

COMMITTEE
WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE

DATE AND TIME
TUESDAY 31 MARCH 2009 AT 7.00PM

VENUE
BARNET HOUSE, 1255 HIGH ROAD, WHETSTONE N20 0EJ

TO: **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE** (Quorum: One quarter of the membership, including at least two local authority members)

Councillors London Borough of Barnet:

Tom Davey
Julie Johnson

John Hart
Hugh Rayner

Councillors London Borough of Brent:

Mary Farrell
James O'Sullivan

Will Motley
Bob Wharton

Organisations:

Barnet Council for Sports and Recreation
British Waterways
Hendon Rifle Club
London Wildlife Trust
Old St Andrew's Residents' Association
Strategy Directorate of GLA
Welsh Harp Conservation Group
Welsh Harp Sailing Association
West Hendon Community Forum

Brent Sport Council
Environment Agency
Local Agenda 21
Natural England
Princes Park Youth Football Club
Training Ship Broadsword
Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre
Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base
Woolmead Residents' Association

You are requested to attend the above meeting for which an Agenda is attached.

David Seabrooke, Democratic Services Manager

Democratic Services contact: Paul Frost, telephone: 020 8359 2205.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item	Title of Report	Contributors	Pages
1	MINUTES		
2	MATTERS ARISING		
3	ABSENCE OF MEMBERS		
4	DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS		
5	PUBLIC SPEAKING ARRANGEMENTS		
6	Welsh Harp Management Plan	Director of Environment and Culture (Brent)	1 – 4
7	Welsh Harp Management Plan	Director of Environment and Transport (Barnet)	5 – 8
8	ANY OTHER BUSINESS:		
9	ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT		

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You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lift. Do not stop to collect personal belongings. Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move some distance away and await further instructions. **Do not re-enter the building until told to do so.**

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Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone N20 0EJ



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

Tuesday 31 March 2009

Report from the Director of Environment and Culture

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

Welsh Harp Management Plan

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan and related issues. The Management Plan is jointly managed by the three main local land-holding organisations: Brent Council, British Waterways, and the London Borough of Barnet.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the Report.

3.0 Detail

Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan

- 3.1 The Management Plan was signed by English Nature (now Natural England) on 15 May 2003. Reviews are undertaken annually, and amendments reported to the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee (WHJCC). The revised Management Plan, approved by the WHJCC on 10 November 2008, is available, together with a map of the zones at www.Brent.gov.uk/parks.

Management works

- 3.2 Marshland works to manage the growth of willow and other trees on the Neasden Recreation Ground side of the Reservoir were undertaken in February 2009.
- 3.3 Neasden Recreation Ground: The path between the car park at Aboyne Road and the interpretative panels has been renewed; goalposts, seven new benches, new litter and dog waste bins are currently being installed. A new play area has been installed at Neasden Recreation Ground as part of the 'Playbuilder' scheme.
- 3.4 Wildflower seed is currently being sowed. Following comments at the January meeting of the WHJCC, contact was made with Queen's Park who have undertaken successful projects to create wildflower areas. One of these areas is of permanent grassland within a woodland walk and has involved promoting the existing Cow Parsley and the planting of Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta* from reputable sources). Their wildflower bedding area includes a range of annual to perennial species but requires cultivation and re-sowing each year.

- 3.5 Brent Council's StreetCare, and Transportation services have investigated an enquiry related to disabled access where the paths from the Welsh Harp Open Space meet Birchen Grove. A ramp/wheelchair access will be constructed in April to enhance access between a path and the footway of the highway.

British Waterways

- 3.6 British Waterways are circulating details of community clean-up projects on Thursday 26 and Sunday 29 March, as part of the project to remove litter and fly-tipping from the woodland on the south side of the Reservoir near to the North Circular Road industrial estate, (Management Plan: Zone 4C). British Waterways are also investigating fencing to help demarcate a boundary.

Environment Agency

- 3.7 Welsh Harp issues are led by the Brent and Crane Environment Management Team. They are continuing work on pollution prevention upstream of the Welsh Harp. Much of their work in this respect is reactive; and they will follow-up and plan future work if there are reports of incidents or other issues.

