

MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 12 January 2010 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Farrell (LB Brent) (Chair), Councillor Hart (LB Barnet) (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Motley (LB Brent), Johnson (LB Barnet) and Rayner (LB Barnet) and Jon Guest (British Waterways), John Colmans (London Wildlife Trust), Brian Turner (Training Ship Broadsword), Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), Brian Turgoose (Welsh Harp Sailing Association), John Shephard (Welsh Harp Sailing Association), Judy Shepherd (West Hendon Community Forum), Geoffrey Johnson (Woolmead Residents' Association) and Farzana Yousaf (Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre)

Apologies were received from: Councillors O'Sullivan (LB Brent), Wharton (LB Brent) and Davey (LB Barnet) and Neale Hider (Environment Agency), Molly Savage (Local Agenda 21), Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust), Kate Mitchell (Natural England) and Harry Mackie (Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre)

Also in attendance: Jenny Warren (LB Barnet) and Leslie Williams (LB Brent)

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

There were none declared.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 11 November 2009 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the following being noted:

Clause 4 – Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan (Brent), paragraph 1:

It was the Welsh Harp Sailing Association that was leading on finding possible solutions for weed growth in the water, not British Waterways as stated.

3. Matters arising (if any)

Bird hide

Following a request for an update on the construction of the bird hide, Jenny Warren (Barnet Parks Services) explained that she met with the contractor early in December 2009 to agree specifications, which the contractor then went away to draw up. Following a request for regular updates regarding the construction of the bird hide, Jenny Warren stated that it should be constructed in time for the next meeting of this committee in March 2010.

Planning applications 09/3220 (Brent) and 03560/09 (Barnet)

The Chair informed the committee that both the planning application for the Greenhouse Garden Centre site at Birchen Grove and the planning application for

the Woodfield Nursery site on Cool Oak Lane were refused. It was noted that at this stage, as far as the committee were aware, no appeals had been made.

4. Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan (Brent)

Leslie Williams (Brent Parks Services) introduced his report which provided an update on the progress of the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan and related issues. He informed the committee that following the annual review, a revised draft version of the Management Plan was now available. He explained that the revised draft Management Plan could now be found on Brent Council's website and was undergoing consultation. He invited members of the committee to take part in the consultation process. He added that whilst the website currently stated that consultation would close on the 12 January 2010, this would be extended to the next committee meeting in March 2010. He explained that the revised Management Plan could be found on Brent Council's website by taking the following steps:

- Go to the Council's Home Page
- Click 'A-Z' Council Services
- Click on the letter 'C'
- Click on 'consultation tracker'
- Click on 'current consultations'
- Click on 'Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan'

Leslie Williams explained that as well as revising the Management Plan, the working group had also decided to create an action plan. He stated that Jenny Warren (Barnet Parks Services) would be updating the committee on the progress of the action plan.

Leslie Williams concluded his presentation by informing the committee that the coppicing of willow trees in the Welsh Harp Open Space by Brent's Park Services would take place at the end of February 2010.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted

5. Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan (Barnet)

Jenny Warren (Barnet Parks Services) introduced a report which informed the committee of the Welsh Harp working group's proposals to develop an action plan for the Welsh Harp. She reminded the committee that at the working group's meeting on the 4 November 2009, it was agreed that, in addition to revisions to the Welsh Harp Management Plan, a supplementary action plan identifying specific targets and actions with timelines and allocated lead officers or groups would be created that would enable the key stakeholders to manage the site more effectively and address 'real' issues at the site. She added that the group met again on the 8 December 2009 to determine a format for the action plan and agreed that the format of BARS (Bio-diversity Action Reporting System) would be an appropriate tool to compliment the Management Plan. She drew the committee's attention to the draft action plan on page two of the report and explained that this would, over the next couple of months, be filled in with more specific targets and actions. It was

noted that a series of sub-groups were due to meet in January and February 2010 to agree these specific targets and actions, with the view to implementing the action plan for April 2010.

In the discussion which followed, it was asked whether targets would be created which related to the recreational use of the Welsh Harp. In response, Jenny Warren explained that there would be targets that related to the recreational use of the Welsh Harp. As an example, she drew the committee's attention to the action plan on page two of the report and the target coded 'WH4' which related to the promotion of the Welsh Harp as a recreational resource. It was also asked whether the recommendations from the London Wildlife Trust's Biodiversity Action Plan had been looked at. In response, Jenny Warren explained that any relevant recommendations would be covered within the action plan. Following an enquiry regarding the definition of eutrophic standing water, it was noted that eutrophic standing water was water that was rich in mineral and organic nutrients which promoted a proliferation of plant life, especially algae.

A concern regarding the lack of dog waste bins on the edge of West Hendon Playing Field was raised and a suggestion made that this needed to be investigated. In response, Jenny Warren stated that she would look into this issue.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted

6. Planning Issues (if any)

None.

7. 175th Anniversary of the Welsh Harp Reservoir

Following on from the discussion which was held at the last meeting of this committee, the committee further considered how to celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the Welsh Harp Reservoir. The Chair explained that she had received an email from Sue Harper, Assistant Director for Leisure & Registration (Brent Council), stating that there were a number of areas of work, which the Council carried out around the Welsh Harp, that could be linked to the celebrations. She added that it was difficult to be specific as to how Brent Council could be involved with the celebrations until they knew when an event might take place. The Chair notified the committee that Sue Harper had informed her that Brent Council had recently produced a new Brent Sports Physical Activity Strategy which had identified water sports as a new priority sport for the Borough and that Brent Council was keen to increase their joint working with the sports clubs based at the Welsh Harp and that this could possibly be linked to the celebrations. The Chair stated that she would pass this information onto the Welsh Harp Sailing Association.

The committee discussed options for the celebrations. The Chair informed the committee that it was very unlikely that any funding for the celebrations would be available. It was noted that at the previous meeting, the committee discussed the possibility of linking the celebrations with the Kingsbury Open Day. Following a discussion, the committee agreed that as long as the organisers of the Kingsbury

Open Day agreed, tying in the celebrations with the Kingsbury Open Day would be the best option. Discussion with the organisers would need to take place as to how this would best work. The Chair informed the committee that she would write to the organisers seeking their permission to tie in the celebrations with the Kingsbury Open Day. It was agreed that the Chair and Councillor Motley would contact the Brent Magazine to investigate whether the Magazine could advertise the celebrations. It was suggested that a procession of boats on the reservoir could also be a good way to celebrate the anniversary. The Chair suggested that the Welsh Harp Sailing Association could look into the practicalities of doing this. A suggestion was also made to hold a regatta, similar to what used to be held many years ago. However concerns were raised over the practicality of holding a regatta and the dangers this would pose to the environment and wildlife.

The importance of using the exhibition on the history of the Welsh Harp, co-ordinated by Hugh Petrie (Heritage Officer, Barnet Council), as part of the celebrations was noted. With regards to the exhibition it was requested that information about the exhibition be sent to all schools in Brent via the school circular. This had already been done for the schools in Barnet. The Chair drew the committee's attention to the invites, which had been sent to members of the committee with the papers for this meeting, to attend a private viewing of the exhibition celebrating 175 Years of the Brent Reservoir at the Church Farmhouse Museum on Sunday 17 January 2010. It was agreed that this invite should be sent to all Barnet and Brent Councillors.

The Committee unanimously agreed to appoint Councillor Hart (Barnet Council) to lead the co-ordination of the celebrations.

RESOLVED:-

- i. Councillor Hart to lead the co-ordination of the celebrations;
- ii. that the celebrations be tied in with the Kingsbury Open Day subject to the agreement of the organisers of the Kingsbury Open Day;
- iii. that the following actions be undertaken;
 - a. the Chair to write to the organisers of the Kingsbury Open Day;
 - b. the Chair and Councillor Motley to contact the Brent Magazine to investigate whether the magazine could advertise the celebrations;
 - c. that information regarding the exhibition on the history of the Welsh Harp Reservoir be sent to all schools in Brent via the school circular;
 - d. that all councillors be invited to the private viewing of the exhibition being held in Church Farmhouse Museum on Sunday 17 January 2010.

8. Any Other Urgent Business

The Chair agreed to discuss the issue of the request by the Open Water Swimming Association to have access to swim in the Welsh Harp Reservoir as other urgent business. Brian Turgoose (Welsh Harp Sailing Association) explained that he had been asked by the Open Water Swimming Association if they could use the reservoir to swim early in the morning between 7.30-9.30am. He added that they had also requested the use of the Welsh Harp Sailing Association's facilities. He explained that whilst casual swimming was not allowed, as the Open Water Swimming Association was a properly constituted body and as open water swimming was an Olympic sport, the Welsh Harp Sailing Association had agreed to this request subject to the approval of the other relevant agencies and on the understanding that the Open Water Swimming Association would meet all the safety requirements.

Jon Guest from British Waterways stated that British Waterways had major reservations in allowing the Open Water Swimming Association to use the reservoir. He stated that not only could it encourage casual swimming but that there were also safety and health risks which needed to be considered, such as the presence of a large amount of weed and algae. These concerns were also raised by other members of the committee. Taking into consideration these concerns, Brian Turgoose (Welsh Harp Sailing Association) stated that he would write to the Open Water Swimming Association to inform them that they would not be able to accommodate their request. Jon Guest from British Waterways explained that he would also write, informing the Open Water Swimming Association of other waters that would be more accessible to their needs such as areas of the Docklands.

9. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee was scheduled for Wednesday 24 March 2010.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

M FARRELL
Chair