

**MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday 13 March 2018 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Agha (London Borough of Brent) (Chair), Councillors Ahmed (London Borough of Brent), Hart (London Borough of Barnet) and Langleben (London Borough of Barnet) and Richard Bennet (Canal and River Trust), Sam Ho (Environmental Agency), Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust), Dianne Murphy (London Wildlife Trust), Phil Atkinson (Phoenix Canoe), Andrew Haynes (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), John Shepherd (Welsh Harp Sailing Association), Martin Hall (West Hendon Allotment Society), Geoffrey Johnson (Woolmead Residents' Association) Nanayaa Ampoma (Planning Officer, Barnet Council) and Daniella Levene (Friends of Welsh Harp)

Also present: Peter and Renata Enos (Cleaner Earth UK) and Lucy Shuker (Brent River Catchment Partnership)

**1. Chair's opening remarks**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the last meeting of the municipal year.

**2. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group)
- Derrick Chung (West Hendon Residents' Association)
- Councillor Crane (Brent Council)
- Matthew Gunyon (Partnerships and Development Manager - Barnet Council)
- Rebecca Hart (Natural England)
- Julie Johnson (Local Agenda 21)
- Councillor Khatri (Barnet Council)
- Councillor Mashari (Brent Council)
- Nathan Smith (Barratt)

Councillor Dixon was present as substitute for Councillor Mashari.

**3. Declarations of interests**

Councillor Langleben declared a personal interest as Trustee of the West Hendon Estate Community Fund.

For purposes of transparency, Councillor Langleben advised that his spouse was employed by Brent Council.

**4. Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations.

5. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as an accurate record subject to the following amendments:

- Daniella Levene (Friends of the Welsh Harp) be included in the list of those present.
- That it be recorded that an update on Cool Oak Bridge was sought.

6. **Matters arising (if any)**

The Chair noted the information provided by Eric Holroyd of Barratt in response to actions agreed at the last meeting, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

A member of the committee sought assurance that the bird and bat boxes installed as part of the West Hendon Regeneration were appropriately cleaned and maintained. It was agreed that this query would be submitted to Nathan Smith (Barratt).

RESOLVED: that Nathan Smith of Barratt be asked to respond to the committee's query regarding the maintenance and cleaning of the bird and bat boxes installed as part of the West Hendon Regeneration.

7. **Management Plan (Barnet)**

The Chair advised that Matthew Gunyon (Partnerships and Development Manager, Greenspaces, Barnet Council) was currently on paternity leave and drew the committee's attention to the written report provided. The Chair confirmed that in the absence of Matthew Gunyon, any actions for the Greenspaces team of Barnet Council would be recorded and forwarded following the meeting. Nanayaa Ampoma (Planner Officer, Barnet Council) advised that she was in attendance from Barnet Council.

It was noted that the report incorrectly referred to British Waterways, which was now known as the Canal and River Trust.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the report of the Strategic Director – Environment, Barnet Council be noted;
- ii) that the following matters be raised with the Greenspaces team of Barnet Council:
  - a. the committee sought an update on the works on Cool Oak Bridge;
  - b. that with regard to the drainage encroachment referred to at paragraph 1.6 of the report, a further incident had been witnessed of a hose pipe being used to continue draining waste from the private property into the Welsh Harp.

8. **Management Plan (Brent)**

Leslie Williams (Barham Park Project Officer) introduced the report updating the committee on the progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan

since the last meeting. The committee heard that the local community and the Welsh Harp Litterpickers had organised a very successful clean up along several hundred meters of the shoreline and marshland of Neasden Recreation Ground during the winter. Brent council was organising contractors to clear litter along the boundary with the North Circular Road and in an area of scrub woodland near to the eastern end of the Neasden Recreation Ground. The committee was further informed that the boardwalk to the east of Neasden Recreation Ground remained in a damaged condition. The landowner had been contacted and access to the boardwalk had been discouraged.

In the subsequent discussion Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust) highlighted that it was now breeding season and suggested that any further clean-up operations be delayed until after August to avoid disrupting nesting birds. Representatives of Cleaner Earth UK, who had been involved in the clean-up operation commented that this would be detrimental to birds and other users of the area, citing health and safety concerns and the harm that could be caused to wildlife by certain forms of litter. Daniella Levene (Friends of the Welsh Harp) noted that disruption to nesting birds could be avoided by ensuring volunteers were appropriately informed of the necessary restrictions. Dianne Murphey (London Wildlife Trust) added that there were many areas that were not sensitive areas with regard to breeding birds.

