

**MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2006 at 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Farrell (Chair, London Borough of Brent), Councillors Motley and O'Sullivan (London Borough of Brent), Councillor Johnson (London Borough of Barnet) and Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), John Colmans (London Wildlife Trust), Frank Hewlett (Barnet Council for Sport and Recreation), Dorothy Jakes (Birchen Grove Residents' Association), 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 Cummins and Harry Mackie (Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre).

Also in attendance were Leslie Williams (Brent Parks Service), Roger Jones (Barnet Parks Service), Clive Cohen (London Wildlife Trust) and representatives of Trainingship Broadsword.

**1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Nominations were invited for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair for the municipal year. Following votes, Councillor Farrell was elected Chair and Councillor Johnson was elected Vice-Chair of the Joint Consultative Committee for the municipal year 2007/8.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were none declared.

**3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007 be received and approved as an accurate record subject to the following alterations:

- that the reference on page 3, item 6(c) be changed from British Waterways to The Environment Agency
- that the reference on page 6, paragraph 1 be changed from the Sea cadets to Trainingship Broadsword.

**4. Matters Arising**

*Proposed reuse of the northern arm of the Welsh Harp as a sailing base*

Copies of a letter sent to, and reply received from Cllr Offord the Lead Member for the Environment at the London Borough of Barnet were circulated. These reported that Cllr Offord was of the view that the northern arm of the reservoir should not be used for sailing or similar activities. Officers from Barnet explained that further discussions were due with Cllr Offord and with Trainingship Broadsword, who had requested access, and that these would be reported back to the committee.

*Enforcing by-laws*

A number of members expressed concerns that the by-laws covering the Welsh Harp open space were consistently being broken with problems such as

BBQs, swimming and littering and that wardens were not present on the site often enough particularly at weekends. It was reported that this was a more significant problem in the areas operated by Barnet Council. Officers responded that wardens patrolled in a limited fashion related to the funding available and also because they hadn't witnessed many problems. Officers explained that there was a phone number publicised at Welsh Harp for problems to be reported but that it wasn't regularly used. The Chair suggested that members ensure that all incidents they witness get reported to ensure that both councils knew the full extent of any problems.

## **5. Public Speaking Arrangements**

Two local residents spoke and both expressed concerns about the litter with the area near the north circular road and the river Brent both up and down stream of the reservoir particularly mentioned. One resident also requested that more efforts be made to provide leisure opportunities for young people as she felt the site was underused in this way.

In response to these speakers, officers agreed that there were litter problems and that they were doing their best to tackle them, in conjunction with British Waterways and the Environment Agency but that they are always looking for volunteers to help on major clean-up operations. Officers promised to examine the need for additional litter bins and dog waste bins near the North Circular road.

## **6. Welsh Harp Management Plan (Brent) - update**

Leslie Williams introduced an item regarding the Welsh Harp management plan. He reported that, as was required, the Welsh Harp Management Plan was currently undergoing its regular review, the last having been in February 2006, and that draft copies of the new version were available on the council website. Issues that had been raised for possible inclusion were the possibility of creating more scrapes (ponds) and the requirement to control Japanese knotweed.

It was reported that British Waterways were conducting a survey into the condition of the trees on their land, including their impact on bats and other wildlife and the danger to the public from any diseased trees found. Officers reported that they would be consulted before any actions were undertaken.

Turning to general management issues, Leslie Williams reported that further attempts to clean up problem areas had been undertaken, that since the last meeting contractors had been at work on the amenity grassland in Neasden Recreation Ground area at the foot of the dam wall and that officers had been in touch with the Environment Agency and British Waterways to encourage them to attend WHJCC meetings and the agencies had responded that they would attend or submit reports as often as possible and if any significant issues arose.

It was reported that the Welsh Harp open space had failed to collect a 'Green Flag' award. It was explained that these were new awards presented to the best open spaces in the country. Officers explained that they would be

examining the report to see what would need to be achieved to enable the Welsh Harp to gain an award in future years and would report back to the next meeting.

Finally, it was reported that Brent Council was continuing to review its Biodiversity Action Plan, that the maintenance of the heritage lottery projects was continuing and that the Kingsbury and Welsh Harp Open Day was successfully held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

A discussion followed during which members expressed concerns about how the tree works were to be undertaken and asked officers to ensure that trees were only removed if absolutely necessary and, if possible, replaced with the same species. In regards to the issue of fly tipping, it was reported that British Waterways had a three year project to clean up the problem areas. Members expressed concerns about the length of the project and it was discussed whether there was anything the councils or voluntary groups could do to help speed this up.

Other issues discussed included the misconnection of waste pipes from housing and the quality of the water entering the reservoir.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted.

#### 7. **Welsh Harp Management Plan (Barnet) – update**

Roger Jones introduced a verbal update on the Barnet side of the Welsh Harp Management Plan. He reported that they were also reviewing the plan and would be meeting with officers from Brent shortly to discuss joint issues, including tree management, litter and pollution issues.

During discussion questions were asked regarding the area of the reservoir north of Cool Oak Lane bridge in relation to requests to use that area for boating activities for young people by Trainingship Broadsword.

Several members, including those from Trainingship Broadsword, expressed concern that officers were looking to remove part of the site from leisure use. They pointed out that this area had previously been used for sailing and that they had been given assurances before the areas recent temporary closure that they would be allowed to come back but that it now appeared that this promise had been broken. Other members expressed support for the decision highlighting how the areas ecology over recent years had changed.

Officers responded that they would discuss the issue with the relevant London Borough of Barnet officers and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

It was also noted that there was a new youth sailing base due to be completed at the reservoir and that local youth groups would be welcome to make use of it when it was finished in a few years time.

During further discussion it was noted that the Metropolitan Housing Corporation, who were working to regenerate an area adjacent to the reservoir, had not been to the committee for a long time to update on their progress. Members requested that an attempt be made to invite them to the next meeting.

Officers further reported on the issue of fly-tipping and agreed to present more information at the next meeting relating to the costs and progress of removing tips. It was finally reported that tests had been run on the water quality on streams entering the reservoir and had encountered no issues.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted.

#### **8. Planning Issues**

Members of the committee reported that they had been consulted again on the plans for the Brent Cross and Cricklewood redevelopment and that part of the plans were to re-route the River Brent upstream of the Welsh Harp reservoir. Members expressed concerns about silt entering the reservoir during construction. It was reported that the developers had stated that they were aware of the issue and intended to prevent and problems.

Members asked if the detailed proposals from the developers to prevent problems could be presented to the committee at the appropriate time.

#### **9. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Consultative Committee would take place on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

#### **10. Any Other Urgent Business**

It was noted that the plaque for Mike Manual had been removed, officers promised to investigate.

Members from Trainingship Broadsword expressed additional concerns regarding their ability to retain members if they weren't able to offer water-based activities.

The meeting ended at 9:03pm

M FARRELL  
Chair

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