendon Playing Fields Master Plan

1.4.1 We concluded the first round of public engagement activities, including online surveys and in-person events in December 2023. We are compiling the results into an engagement report, which findings will be shared with through our Commonplace webpage soon.

1.4.2 In response to the overwhelming interest from the local community, we're actively fostering relationships with concerned groups and interested parties of the playing fields. Additionally, we're preparing an FAQ page on our engagement project website to

address the numerous inquiries we've received. This resource will serve as a central hub for information dissemination and clarity.

- 1.4.3 The information gathered through the engagement process will be used along with existing information help within the project team in order to inform the design development.
- 1.4.4 Visualisations and drawings depicting our evolving designs will be developed and be available for comment. These visuals will offer insights into the aesthetics, functionality, and ambiance of the site. WHJCC input will be crucial in making informed decisions regarding site options.
- 1.4.5 We are committed to a transparent and iterative design process. Resident and community feedback, along with input from other stakeholders, will drive the refinement of our designs. Another round of engagement will follow in the Summer, ensuring that our plans resonate as well as possible with expectations of a wide community.
- 1.4.6 We are planning a second round of engagement with a special focus on schools and young individuals. Their perspectives are invaluable, and we are eager to involve them in shaping the future of our project. Planning for this has begun and will begin to take shape in the coming weeks.
- 1.4.7 We propose that the project presents at an upcoming meeting whereby we can offer some visuals and update on design and engagement.

1.5 **Welsh Harp and SSSI management**

- 1.5.1 Over the Spring and Summer of 2024 an update litter management regime will be trialled in order to improve the levels of litter and waste in the area, this will be reviewed throughout the period and adjusted as required. This will be supported with two contractor led targeted deep cleanse actions that will take place post the nesting season (Aug/Sept) and pre the nesting season (Dec/Jan).
- 1.5.2 Over the Spring and Summer seasons the Council will explore options around the Public Bird hide in order to tackle the ongoing anti-social behaviour and misuse of the area. A thorough options appraisal will be completed with the aim of undertaking any require works in the autumn/winter of 2024 (subject to any approvals requires).
- 1.5.3 Damage to the SSSI caused by development on neighbouring properties was reported to the Council by members of the WHCG in April 2023. The Planning Enforcement Team are working with Natural England to resolve the issues and served enforcement notices to the address in May 2023. In August, a retrospective application for the construction work (23/2569/RCU) was refused by the London Borough of Barnet Planning Department. On the week commencing 13th November 2023, Barnet Planning Enforcement served a notice to the property owner requiring the demolition of the outbuilding and the removal of the constituent materials from the property within four months of the date of the notice. LBB will continue to monitor to ensure this is done and no further damage is done to the SSSI.

1.5.4 The council continues to work in partnership with Brent Council, Canals, and Rivers Trust, The GLA, The London Wildlife Trust and Thames 21 in delivering the overarching Vision for the Welsh Harp and updating the existing Management Plan.

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 the 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](#)

 <p>Brent</p>	<p>Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee 14 March 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Report from the Corporate Director of Resident Services and Cabinet Member for Environment, Infrastructure and Climate Action</p>
<p>Welsh Harp Management Plan</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	1: Appendix A – Welsh Harp and Brent Reservoir Management Plan: Action Plan 2023-2024
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Leslie Williams, Project Officer, Parks Services, Brent Council 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 2023/24 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.

3.0 Detail and Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities

3.1 Welsh Harp ‘Vision’:

The ‘Welsh Harp Vision’ was published in July 2023. The Vision has been prepared by the Canal & River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council, the London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority, Thames 21 and other partners.

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.

3.4 Brent Reservoir de-watering:

The Canal & River Trust will update the Committee on the progress on the reservoir de-watering, dam wall mechanism repairs and associated works. For Brent Council this has been an opportunity to work with the Canal & River Trust, the local community, and other partners to improve aspects of the reservoir. We note the considerable community response to the several clean-up projects that have been organised. Those have included projects on the northern shores of the reservoir and also events on the southern shores near to Priestley Way and in the vicinity of Neasden Recreation Ground. We note also help from volunteers, for example the Clean Up The River Brent group, primarily based downstream in Ealing, who have organised projects and participated in other events. The local groups have continued their work.

Brent Council and others were involved in the Brent Reservoir (Welsh Harp) Open Day on 3rd February 2024 organised by the Canal & River Trust.

3.5 Marshland work:

Following a site meeting with officers of the Canal & River Trust in October 2023, their Ecologist has detailed works for the marshland edge alongside the southern edge of the reservoir adjacent to Neasden Recreation Ground. These works had prior approval from Natural England and that has been confirmed. The works will involve some tree management, particularly to increase light to the marshland edge, for the benefit of the marshland vegetation, views and also to reduce the wind shadow for water wind-sport users. The organisations involved with the project will now be looking at how the works can be implemented. That will possibly involve a start on site from September 2024.

3.6 Welsh Harp Centre:

The Council has appointed a design team to develop proposals at the Welsh Harp Centre, we have started early consultation with some of the proposed end users and will engage with other stakeholders and the local community. The

project will deliver a new purpose-built education centre with multi use spaces for the wider community to access.

3.7 Healthy Walks programme:

The walking programme continues. The Welsh Harp walks are on Thursdays from 10am to 11am, meeting at the Welsh Harp Open Space end of Birchen Grove, Kingsbury NW9. For details, please see the walking website at: brent.gov.uk/parks-leisure-and-healthy-living/walking

3.8 Pollution incidents:

Refer to the Environment Agency. During the winter, the Environment Agency have been continuing their investigation of one or more incidents from the Welsh Harp Industrial Estate.

