

MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 22nd April 2008 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Farrell (Chair, London Borough of Brent) and Councillors Motley and Wharton (London Borough of Brent) and Councillor Rayner (London Borough of Barnet) and Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), Peter Castle (Hendon Rifle Club), Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust - Barnet), John Colmans (London Wildlife Trust - Brent), Frank Hewlett (Barnet Council for Sports and Recreation), Molly Savage (Local Agenda 21), Judy Shepherd (West Hendon Community Forum) and Brian Turgoose (Welsh Harp Sailing Association).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O'Sullivan (London Borough of Brent) and Councillors Hart and Johnson (London Borough of Barnet) and Dorothy Jakes (Birchen Grove Residents' Association), Geoffrey Johnson (Woolmead Residents' Association), Kate Mitchell (Natural England) and the Barnet Parks Service.

Also in attendance was Leslie Williams (Brent Parks Service).

1. Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the guest speakers to the committee.

Amendment to the order of business

The Chair proposed, and the committee agreed, to move Agenda Item 7 – Barrett Metropolitan up the agenda.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 13th November 2007

RESOLVED:-

that, subject to the inclusion of apologies for absence from Cllr Motley and altering the spelling of [swan] signet to cygnet, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th February 2008 be received and approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

Bird Hide

Members suggested that Barnet Council would need to report back to the Heritage Lottery fund should they decide not to continue to maintain the bird hide due to the original funding agreement terms and that the RSPB may have experience to offer when choosing new hide options. It was also reported that efforts were continuing to encourage the use of the facilities by local schools.

It was explained to the meeting that Barnet officers would present a number of options to the committee at the appropriate time.

5. **Barrett Metropolitan**

Ned Baker from the Metropolitan Housing Trust and Neil Connolly from Barratt Homes were introduced to the committee. They explained that they were present at the meeting to provide an update on the West Hendon Regeneration project following a request from Members at a previous meeting. They explained that the project was a joint venture between their organisations.

Ned Baker and Neil Connolly then proceeded to run through a presentation about their project to replace an existing housing development detailing the location of the site, between the A5 road and the Welsh Harp open space, the planning proposals, currently for 2171 new flats and houses, the details of the current buildings that were to be demolished and the progress of the scheme to date along with a proposed completion date in approximately 11 years time. They further reported that they were looking to offer new commercial and community spaces as part of the development.

They then proceeded to provide more detail regarding how the project would affect the Welsh Harp site. They explained that both organisations were extremely concerned to ensure that no environmental harm was suffered by the Welsh Harp during the project and they stated that right from the early discussions with Barnet Council they had undertaken to abide by a number of agreements to ensure this was the case, details of which were available to any Members who were interested. They further asked the committee to note that a number of these agreements had since, due to changes in the law, become legal requirements and they stated that they were still proposing to meet all such regulations and agreements.

In addition, they explained that they hoped to enhance the area by cleaning up current park areas and creating new open land. Particular improvements were also noted in relation to land around the Silk Stream.

In relation to the Youth Sailing Base, it was reported that Barnet Council were undertaking a review as to their requirements for the site and so plans were on hold until it became clear what was required to replace the original Sailing Base buildings.

During discussion a number of questions and concerns were raised about the mitigation plans to prevent environmental damage during the building programme. Ned Baker and Neil Connolly restated their commitment to all the current agreements and tried to reassure the committee that all possible measures had been taken and that they would be effective.

Questions were also asked about the height and location of tower blocks, the likely completion date and the plans for continuing maintenance after the end of the project. In response it was explained that the proposed locations of some of the tower blocks had changed but not in a significant way in relation to Welsh Harp itself, that it was possible the completion date would slip, depending partly on the success in selling homes as they were completed but that the whole project had a 'longstop' end date of 2022 so it couldn't continue beyond that, and that the public and communal areas on the development

would continue to be maintained after all building works had been completed. It was also confirmed that discussions were continuing with Barnet Council officers and other relevant organisations such as Natural England.

Members requested that Natural England be invited to attend a future meeting so that they would be able to explain their views on the project. Members were also invited to talk directly to Ned Baker or Neil Connolly at any time, or invite them to local meetings, should they have any concerns or wish to find out more information about the project.

Regarding the Youth Sailing Base, Members requested that an Officer from Barnet Council be present at the next meeting to discuss the options available for the Base.

Finally, Members requested that Barnet Council planning officers be asked to provide a breakdown of the spending plans relating to Section 106 money resulting from the planning application for information purposes.

6. Welsh Harp Management Plan (Brent) – update

Leslie Williams introduced an update on the Brent sections of the Welsh Harp Management Plan.

He reported to the Committee on a number of items including the need to investigate brush and logs being dumped into marsh habitat areas, the fact that no new rave events had been reported since the last meeting and that he'd received no new updates from the Environment Agency and British Waterways on their works at the site.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the appendices to the report that listed the heritage lottery award projects from 2002 with updates in 2005. It was noted that a number of the projects were managed by British Waterways rather than the councils themselves.

Finally, it was noted that a number of events were taking place at the Welsh Harp over the summer including a healthy walks programme, Kingsbury Open Day and the Environmental Education Centre Open Day.

During discussion Members requested that British Waterways be asked to provide an update to the Committee of clean up works that have already taken place with regard to fly tipping and also those planned for the year ahead.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted.

7. Welsh Harp Management Plan (Barnet)

A written update on the Welsh Harp Management Plan from Barnet Officers was read out to the Committee.

It was reported that Barnet officers were continuing to explore options for replacing the damaged bird hide and that quotes were being received from a number of companies and that these would be evaluated shortly.

It was also reported that a contract had been signed for a three year eradication programme targeting Japanese Knotweed and other invasive plant species and that the external contractor would launch its first attack on the plants when they started growing this spring. Members of the committee were asked to report any sightings to Barnet officers so that the plants could be tackled promptly.

Finally, it was stated that Barnet officers had undertaken a full walk around the reservoir and as a result they were going to move some bins and signage to improved locations.

RESOLVED:-

that the verbal update be noted.

8. Planning Issues

There were none.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Consultative Committee was provisionally scheduled to take place on Wednesday 2nd July 2008 in Barnet.

Further meeting dates for the 2008-09 municipal year were proposed as follows:

Monday 10th November 2008

Tuesday 6th January 2009

Tuesday 31st March 2009

The final meeting schedule for the municipal year 2008-09 would be agreed by both Councils' Full Council meetings in May 2008.

10 Vote of Thanks

A vote of thanks was proposed for Councillor Farrell relating to her work as Chair of the Committee over the past year. The vote was passed unanimously. In turn the Chair thanked all Members of the Committee for their hard work.

The meeting ended at 8:58 pm

M FARRELL

Chair

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