

DECISIONS OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

2 July 2008

*Councillor John Hart (Barnet) (Chairman)
*Councillor Will Motley (Vice-Chairman) (Brent)

Councillors:
Mark Cummins (Brent)
Tom Davey (Barnet)
Mary Farrell (Brent)
*Julie Johnson (Barnet)
James O'Sullivan (Brent)
*Hugh Rayner (Barnet)

Organisation

Barnet Council for Sport and Recreation
Birchen Grove Residents' Association
Brent Sports Council
British Waterways
Environment Agency
Greater London Assembly
Hendon Rifle Club
Hendon Rifle Club
Hendon Rifle Club
Local Agenda 21
London Wildlife Trust
London Wildlife Trust
London Wildlife Trust
Natural England
Old St Andrew's Residents' Association
Princes Park Youth Football Club
Training Ship Broadsword
Welsh Harp Conservation Group
Welsh Harp Conservation Group
Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre
Welsh Harp Sailing Association
Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base
West Hendon Community Forum
Woolmead Residents' Association

Representative

Frank Hewlett
Dorothy Jakes
David Carter
Vacancy
Martin Everett
Mike Waite
Peter Castle
A Jefferson
Klaus Schuricht
* Molly Savage
Clive Cohen
John Colmans
* Dr Oliver Natelson
Kate Mitchell
John Thompson
Jon Bell
Commander G F Beck
Leo Batten
* Roy Beddard
Harry Mackie
Brian Turgoose
Vacancy
* Judy Shepherd
Geoffrey Johnson

*denotes Member present

\$ Denotes Member absent on Council Business

Also in attendance were

Julie Warren – Barnet Greenspaces
Jonathan Regal – Barnet Democratic Services
Leslie Williams – Brent Parks Service

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN (Item 1)

RESOLVED – That Councillor John Hart and Councillor Will Motley be appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively for municipal year 2008/2009.

2. MINUTES (Item 2)

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 April 2008 be approved as a true and accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING (Item 3)

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

4. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS (Item 4)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tom Davey (Barnet), Councillor Mark Cummins (Brent), Councillor Mary Farrell (Brent), Councillor James O’Sullivan (Brent), Heather Samuel (on behalf of the Environment Agency), Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust), John Colmans (London Wildlife Trust), Kate Mitchell (Natural England), Harry Mackie (Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre) and Geoffrey Johnson (Woolmead Residents’ Association).

5. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS (Item 5)

No interests were declared.

6. WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN (BRENT) (Item 7)

Leslie Williams presented a progress report from Brent’s Director of Environment and Culture detailing progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan and related issues.

The Committee were verbally informed that:

- a) It was anticipated that minor adaptations to the Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan would be undertaken by September;
- b) The Birchen Grove car park metal railings had been repaired. There were plans to re-align the pavement kerb to allow disabled access;
- c) British Waterways continued to clear the fly-tipping at the southern side of the reservoir bordering the North Circular Road;
- d) Work continued on the Heritage Lottery Award; and
- e) Proposals had been made for three new cycle routes from Wembley Stadium through the Welsh Harp: two through Birchen Grove and the other across the dam wall, but the latter was unlikely to get consent from British Waterways.

The following were noted:

- Litter bins were emptied on the Brent side on Mondays, and as and when by the Park Patrol team; and
- British Waterways, in consultation with the Environment Agency, were currently in a 3-year programme to clear pollution and illegally dumped industrial waste. Leaseholders at the industrial estate had been written to stating that those who illegally dumped material would be prosecuted.

Action:

Leslie Williams to write to British Waterways to request a copy of their programme of planned works on clearing pollution and illegally dumped industrial waste.

RESOLVED – That the progress report on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan and related issues be noted.

7. WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN (BARNET) (Item 8)

Jenny Warren presented a progress report from Barnet's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport detailing progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan and related issues.

The Committee were verbally informed that:

- a) The hide was still under licence to the Heritage Lottery Fund and any changes would need their consent. The hide needed to be repaired or replaced and that the Committee's recommended preferred option was sought;
- b) The three-year weed control programme would start in the Autumn;
- c) The weekend litter picking crews were enforcing the bye-laws in an advisory capacity, once a day except on bank holidays and religious festivals when it was twice. Greenspaces staff were unable to enforce the bye-laws as they were not enforcement officers, training would be undertaken in confrontation / managing aggressive behaviour. When trained, staff would be equipped with a pictured flipchart book to communicate to those who spoke no or little English; and
- d) Councillor Julie Johnson and Judy Shepherd (West Hendon Community Forum) had met on site to set new locations for some signs. The signs would be relocated in the next 12 months.

The following were noted:

- The preferred option for the hide was to keep the existing hide with an open side and additional support to the roof. If this was inadequate then option D in the Officer's report was preferred with a 2 metre height;
- Concerns were raised on the three-year weed control programme such as the materials being used and that the Himalayan Balsam gave waterside cover and a habitat to various species;
- Concern was expressed that untrained litter pickers were being used to enforce the bye-laws;
- People were still swimming in the Welsh Harp and that this was a risk to both the Council and British Waterways;
- Birds had been injured by fishing lines and hooks left by illegal fishing;
- Weekend emergency calls did not seem to be forwarded to Greenspaces;
- Request that the risk assessment that will be reported to the Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee included whether Barnet Council was doing enough to stop swimming by placing signs and whether further enforcement officers were required; and
- The emergency number still needed to be changed on the visitor information centre as agreed recently at the Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee.

Action:

Jenny Warren to arrange:

1. appropriate repair or replacement action to the hide following consultation with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Barnet's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.
2. details to the next meeting about the three-year weed programme.
3. to ask the three-year weed control programme contractors to contact Brent Council to assist with any requirements they may have.
4. to investigate whether weekend emergency calls were being forwarded to Greenspaces.
5. to note the request that the risk assessment include whether Barnet Council was doing enough to stop swimming by placing signs and whether further enforcement officers were required.

6. to write to British Waterways to request action against people swimming in the Welsh Harp.
7. to raise order to change the emergency number on the visitor information centre.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Item 9)

There was no other business.

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT (Item 10)

A. Litter clear up day on the Welsh Harp

Councillor Julie Johnson asked the Committee on what date they wished to join voluntary organisations to clear litter.

Action:

1. The litter pick at Cool Oak Lane and Woodfield Park to take place on 14 October.
2. Jenny Warren to organise a skip.

B. "History of the Welsh Harp Presentation"

The Chairman, Councillor John Hart, said he had attended a meeting where the Borough Archivist had given a presentation on the history of the Welsh Harp. The Committee thought it would be a good idea to share this with schools in the form of a travelling exhibition.

Action:

Jonathan Regal to contact the Children's Services to see whether the Welsh Harp history presentation could be given to schools.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm