

DECISIONS OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

11 July 2006

*Councillor Christopher Harris (Barnet) (Chairman)

*Councillor Mary Farrell (Vice-Chairman) (Brent)

Councillors:

Mark Cummins (Brent)

*John Hart (Barnet)

*Julie Johnson (Barnet)

*Will Motley (Brent)

*Matthew Offord (Barnet)

James O'Sullivan (Brent)

Organisation

Barnet Council for Sport & Recreation

Birchen Grove Residents' Association

Brent Sports Council

British Waterways

English Nature

Environment Agency

Local Agenda 21

London Wildlife Trust

Old St Andrew's Residents' Association

Princes Park Youth Football Club

Strategy Directorate of Greater London Assembly

Training Ship Broadsword

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

Mike Manuel

Alex Machin

Martin Everett

* Molly Savage

* Clive Cohen

John Thompson

Jon Bell

Mike Waite

Commander G F Beck

* Roy Beddard

* Harry Mackie

* Brian Turgoose

Vacancy

* Judy Shepherd

* Geoffrey Johnson

*denotes Member present

Also in attendance were

Patricia Davila – Barnet Law & Probity

Mark Evison – Barnet Environment and Transport Service

Jonathan Regal – Barnet Democratic Services

Leslie Williams – Brent Parks Service

1. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED – That Councillor Christopher Harris and Councillor Mary Farrell be appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively for municipal year 2006/2007.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 March 2006 be approved as a true and accurate record.

3. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mark Cummins (Brent), Dr Leo Batten (Welsh Harp Conservation Group) and John Colmans (London Wildlife Trust).

4. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

5. PUBLIC SPEAKING ARRANGEMENTS

No members of the public had asked to address the Committee.

6. WELSH HARP RESERVOIR MANAGEMENT (BRENT) (Item 6)

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

The Committee were verbally informed about Brent's dedicated team dealing with access to the open space and how bollards had been erected to try and stop raves from occurring. Brent is actively pressurising rave organisers.

The Committee was also verbally informed about the recent Welsh Harp Open Day that was attended by each respective Mayor.

Discussion on security and enforcement ensued.

Councillor Offord challenged section 3.5 of the report and informed the Committee that Barnet does act on enforcement issues through the noise and nuisance team. Various Committee members expressed the view that they felt that the emergency telephone service had problems answering their calls.

Councillor Offord asked whether Brent's Legal Services had taken any legal action against illegal raves. Leslie Williams stated that Brent had no jurisdiction in Barnet and explained that Brent dealt with requests for appropriate events through a booking system.

Geoffrey Johnson (Woolmead Residents' Association) asked who had the responsibility for policing the Welsh Harp. Councillor Offord stated that were different expectations from the users of the Welsh Harp. However, illegal raves and alcohol abuse were police matters and not the responsibility of Barnet, who do get involved but not 12 hours per day.

Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust) enquired who is going to stop those having barbecues or swimming interfering with sailing on the lake.

At the suggestion of the Chairman, the Committee agreed that there should be better liaison between the respective Council departments of the two Councils on their working arrangements and procedures.

7. WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN (Item 7)

Mark Evison presented a progress report from Barnet's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the position of the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) byelaws and on-going site management.

The Committee were verbally informed that the bye-laws had come back from the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs and that they would be going to the next Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee on 5 September 2006.

Discussion on security and enforcement ensued.

Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust) asked why the Welsh Harp Open Day had not been widely communicated. Mark Evison replied that the Committee had been informed about the launch date at the previous meeting but the timing had not been finalised.

Clive Cohen requested that CCTV be installed on the Welsh Harp. Mark Evison stated that CCTV was expensive and would cost around £60,000, however he would investigate whether the mobile CCTV unit could visit the area.

Councillor Hart enquired whether a dedicated barbecue area could be found. Councillor Offord replied that this had been tried previously and failed, users did not remain in the dedicated area. Councillor Julie Johnson enquired whether the grass could be kept longer as a preventive measure against the barbecue use. The Committee felt that this was worth investigating.

