

MINUTES OF THE WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 24 March 2010 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Farrell (LB Brent) (Chair), Councillor Hart (LB Barnet) (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Motley (LB Brent) and Dr Leo Batten (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group) and Brian Turgoose (Welsh Harp Sailing Association)

Apologies were received from: Councillors Wharton (LB Brent), Davey (LB Barnet), Johnson (LB Barnet) and Rayner (LB Barnet).

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None at this meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 January 2010 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising (if any)

None at this meeting.

4. Welsh Harp Management Plan (Brent)

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

In his introduction the Environmental Policy Officer for Brent, Leslie Williams stated that as part of the annual review of the Management Plan, officers of the three main land-owning / managing organisations met to review the Management Plan copy of which was available on the Brent Council's website. He outlined an Action Plan of objectives, actions and targets of priorities from the draft Management Plan that would be presented to the Committee, in a separate report from Barnet Council. These would include input from discussions that focused on the water-sports priorities and those of habitat improvements. Though the Management Plan, and the Action Plan would emphasise on land management, both would seek to highlight solutions for both recreation and the environment. Leslie Williams gave an outline of the work undertaken thus far as follows:

Management works: Coppicing to control the growth of young willows in the marshland at the edge of the Welsh Harp Open Space was undertaken during February 2010.

Weed issues: Organisations affected by the growth of weed in the water, met to plan management of the issue and concluded that the most feasible solution would appear to be weed cutting in the water, starting during early stages of the seasonal growth. He continued that if early control was delayed or weed growth became prolific, both cutting and harvesting may be required which would also involve landing the cut material at selected locations on the edge of the reservoir.

There was recognition that the work during 2010 would require a high level of resources, particularly by the Welsh Harp Sailing Association. Discussions emphasised concern about the on-going need for resources if management of weed needs was to be repeated annually in the medium-term.

For the long-term there was recognition that the underlying causes of the weed growth would need to be controlled. The related problem of alluvial deposition had reduced the depth and the area of water available for water-sports however, removal of effective quantities of alluvium would be a major and expensive operation but which may be required in the long-term.

British Waterways were continuing to lead on the three-year programme of clean-up on the southern side of the Reservoir and a Community Clean-up was also being organised by British Waterways and Thames21 on 13 March 2010. It was noted that The Environment Agency had provided advice on the issue of the management of the weed in the reservoir.

Maintenance of the Heritage Lottery Fund award project continued.

Leslie Williams also outlined other events as follows;

Brent Council Sports Service and Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre: The Healthy Walks Programme would continue to March 2011. 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

Capital Ring: Stocks of the leaflets were available from the Parks Service.

Kingsbury Open Day: Spring Bank Holiday Monday 31 May 2010, 10.30am to 4pm. The main organisation St. Andrew's Church would be organising a concert in the Church at 5pm.

175 Years of Brent Reservoir": Barnet Council's exhibition will be displayed at the London Canal Museum, 12/13 New Wharf Road, London N1 9RT (near to King's Cross and Camley Street). Later in the year the exhibition would be shown at the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre and at the Brent Museum.

Brian Turgoose of Welsh Harp Sailing Association in giving a progress report stated that approval had been obtained for a sailing area and locations where weed could be dumped. He added that a speed boat had been purchased which was expected to be delivered in the coming weeks and GPS surveys undertaken. Brian outlined some of the issues of concern for the Association which included safety for volunteers and first aid certificate and qualifications.

5. **Welsh Harp management Plan (Barnet)**

The Environment Policy Officer Barnet Parks, Jenny Warren informed the Committee that the action plan was still on-going with cross party input and that she was hoping for its release as soon as the action plan was finalised. She however gave the following update;

Work on bio-diversity was on-going

Bird hide of robust metal and wood finish was being constructed off site to replace the existing hide which would be demolished this week.

Illegal camp set up in the north eastern part of the harp had been removed and that the new site was being actively monitored

Patrols would be on site in the Neasden through to the Easter break during the Iranian New Year.

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

At this meeting there were none.

7. **175th Anniversary of the Welsh harp**

The Committee members were informed about the forthcoming 175th anniversary celebrations for the Welsh Harp. The representative of the Sailing Association outlined some of the activities planned for the day which included the following:

A display by sea cadets

Dragon boat racing as a charity event in support of St Luke's Hospice.

An application was to be submitted to Brent Council to allow the organisers to use Neasden Recreation grounds for some of the activities.

Welsh Harp Community Forum would be organising balloons as well as questionnaires and surveys to seek views on the Welsh Harp.

Pond dipping to collect wildlife

Orienteering

Guided nature walk, including visiting the bird hide with binoculars

Wildlife quiz

Using digital microscopes to have a close up look at minibeasts

Getting up close to Giant African millipedes and 'hissing Sid' the cockroach and his family

Indoor arts and crafts, such as making fossil moulds and wildlife colouring sheets.

It was also noted that there would also be information and advice available on sustainable living from Brent Council's team of environmental officers and the Brent charity, Energy Solutions.

St. Andrew's Church, the Welsh Harp Sailing Association and other local organisations would also have activities on offer.

It was noted that a further meeting of a Sub-Committee would be held on Tuesday 11 May 2010 at 3.00pm in the Heritage Room, Barnet Town Hall to progress discussions on the planned events.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the date of next meeting would be announced at the forthcoming full meeting of the Council in May 2010.

9. Any Other Urgent Business

Vote of Thanks.

The Chair informed the Committee that this was her last meeting as she would be retiring from the Council in May 2010. She therefore thanked everyone for their contributions and support over the past years. On behalf of the Committee Councillor Hart reciprocated the sentiments.

COUNCILLOR M FARRELL
CHAIR

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

M FARRELL
Chair