The committee discussed actions to prevent littering, including the provision of more bins and trash traps, on the spot fines, CCTV and a greater enforcement officer presence. Phil Atkinson (Phoenix Canoe) advised that an enforcement officer was also needed to tackle the prolific illegal fishing in the reservoir. Councillor Langleben highlighted that paragraph 1.4 of the report from Barnet Council indicated that the new parks furniture contract was currently being processed by the legal team of Barnet Council and was due to commence from 1 April 2018.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the report from the Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment be noted.
- ii) that the following actions be noted for all future clean-up events for the Welsh Harp:  
The organisers of the event to:
  - a. ensure that volunteers are instructed to avoid any sensitive areas for wildlife, particularly breeding areas for birds;
  - b. provide promotional details in advance to both Brent and Barnet Council to assist in advertising the events;
  - c. share photographs of these event to support post-event promotion of the activity.

## 9. **Thames 21**

Lucy Shuker (Brent Catchment Partnership Development Manager) outlined the role of the Brent River Catchment Partnership and her role as Development Manager. She would be working with all the partners and stakeholders of the River Brent to deliver environmental improvements and wider benefits to local residents. She would be identifying suitable projects, undertaking fundraising and sharing

knowledge of the river's function and ecology. Lucy Shuker emphasised that she was keen to support existing improvement activity. The committee heard that the Partnership was hosted by Thames 21 and included five local authorities.

Lucy Shuker then discussed a recent pollution incident, commenting that the Environment Agency had done a fantastic job of cleaning up following the event and querying whether there was an opportunity for partners to work together on a larger scale to improve the area affected. The committee heard that the incident had been caused by a fire at a paint factory that had been doused with water, which had subsequently drained into the river Brent and the surrounding woodland. The Environment Agency had acted quickly to pump a lot of the pollutant material out and had monitored the situation in the following weeks. Consultants were now taking detailed ground boreholes and undertaking remedial works.

Richard Bennet (Canal and River Trust) agreed that following the outcome of the investigation, it would be a good opportunity to try to deliver environmental improvements for the site.

The committee subsequently discussed water testing and Samantha Ho (Environment Agency) confirmed that testing was undertaken weekly at two points; in the Silk Stream and at Priestley Way in Brent. Samantha Ho further advised that the key stakeholders and landowners had been informed of the pollution incident. Lucy Shuker advised that part of her role would be to develop a social media presence and this could help in raising awareness of such incidents. Nanayaa Ampoma (Planning Officer, Barnet Council) advised that she would explore how the process for reporting pollution incidents and follow up activity could be better promoted on Barnet Council's website. The Chair highlighted that Brent had a Cleaner Brent app for residents and suggested that it could be explored whether reporting of pollution events could be included in this facility.

RESOLVED:

- i) The members of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee should be informed of any pollution incidents in the Welsh Harp via the Brent and Barnet Committee Governance teams.
- ii) That officers of Barnet Council explore better promoting on the Barnet Council's website the process for reporting pollution incidents.
- iii) That officers of Brent Council explore including pollution reporting in the Cleaner Brent App.

10. **Environment Agency - Verbal Report (if any)**

This item was discussed under agenda item 9.

11. **Planning Issues (if any)**

None.

12. **Date of next meeting**

The Chair highlighted that the meeting dates would be confirmed after the meeting calendars for Brent and Barnet Councils were agreed at their respective annual council meetings.

**13. Any other urgent business**

The Chair noted that it had previously been agreed that each member organisation would be given the opportunity to provide a brief update on activity and invited members to make contributions.

Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust) queried whether there had been any incidents of bird flu in the Welsh Harp and suggested that contact could be made with colleagues familiar with treating infected birds. Richard Bennet (Canal and River Trust) confirmed that there had been a few incidents of confirmed bird flu.

Councillor Langleben (Barnet Council) thanked the Chair and Officers for their hard work and commitment to the committee through the year.

The meeting closed at 8.18 pm

Cllr A Agha  
Chair