

Decisions of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

20 November 2018

Members Present:-

Councillor John Hart
Councillor Saira Don

Councillor Roxanne Mashari
Councillor Parvez Ahmed

Also in attendance

Canal and River Trust: Richard Bennett
London Wildlife Trust: Dianne Murphy and Clive Cohen
Hendon Rifle Club: Dale Langdale
Welsh Harp Sailing Association: David Rose
West Hendon Allotment Society: Liz Hall
Cleaner Earth UK: Peter and Renata Eros
Thames Water: Stephen Barry and Kimberley Rodwell

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The following items were noted:

Previous outstanding actions in relation to the waste drainage issue were resolved and the hose pipe installed.

The first paragraph of Item 7 the last sentence that stated, "the Friends of Welsh Harp website" should be amended to the Forestry Commission website.

Matthew Gunyon confirmed that he would take up the issue on repair of the bridge with the Community Safety Team to see if they could resolve some enforcement in relation to the activity of fly tipping. The issue with Woodside Park Car Park was being discussed with the Community Safety Team about the possible deployment of a CCTV camera.

Contracts had been awarded for signs, bins and benches, focussing on sites where there was dangerous furniture dumping. Councillor Mashari had emailed the appropriate team about requested signage on littering but funds were very limited.

Matthew Gunyon added that double size bins were present and he would take back the suggestion of emptying the bins with colleagues at Street Scene.

Richard Bennett from the Canal and River Trust said that following a site visit, the area had been made safe and dangerous wooden slabs removed with the help of volunteers.

Liz Hall from the West Hendon Allotment society pointed out that there were rough sleepers who broke into the allotment site which was a nature reserve. She also wanted to know if Greenspaces had any plans for the preservation of the area. There was a master plan that was currently being worked on which could include the local area.

Councillor Saira Don brought it to the Committee's attention that local residents were complaining about fishing in the Welsh Harp reservoir. Councillor Don had sent an email to request signage and was waiting to hear back.

Members of the Committee felt fishing had a major effect on wildlife. From the kind of litter witnessed in the area, it seemed that regular fishing was taking place throughout the site. There was a risk of fishing tackle getting lost in the reservoir and affecting ducks and even children.

Furthermore, following Councillor Mashari's request to ensure regular patrolling of the area, the Governance Officer advised that the Councillor could write a letter to the Safer Communities Partnership Board or speak directly to the Environment Director requesting signage around the Welsh harp.

Richard Bennett confirmed that fishing did take place but there was in fact a benefit to it at times. There was no element of policing and therefore a complicated issue, although fishing should not be taking place without a licence.

RESOLVED:

- (i) A joint letter to be written by Chairman and Vice Chairman on behalf of the Committee to make a formal request to the Safer Communities Partnership Board with regards to signage around the Welsh harp.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Nagus Narenthira, Councillor Jess Brayne, Councillor George Crane, Daniella Levene, Lucy Shuker, Derrick Chung, Catherine Cullen, Roy Beddard and Judy Shepherd.

3. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE UPDATE

The updated Terms of reference (TOR) was presented and the committee asked to make any comments before adopting the new TOR.

The Committee noted that under the published Terms of Reference paragraph B(i), The British Waterways Board should read Canal and River Trust and the Princess Park Youth Football Club should read Princes Park Youth Football Club.

The Welsh Harp Sailing Association pointed out that Barratt London was an attendee not a member with "a vote". The committee was advised that every organisation has one vote, including Barratt London, any change would require a vote of the committee. As such the London wildlife Trust moved a motion, duly seconded by the WH Sailing Association, to remove the current vote listed under Barratt London.

Councillor Mashari felt that the more integrated Barratt London was, the more beneficial it would be for the Welsh Harp as they have a lot of involvement in the area and therefore they would be more accountable. A member raised the question of Barratt London's pecuniary advantage.

The Chairman put the motion to a vote and the committee voted as follows:

For - 6

Against - 4

Abstain – 2

As such the motion was passed.

RESOLVED:

- (I) The Governance Service write to Nathan Smith to inform him the decision made that Barratt London was welcome to attend all meetings but that they would not have a vote at the Committee.
- (II) That the Committee agree the changes made to the Terms of Reference, subject to the amendments agreed.

6. LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT - WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN

Joint work was carried out by the WH with Canal and River Trust and Barnet Council. Brent Council management plan of the reservoir was included on its website. This assisted routine work.

An updated action plan was available and colour coded RAG as suggested at the last meeting.

Brent was undertaking consultation on Public Spaces and Protection Orders till the 16th of November which should make it easier to undertake enforcement for some actions covered under the by-laws to get a message across with regards to anti-social behaviour and to make it more pleasant for all users.

Mr Williams from Brent Council referred to the marshland areas in the Welsh Harp and Welsh Harp open spaces. There was woodland belt and scrub along with narrow margins alongside the reservoir, 20 m wide in places, and therefore losing flora and views. Brent was looking to undertake some reduction management of the woodland edge of the reservoir to open up views and improve flora and water sports.

The Welsh Sailing Club provided an update in relation to the dam facilities. The 2 oak trees that were causing the infestation of processionary moths had not been removed. Security fencing to club area had been put up and discussion with the local police was held regarding security in car parks.

The four sailing clubs in the area had seen a positive outcome from working jointly, investing £10,000 to improve jetties and slip ways to increase capacity and make them safer. An additional £5000 next year would improve rotten jetties, keep sailing up to scratch and increase capacity. The WH were working in conjunction with Canal River Trust to establish a new body, Regatta Safety Boat Place, incorporating boat and on water safety in order to take river activity to the next level.

