

<u>Meeting</u> Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee
<u>Date and time</u> Thursday 16th March, 2023 At 7.00 pm
<u>Venue</u> Virtual

Dear Councillors,

Please find enclosed additional papers relating to the following items for the above mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda.

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
6	Update from Friends of the Welsh Harp	3 - 6

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**WHJCC MEETING, 16th MARCH 2023, 7PM
FRIENDS OF THE WELSH HARP SUBMISSION**

AGENDA ITEM 6

Since the last meeting, Friends of the Welsh Harp has continued with its grassroots community conservation activities.

Activities since the last WHJCC on 23rd November 2022:

- 27/11/22: Monthly conservation event
 - Approx. 25 attendees = 50 hours of volunteering
 - 1 tonne litter collected around Eastern Marsh up to and including Brent
 - Equates to £552.50 worth of work* done at no cost to stakeholders with statutory responsibility of the Welsh Harp
- 29/01/23: Monthly conservation event
 - Approx. 45 attendees = 90 hours of volunteering
 - 2 tonnes litter collected at the A5 woodland plus work done at the bee garden
 - Equates to £994.50 worth of work*
- 26/02/23: Monthly conservation event teaming up with other grassroots groups: CURB, Friends of the Silk Stream, LAGER Can, Phoenix Canoe Club, Wembley Scouts
 - Approx. 70 attendees = 140 hours of volunteering
 - Estimated 4 tonnes waste removal at the Silkstream plastic flotilla and surrounding woodland
 - Equates to £1547 worth of work*
 - *Question to Barnet Council: Has the collected litter been collected from A5, woodland area, and by the Silk Stream?*
 - *Please also see item 3 in 'issues to be discussed below'*
- 27/02/23: Corporate volunteer day
 - Tree planting of 100 native trees in the field outside Woodfield Primary School
 - 7 attendees, equating to 25 hours of volunteering
 - Equates to £276.25 worth of work*
- 13/03/23: Corporate volunteer day
 - Building of bee bank at bee garden
 - 13 attendees, equating to 39 hours of volunteering
 - Equates to £430.95 worth of work*

STATS AT A GLANCE

4 months * 554 community volunteering hours† * £6,122 work at no cost

* Calculations based on London Living Wage £11.05 per hour.

† Also includes volunteer organising hours of Leila Taheri, Livia Forte, and Daniella Levene.

Current / future activities:

- 26/03/23: Monthly conservation event teaming up with other grassroots groups: CURB, Friends of the Silk Stream, LAGER Can to continue work at Silkstream plastic flotilla plus bee bank
- 30/04/23: Monthly conservation event teaming up with WHCG to make insect hotel chain
- Further conservation days will take place during following months
- Bee garden update
 - Completed: Bee bank built, nutrients added to soil, temporary signage added, some planting done, coppicing (thanks to the Canoe Club and Sailing Club!)
 - Future work: Further planting, permanent signage, maintenance
 - *Question to Barnet Council: Please can the current signage on the pole be removed as discussed?*
- Public bird hide update
 - Local eco-art competition judging event attended by stakeholders
 - Winners announced to schools
 - 'Pasting party' to take place 24/04/23 where art will be installed by children and bench painted
 - *Question to Barnet Council: When can a bin be installed?*

Issues to be discussed:

- Welsh Harp Vision: When is this being published? It has been delayed multiple times.
- Silk Stream Bridge: What is the status of this? We are extremely concerned about this issue given a recent email response from a council officer. The impact of the bridge is being minimised and the incorrect information used in the planning application not acknowledged. Part of the letter states: "We are not aware of any scientific evidence that proves that the bridge would have an adverse impact on the wetlands."
 - *Can Barnet Council provide scientific evidence of how thousands of tonnes of materials being introduced to a fragile ecosystem, extended works carried out over a period of time, and noise pollution will NOT adversely impact the wetlands and its wildlife?*
 - *We'd like to understand how NE could approve a 200 metre bridge to be built across an SSSI while it will not approve some native trees to be planted on its fringes.*
- Regarding the silk stream flotilla: On 08/03/23 Barnet Council commented on Twitter: "Quick update from us: We are arranging contractor-led clearance works in the area, and we will be undertaking a review of litter-picking regimes for the whole Welsh Harp. [1/2] We're also exploring additional measures to

keep waste in the trash screen, especially during periods of increased water levels. [2/2]"

- *Request for Barnet Council: Could we get an update at the next JCC on 1. the agreed dates for the contractor-led clearance, 2. outcome of the litter picking review, and 3. outcome of the explored measures related to the trash screen.*
- Our proposal for a 'Wellbeing Woodland' to be created on the A5 opposite the new St George's development has been received well from the developer. We have a site meeting with them to discuss the potential works to boost biodiversity as well as create an attractive entrance to the Welsh Harp for the benefit of the entire community.
 - *Barnet Council and CRT have expressed their support. Question for Natural England on whether they are open to granting approval for such works to be carried out.*
- A cannabis farm was recently discovered on the SSSI, near West Hendon Playing Fields.
 - *Question for Natural England: Given concerns around planting, would Natural England like to investigate the issue?*

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