Heritage Lottery Award

- 3.8 Maintenance of the Heritage Lottery Fund award project continues.

Biodiversity Action Plan

- 3.9 National Indicator 197: Brent Council has provided links for the new National Indicator 197 ('Improving Biodiversity') at <http://www.brent.gov.uk/pks.nsf/Biodiversity>.

DEFRA issued revised guidance in December 2008 to the effect that Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) should be excluded from the assessment of NI 197, in addition to the exclusion of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). London, however, differs from some areas outside of London in that London LNRs and Local Sites are often over the same land. Discussions are continuing. Current advice is that the assessment of the Welsh Harp will be based on the Local Site area except for that within the SSSI (which is subject to a separate national indicator). The first assessment will cover the five-year period to 31 March 2009, with local scrutiny during April, and completion of the reporting in June/July 2009.

- 3.10 Brent River Park: Downstream of the Brent Reservoir the river flows through the Brent River Park which was entered and short-listed for The Mayor's Priority Parks scheme. Brent's nomination was unsuccessful but the Council thanks all those who voted and we hope that the Brent River Park now has a higher profile.

Events / Other

- 3.11 Brent Council Sports Service: The Healthy Walks Programme continues to March 2010. Walks meet at the Welsh Harp Open Space car park, Birchen Grove, every Thursday (except on Bank / Public Holidays) from 10am-11am. The walks are 'low to moderate' in pace. For details contact Brent Council Sports Service, tel: 020 8937 3707, www.brent.gov.uk/sports
- 3.12 Sustrans are consulting on proposed 'Greenways' (cycle routes that are also used for walkers and others). A number of routes are proposed at and in the vicinity of the Welsh Harp. Some of these are on existing path routes and some are new. Details of the routes are available on the Sustrans website at: www.sustrans.org.uk/goal.

The current consultation ran from 23 January to 6 March 2009 (and therefore fell between WHJCC meetings) but comments could still be sent to Sustrans, Greenways Manager, 70 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EJ.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None specific, but some of the priorities identified in the Management Plan will require additional resources and decisions by, as appropriate, Brent Council, Barnet Council or British Waterways, if they are to be implemented in the future. For Brent Council Parks Service, the Management Plan is implemented and improvements programmed via the Brent Parks Service Parks Strategy, and Service Plan; both of which derive from the Council's Corporate Strategy. Thus implementation is partially dependent upon revenue and capital budgets for grounds maintenance and for parks management. The Parks Service pursues other sources of finance and opportunities for partnership working that may become available.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), land owners or occupiers are required to give notice to and consult with Natural England for any operation in an area of land that is of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features (this requirement applies to operations within a SSSI, and to operations outside the SSSI that may affect the features of interest); and Natural England will issue a consent for the works unless the operation is likely to have a significant impact on any of the notified features of interest on the site. CROW (and section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) places a duty on all public bodies to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of the authority's functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the site.
- 5.2 It is good practice for land owners or occupiers to produce Management Plans for the SSSI, which when approved by Natural England, enable the carrying out of the works specified in the Management Plan. This can reduce the administrative work inherent in obtaining consent for individual items of management work.
- 5.3 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires that from 1 October 2006 all public authorities in England and Wales have a general duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no diversity implications.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

- 7.1 None specific.

8.0 Environmental Implications

- 8.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan co-ordinates environmental works in the Reservoir area.

Background Papers

Dated correspondence and other documents referred to in the Report including:

Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan.

Equality Impact Assessment Completion Form: Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee:

Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan: 20 January 2005. Form dated 06b.01.2005.

Contact Officers

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Mr Leslie Williams, Environmental Policy Officer, Brent Parks Service, 660 Harrow Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2HB. Tel.: 020 8937 5628. E-mail: Leslie.Williams@Brent.gov.uk

Richard Saunders
Director of Environment and Culture

Name
Title
Unit

AGENDA ITEM: 7 Pages 5 – 8

Meeting	Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee
Date	31 March 2009
Subject	Welsh Harp Management Plan
Report of	Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport
Summary	To report the position on the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and on-going site management.

Officer Contributors Jenny Warren, Green Space Services Manager

Status (public or exempt) Public

Wards affected West Hendon

Enclosures None

For decision by Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

Function of Executive

Reason for urgency /
exemption from call-in (if
appropriate) N/A

Contact for further information: Jenny Warren, Green Spaces Services Manager, 020 8359 7803.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the contents of the Report be noted.

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee on 9 December 2003 – approved the proposed boundary of the Local Nature Reserve.
- 2.2 Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee on 15 March 2005 agreed the designation of a Local Nature Reserve on the Welsh Harp.
- 2.3 Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee of 15 June 2005 agreed draft byelaws.
- 2.4 Hendon Area Environment Sub-Committee on 5 September 2006 and Cabinet on 16 October 2006 endorsed the draft byelaws for formal approval by full Council on 7 November 2006.
- 2.5 Council formally endorsed the draft byelaws on 7 November 2007.
- 2.6 Hendon Area Environment Sub Committee on 19 June 2008 – Decision 6. That the progress of the Council's Welsh Harp Risk Assessment be examined and reported back to the next meeting. That British Waterways be invited to report back to the Sub Committee on the progress of their Welsh Harp Risk Assessment at the next meeting.
- 2.7 Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee on 02 July 2008 – Item 8, Actions 1 to 7.
1. To arrange the 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. Provide details about the three year weed control programme.
 3. Request the weed control contractors contact Brent Council to assist with any requirements.
 4. Investigate whether weekend emergency calls were being forwarded to Greenspaces.
 5. 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 an order to change the emergency number on the visitor information centre.
- 2.8 Hendon Area Environment Sub Committee on 23 September 2008. Decisions:
1. That the Draft Risk Assessment for the Welsh Harp be noted.
 2. That the Council writes to British Waterways advising them to introduce a risk assessment for the Welsh Harp.
 3. That the Risk Assessment be submitted to the Audit Committee to consider the level of assessment.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The ongoing management of the Welsh Harp contributes towards a Clean, Green and Safe Borough, as described in Barnet's Corporate Plan 2008/09 – 2011/12.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1 There are no risk management issues associated with this Report.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

5.1 Parks and Open Spaces benefit all sectors of the community by improving the local environment. Maintenance is carried out according to the management plan and takes into account requests from residents, users and Members. Improvements are made, wherever possible, to ensure equal access for all users.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

6.1 For ongoing information the repair and or replacement bird hide to be funded by section 106 contributions up to approx. £6,000.

6.2 For ongoing information the three year programme for the treatment of Japanese knotweed which commenced in 2008 at £1,300 per annum will continue into 2009/10.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

7.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 in relation to the steps to be taken to safeguard, protect and enhance sites of special scientific interest. The Local Authority has the power under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to provide or secure the provision of any land its area... to be managed as a nature reserve. However, English Nature must be consulted by the Authority in the use of the powers given by section 21. The 1949 Act states that a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) must be managed in such a way to ensure that use of the site does not result in any damage to its natural features and maintains its special interest.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

8.1 The Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee, as set out in its Constitution, include: "to consider and co-ordinate all the interests of recreation / leisure / maintenance / nature conservation and statutory requirements of the British Waterways Board and the Environment Agency at the Welsh Harp; with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation."

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

9.1. Current ongoing management issues:

9.1.1 Replacement of the bird hide

The replacement bird hide design is still awaiting approval from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

9.1.2 Japanese Knotweed Control Programme

As reported previously, the three year programme to treat the Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed is programmed for ongoing works in 2009/10.

9.1.3 SUSTRANS cycle network – North West Greenways

A public consultation document regarding proposed routes for Greenways for the Olympics and London was launched in January and closed on 6 March 2009. It seeks to provide a network to enable people to walk and cycle more as part of their everyday journeys. The project is to identify a network of Greenways for intended future development across north west London in the London Boroughs of Hillingdon, Ealing, Hounslow, Harrow and Brent. Barnet are not partners in the study, however a route has been identified in the study through West Hendon playing fields and Barnet's section of the Welsh Harp. The Highways department has written to TfL as Barnet has not been consulted, the installation of any cycle paths cannot be undertaken without the landowner's permission.



10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan can be found on Brent Council's website: www.brent.gov.uk/parks in the biodiversity section.

Legal – JMK
CFO – MG