

MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Thursday 16 January 2020 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Hart (LB Barnet, Vice Chair in the Chair), Councillor Ahmed (London Borough of Brent), Councillor Crane (London Borough of Brent), Councillor Agha (London Borough of Brent), Councillor Clarke (London Borough of Barnet), Councillor Don (LB Barnet) and Councillor Brayne (LB Barnet) and Ms Shuker (Brent River Catchment Partnership), Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust), Dianne Murphy (London Wildlife Trust), John Shepherd (Welsh Harp Sailing Association), Hall (West Hendon Allotment Society) and Derrick Chung (West Hendon Residents' Association / Friends of York Park)

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Mashari (London Borough of Brent), Mr Roy Beddard and Mrs J Shepherd.

1. Declarations of pecuniary interests

None.

2. Deputations

None.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th July 2019 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising

None.

5. Management Plan (Barnet)

Mr Matthew Gunyon (Greenspaces Service Manager, Barnet) introduced the report and provided updates on matters relating to the on-going site management issues during this quarter as follows:

The Greenspaces Team continued to work closely with the Barnet Community Safety Team, the Local Police and other partners to identify and remove illegal encampments. The encampment discussed at the previous meeting located in York Park was cleared in partnership with Barratts, Canals and Rivers Trust and Barnet Council. A team attended site after the event and undertook a cleansing of the area in question.

The Greenspaces Team, Community Safety and Councillor John Hart undertook a site visit during which evidence of two small fly tips was noted in addition to litter in

and around the area. The Community Safety Officer agreed to arrange to have the area litter picked by the Community Payback Team. Mr Gunyon urged members to take pictures of incidents of fly tipping and report them to the BarnetCST@barnet.gov.uk

In the ensuing discussions, members complained about illegal parking on grass verges particularly during event days. They expressed a view that the introduction of mobile CCTV would assist in deterring fly tipping and parking on grass verges. Mr Gunyon advised that mobile CCTV would not be as effective as it required consistent wifi connectivity.

Mr Gunyon updated the Committee that the Council's contractors were currently reviewing the results of the consultation and looking at options to address concerns raised in the consultation relating to West Hendon Playing Fields Master Plan. This will be reported to a future date of the Environment Committee in either March or June 2020 for approval and adoption. Once adopted the Council would look to develop a business case to help inform the next stage of the Master Plan. He continued that one of the tennis courts in West Hendon Playing Fields was being converted into a Basketball Court with posts erected. The Council was currently seeking quotations to complete an overlay of the playing surface along with new lines.

Members sought further details about the Master Plan designs and also expressed concerns raised about environmental impact of the plastic pitches including the astro turf. They also enquired about planned consultations for the Master Plan.

Mr Gunyon advised that the Council had made every effort to mitigate all concerns previously raised, adding that the Master Plan would not impact on SSSI areas. He added that the Council had consulted all statutory agencies on the Master Plan which at this stage was a spatial plan and once agreed, would lead to proper designs. He informed the Committee that the Master Plan would be published to Barnet's community engagement on-line portal and members of this Committee would be engaged in future consultations.

RESOLVED:

That the report Management Plan (Barnet) be noted.

6. Management Plan (Brent)

Mr Leslie Williams (Brent) gave the following updates since the last meeting, drawing Members' attention to The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan, appended to the report, which included an Action Plan. The Action Plan listed current year progress and actions that may require a longer time- frame and/or for the resources to be identified to undertake the action. He highlighted the following:

Marshland work: Officers of the Canal & River Trust, Brent Council, and members of the Welsh Harp Sailing Association had met to discuss continuation of the work commenced last winter. In some areas of the Welsh Harp Open Space and at Neasden Recreation Ground tree growth during recent years in the marshland and nearby areas had shaded marshland, reduced views of the Reservoir and increased wind-shadows into the reservoir which affected water wind sports.

While tree growth in many locations should be encouraged, there were also areas where more of a balance is necessary, for example, where scarce habitat such as marshland is at risk. As previously, the aim of work would be to seek to re-open some areas of marshland, acid grassland and rough grassland, while retaining clumps of trees and individual trees along the edge of the reservoir. Consent has been sought from Natural England to progress that.

Public Spaces Protection Order. Brent Council's Cabinet considered a report detailing the Public Spaces Protection Order on 9th September 2019. The report and Cabinet decisions including future implementation were available on the Brent Council website and at:

<http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=455&MId=5357&Ver=4>

Meadow areas had been enhanced at Neasden Recreation Ground. The increase in longer-grass habitat in the selected areas at Neasden Recreation Ground appears to have been a success. The annual cutting should have taken place by the time of the Committee meeting. Where strips were additionally seeded, some areas that were missed will be re-seeded in 2020.

Healthy Walks programme:

See:

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/culture-leisure-and-parks/sports-and-wellbeing/sport-activity-finder/healthy-walks-in-brent-welsh-harp-nature-walk/>

Welsh Harp / Birchen Grove Car Park. In response to concerns raised by residents and car park users about the use of the car park for off-road car driving at speed, the Council had arranged for the installation of speed reduction ramps in the car park as a measure to reduce this issue. The measures would enable the use of the car park for car parking and also enable pedestrian access to the Welsh Harp. The work involved was now scheduled between 13th - 24th January 2020 which may affect the use of the car park during those times.

Members expressed concerns about lorries which were parking on pavements in Birchen Grove, causing damage to the paving stones and to the detriment of residential amenity. In response, Mr Williams undertook to inform the Council's Enforcement Team so that officers could take speedy and appropriate measures to address the problem.

RESOLVED:

That the report Management Plan (Brent) be noted.

7. Environment Agency - Verbal Report

None.

8. Planning Issues

Mr Matthew Gunyon Greenspaces Manager undertook to report back to the next meeting following the meeting of Regeneration Committee.

9. **Update on activities in the Welsh Harp**

None.

10. **Any other urgent business**

GLA Funding Support for Brent Catchment Partnership

Ms Lucy Shuker (Development Manager, Thames 21) informed the Committee about funding support from the GLA for a Brent Catchment Partnership proposal for a scoping study at the Welsh Harp. Canal and Rivers Trust and LB Brent in partnership with LB Barnet would lead on the scoping study which would provide a long term vision for improving the Welsh Harp site

This project which will be carried out this financial year will involve inviting input from all stakeholder groups with a view to gathering information on all of the issues and opportunities to benefit the Welsh Harp site for wildlife and surrounding communities in the years ahead.

List of Flora and Fauna

Mr Clive Cohen suggested that the list of flora and fauna be compiled and circulated to all members of the Committee. The Chair requested officers of both boroughs to look into it.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

COUNCILLOR J HART
Vice Chair in the Chair