3.9 Priestley Way Trash Screen:

The Environment Agency attend the Priestley Way screen on a fortnightly basis to use a grab lorry to clear the screen. The Environment Agency have requested a reminder that other than of their trained teams, there should be no accessing of the trash screen beyond the fence and gate into the trash screen area. Signage is provided on the screen's exterior fence.

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 timeframes, 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 Paragraph 185 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) provides that to protect and enhance biodiversity, plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks. For decision making, paragraph 186 of the NPPF provides that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. Paragraph 186 also provides that planning permission should not normally be permitted where development on land within or outside a SSSI is likely to have an adverse effect on it.
- 5.5 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.

Peter Gadsdon
Corporate Director Resident Services

APPENDIX A. WELSH HARP / BRENT RESERVOIR MANAGEMENT PLAN: ACTION PLAN FOR 2023-2024

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 timeframes, though many are not affordable in the short term.

The Action Plan here tracks current year progress on the existing Management Plan while also highlighting projects with a longer timeframe.

Progress is indicated within the text and may include the priority of the issue, risks and progress.

Action	Lead	Budget	Approximate timetable	Progress: 2023-24 to 14 th March 2024
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.	Published in late July 2023.	Developing a vision and options for the Welsh Harp.
Implementation of the Welsh Harp Vision	Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council, Thames 21, London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority.	The Vision team are investigating potential grant sources. The first is a potential application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.	On-going	In discussion.

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.		Ongoing since 2011.	River Brent Catchment Partnership Action Plan published at: 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 (CRT)	Canal and River Trust	Works: October 2023 to February 2024.	Dam wall and mechanism maintained to operational and statutory standards. Statutory inspection and works conducted in January to February 2021. Works, involving pre-drawdown of the Reservoir, commencing October 2023.
Maintain open water for water sports	Welsh Harp Sailing Association (WHSA)	Undertaken by volunteers of the (WHSA)	On-going	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	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	The WHCG organise winter projects at and near to the hides.
Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre	Brent Council, Thames 21		Brent Council are leading on the future of the Education Centre, while Thames 21 are currently maintaining a presence.	Refer to: Brent Council Cabinet, May 2023 report. Brent Council are working on details for a new Welsh Harp Centre building as a post-16 skills resource centre, with a focus on horticulture, work experience and volunteering opportunities. There is the potential for use of the site at other times by third sector and community organisations.

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.	Barnet Council: West Hendon Allotments are Self-Managed. 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.	Maintenance, particularly of the well-used paths and features.
Signage; and interpretative signage.	Brent / Barnet.		The C&RT have a series of interpretative signs in design.	Maintained. The Canal & River Trust are currently preparing a set of interpretative panels, for installation in 2024.
Parks infrastructure	Brent / Barnet			Parks infrastructure is checked at appropriate frequencies. Birchen Grove Car Park: Mini-humps installed in January 2020. Silver Jubilee Park Car Park: resurfaced and line-marked: January 2020. Cool Oak Lane Car Park: Barnet.

Monitoring: wildlife, and indicators	WHCG; and public authorities.	Mainly by volunteers of WHCG.	On-going	See the most recent 2022 report (published in June 2023) 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.	Grasslands: A grassland maintenance schedule introduced by Brent Council across the Borough (including at Neasden Recreation Ground) 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. There are also 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.	Spring to autumn.	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	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.

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.	<p>Several clean-ups have been organized since January 2021. The Canal & River Trust have cleared some larger items from the reservoir itself, while the C&RT and community organisations have held several clean-up events of the margins of the reservoir.</p> <p>During the current de-watering of the reservoir, from late 2023 into early 2024, a number of safety-supervised events have been organized to clear litter from the margins of the reservoir.</p> <p>There remains, in addition to litter and rubbish in the reservoir; fly-tipped waste in the wooded wetland on the southern shore of 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> <p>Litter and fly-tipping onto the public open spaces of the Welsh Harp is a responsibility of the grounds maintenance contractors of either Barnet or Brent Council. For Brent, instances can be reported using the FixMyStreet app, but please select 'Parks' on the first set of options which takes the user to a dedicated page for parks.</p>
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.	<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 fortnightly. 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.	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 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.	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.	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	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 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.	Habitat maintained. Estimates from GIS aerial images suggest that the area of reedbed 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. 2023: CRT works to create alcoves in the reedbed in the Eastern Marsh.

Wet woodland	Canal and River Trust, Barnet, Brent	Largely self-managing.	On-going.	Largely self-managing. Rubbish noted 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. Unfunded: management of woodland to increase diversity, but potential for creative use of material.		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.	<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) 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 to 2021.</p> <p>For the southern shore, a programme of works was detailed by the C&RT Ecologist in early 2024 and discussions are in progress to proceed with works from about September 2024.</p>

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.	Marshland habitat at risk of scrub encroachment. See the comments for 'Marshland maintain', above.
Marshland: orchids and other marshland plants	WHCG, Brent	Marshland work by Brent Council. Volunteer work by WHCG.	WHCG to provide information.	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.	Refer to Barnet. 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.	The remnants of the previous boardwalk have been collected by volunteers. A section of the original boardwalk and a small footbridge remain in place after repairs by volunteers.

<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>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> <p>Autumn 2023: Completion of Riverside Connections control programme for Japanese Knotweed and visible Giant Hogweed between Quainton Street Open Space and the foot of the Welsh Harp dam wall.</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>Pedestrian footbridge alongside historic, vehicular footbridge.</p>
<p>West Hendon Playing Fields</p>	<p>Barnet Council</p>	<p>Barnet Council</p>		

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