Dianne Murphy from the London Wildlife Trust pointed out that the Forestry Commission had a system to mark a dot on trees that were checked and free of any infestation or a circle when infested. The tree on the edge of the football pitch on Cool Oak Lane had a dot on it indicating that the infested tree was still standing.

A question was put forward regarding the drop in water levels and when the operation was planned, and whether notice had been given to the public downstream for works carried out. Mr Bennett from the Canal and River Trust said the reduction of water levels was done gradually over 2 weeks

Weather reports should be looked at before works were carried out but water levels could change within a space of an hour. It was advised that people located downstream be kept informed and should contact Mr Richard Bennett at the Canal and River Trust or colleagues in the water management team.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the report.

7. LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET - WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN

The encampments had been cleared and removed. Greenspaces were working closely with Street Scene Community Servicing, Police and Barratt London to remove excess waste.

The issues of littering had been looked at and operational services at Greenspace had been increased. Drainage encroachments had been removed and repaired. Cool Lane Oak Bridge from last report had now been repaired.

A member reported that there were bollards at both ends of the bridge to prevent bigger vehicles from entering but there was no width restriction signage. Mr Gunyon agreed to check that information with Highways.

The West Hendon Masterplan was presented and displayed for the Committee. The current engagement process would run until the end of November and the final draft master plan would then be presented to Environment Committee for a full public consultation. The aim of the discussion was to create better connections and to ensure that the West Hendon playing fields had a good relationship with its surrounding areas. Part of the master plan was to have a sustainable solution. The plan was to generate income therefore to have some commercial operations and not drain Council resources.

The members questioned the time of year when work would be carried out and how many trees would be destroyed in the process. If trees were to be removed, then the Council would look to mitigate the loss. The Council took a pro-active approach and was looking to plant 10,000 trees a year.

Councillor Mashari pointed out the ambitious plan before the Committee but felt there was not much being done about the preservation of wildlife and suggested that part of the section 106 funding could be used specifically for wildlife and conservation initiatives. Matthew Gunyon said there was a significant amount of money in section 106 but currently the contribution of funds was for the recreation facilities and sporting facilities.

Councillor Mashari requested a breakdown of CIL funding pots. Councillor Mashari felt it should be discussed at this Committee due to critical capital issues that needed to be addressed based on the Welsh Harp plan. The committee was reminded that it did not have any decision-making powers under their terms of reference and could only make proposals to the relevant Officers. Matthew Gunyon assured the members that Barnet would work with partners to improve the playing fields.

Breeding season was noted to be from March till August so any development during this period would be a disturbance to breeding birds. With recent projects, work was carried out before the breeding season. Work would need to be managed appropriately and be tendered appropriately.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The committee noted the report and the contents of the report.
- (ii) The Governance Officer would resend a link to the formal consultation to all Members to have the opportunity to respond before the end of consultations.

8. THAMES WATER VERBAL UPDATE

Stephen Barry from the Thames Water (TW) Environmental Protection Team and Miss Kimberley Rodwell who represented Thames Water in the Brent area provided a verbal update.

Surface Water Outfall Programme, Outfall Safari and Misconnections

Outfall Safari is a programme of works surveying surface water outfalls along stretches of London's rivers in a method devised and a scheme managed by ZSL.

The outfalls are surveyed by volunteers and local community groups trained to identify and record signs of pollution along the river which are then reported to TW who will take action where required.

ZSL along with volunteers carried out an outfall safari on the Dollis Brook catchment in 2017.

The volunteers photographed, located and assessed a total of 178 outfalls on the Dollis Brook, Folly Brook, Mutton Brook and Silk Stream and found 47 were significantly polluting.

High scoring outfalls are reported right away for immediate response, but sometimes pollution sources are numerous and widespread 3rd party misconnections to the surface water system.

A Thames Water team is tasked with investigating new polluted outfalls with an enhanced response to solve pollution quickly if possible. Usually issues they can resolve are 1 or 2 misconnections or defects. Widespread misconnections, if found within a catchment, would require a funded project via the Surface Water Outfall Programme (SWOP) pre-programmed and funded work in conjunction with the EA to tackle misconnections and polluted outfalls to watercourses

Any outfalls suffering from multiple, widespread, intermittent pollution discharges, would require a strategic, long-term investigation to identify the suspected third-party misconnections and specialist contractors required.

Dollis Safari Update

Of the 47 identified outfalls:

- 18 outfalls have been completed or closed
- 5 outfalls were not a Thames Water asset and were therefore reported to the EA
- 3 Outfalls were checked on multiple occasions and were no longer polluting
- 4 Outfalls had issues that were quickly resolved (fly-tipping, blockages etc.)
- 6 outfalls with misconnections have been resolved
- 7 outfalls were passed to SWOP and are on the waiting list
- 11 outfalls currently under live investigation

RESOLVED:

- (i) The committee agreed to note the presentation from Thames Water.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Clive Cohen pointed out that the presence of Signal Crayfish prevented spawning of frog, toad because they ate spawn. Mr Cohen queried whether it was possible for the CRT to carry out some form of management of Signal Crayfish as it was a big problem that had gone on for a long time and any plan to reduce their presence could only improve the health of the Welsh Harp. Mr Bennett said there was no practical solution of dealing with non-native crayfish species was a tricky problem due to having to remove other wild life which was a real challenge. Studies on the effectiveness of their removal had been proposed but it could make the problem worse as the population of the young ones were said to grow if the larger ones were removed. In addition, there were health and safety implications with traps being laid down at the reservoir. It was currently not considered to be a huge conservation issue and there was no clear way forward.

10. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 9.03 pm