The Chairman asked whether there were many reports of illegal motorcycle use in the area. Mark Evison replied that there were very few reports actually logged but it was felt that there was a lot of use. The Chairman asked whether a dedicated cycle centre could be provided on some land. Councillor Offord replied that illegal motor cycling tended to be localised and that setting up tracks would be expensive and impractical.

In view of interest from the large Polish community, Judy Shepherd (West Hendon Community Forum) asked whether an official from the Polish Embassy could make an official visit to the area.

At the suggestion of the Chairman, the Committee agreed that Officers should ask the Polish Embassy to visit the Welsh Harp.

8. WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION (Item 8)

Jonathan Regal presented a report to update the Committee's Constitution. The Committee were verbally informed that the following changes had occurred:

- a) terms of reference (that reports will go to an appropriate committee, if necessary)
- b) representation of various organisations
- c) notice for items on the agenda (from 21 days to 9 working days).

Brian Turgoose (Welsh Harp Sailing Association) asked when minutes would be circulated. Jonathan Regal replied that it was usual for Committees to receive minutes in 5 working days but for consultative committees it was longer.

At the suggestion of the Chairman, the Committee agreed that minutes should be circulated in 15 working days.

9. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS (Item 9)

The Committee agreed that the next meetings would be held on 31 October 2006 and 5 February 2007.

Brian Turgoose (Welsh Harp Sailing Association) enquired whether another meeting would be held this municipal year as the constitution states 4 meeting per annum.

At the suggestion of the Chairman, the Committee agreed that another meeting be scheduled in April 2007.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS: MEMBERSHIP OF THE WELSH HARP ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE ACTION GROUP (Item 10(i))

Malcolm Scott of the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre Action Group informed the meeting of the dissolution of the group on 13 April 2006. The group has been superseded by a new Welsh Harp Advisory Panel to the Brent Business for the Environment. Malcolm Speed tendered his resignation from the Committee.

The Committee noted the resignation of Malcolm Scott and the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre Action Group.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS: MEMBERSHIP OF THE HENDON RIFLE CLUB (Item 10(ii))

Peter Castle of the Hendon Rifle Club put forward a nomination to be a member of the Committee.

The Committee agreed to the membership of the Hendon Rifle Club.

12. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES AREA URGENT (Item 11)

Firing of guns at night

Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust) asked whether anything could be done about the firing of guns (not connected to the Hendon Rifle Club). Councillor Matthew Offord replied that it was a Police matter and that they should be contacted.

PC Sandy Marwick

In accordance with paragraph G 2.(i) of the WHJCC Constitution, the Chairman invited PC Sandy Marwick to say a few words about policing on the Welsh Harp. PC Marwick explained that the Police encounter:

- i) occasional communication problems between the respective Sectors;
- ii) very little criminal activity, but there were problems with illegal motorcyclists;
- iii) very few problems, but when called have difficulties with locating particular areas.

PC Marwick also explained that Barnet Police patrol the area one weekend in three and that there had been a recent robbery. He also asked for users to inform the Police of registration details of illegal motor cycle users to enable them to make contact.

The Chairman asked if the Police could set up better liaison between Barnet and Brent Metropolitan Police.

Request for an alcohol-free zone

Councillor Julie Johnson asked whether an alcohol-free zone like the Hendon Central zone could be provided. Councillor Offord replied that an alcohol-free zone could be set up but it all depended on whether the Police had the resources to enforce it. PC Marwick stated that he did not think moderate peaceful drinkers, such as those drinking wine on family picnics should be penalised, to which Councillor Julie Johnson replied that the site did not attract family picnics.

Funding for enforcement in the area

Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group) stated that both the Police and Barnet seem to have a funding gap in enforcing the Welsh Harp. The Chairman referred to the need to prioritise scarce resources and to engage the community to achieve change. Councillor Johnson asked whether external funding could be sought. The Chairman stated that most external funding was for capital items and not everyday enforcement.

Park Royal Partnership Action Day – 28/29 September 2006

Brian Turgoose (Welsh Harp Sailing Club) informed the Committee that the Park Royal Partnership, a volunteer group, was looking for challenging involvement in the area.

At the suggestion of the Chairman, the Committee agreed that the Partnership be contacted to help with the clearing up of the Welsh Harp.

The meeting ended at 8.28 pm