

Decisions of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

17 July 2019

Members Present:-

Councillor Mashari and Councillor Ahmed - London Borough of Brent
Councillor Hart and Councillor Don - London Borough of Barnet

Lucy Shuker - Brent River Catchment Partnership
Richard Bennett - Canal and River Trust
Dale Langdale - Hendon Rifle Club
Clive Cohen - London Wildlife Trust
Dianne Murphy - London Wildlife Trust
David Rose - Welsh Harp Sailing Association
Liz Hall - West Hendon Allotment Society
Geoffrey Johnson - Woolmead Residents' Association

Apologies for absence were received from: Maria Bailey (Environment Agency), Daniella Levene (Friends of Welsh Harp), Catherine Cullen (London Wildlife Trust), Roy Beddard (Welsh Harp Conservation Group), John Shepherd (Welsh Harp Sailing Association) and Judy Shepherd (West Hendon Community Forum)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR 2019-2020

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mashari be elected Chair for the municipal year 2019-2020.
That Councillor Hart be elected Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2019-2020.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

3. DEPUTATIONS IF ANY

None.

4. BRENT RESERVOIR BIG SPLASH EVENT

Mr Richard Bennett informed the meeting that The Canal & River Trust, in partnership with the Phoenix Canoe Club, will be organising The Brent Reservoir Big Splash Event as Part of London's National Park City festival on 27 and 28 July 2019. The event is a GLA backed initiative aimed at encouraging people to make the most of London's parks and waterways and will be the largest free celebration of London's outdoor spaces.

One element of the festival is the "Big Splash", which looks to put on a variety of water based activities across London so that Londoners can get out on to the water for free. The Trust is keen to promote Brent Reservoir as a part of the festival so as to highlight the importance of the reservoir as a water resource, leisure facility and Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Phoenix Canoe Club will be running Paddleboard, Canoe and kayak taster session and the Trust will have a gazebo set up outside the canoe club with some information about our work across London's waterways.

Mr Bennett advised that the booking for the “taster sessions” with the Phoenix Club be made via the link below which he asked the Governance Officer to circulate to all members so as to encourage maximum attendance.

https://volunteerbooking.london.gov.uk/vk/volunteers/provider_profile.htm?name=TeamLondonMajorEvents&pid=34150

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th March 2019 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

6. MATTERS ARISING

None.

7. MANAGEMENT PLAN (BARNET)

Mr Matthew Gunyon (Open Spaces Manager, Barnet Council) introduced the report. He updated members that the Greenspaces Team continued to work closely with the Barnet Community Safety Team, the Local Police and other partners to identify and remove encampments. He continued that the York Park encampment, discussed at the previous meeting, was cleared in partnership with Barratts, Canal and Rivers Trust and the Council. A team attended the site after the event and undertook a cleansing of the area. Members heard that litter and bin schedules would continue to be reviewed by the operational service within Street Scene to ensure the service delivery meets the needs of the area.

Members heard that fly tipping in and around Cool Oak Lane Bridge was reported to the BarnetCST@barnet.gov.uk and allocated to an officer to arrange enforcement patrols and to investigate the feasibility of a CCTV camera along this area. In the discussion that followed, the general expression was that fly tipping was still relentless and ongoing. In order to address that, the Chair suggested that a site visit be undertaken to the known hotspots.

Mr Gunyon then presented the West Hendon Playing Fields Master Plan & Replacement Ball Court approved by the Environment Committee to go to full public consultation between 3 June – 28 July 2019. He outlined the consultation process which included flyers to local residents, posters erected in the park and the use of social media to inform people. He added that representations can also be made through the council’s online engagement portal; <https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/draft-masterplan-west-hendon-3>

A note of thanks was expressed to the officers for the way they handled the complex and challenging problems in and around the Welsh Hendon Playing Fields area. In view of the complexity of the problems, it was agreed that Matthew Gunyon should organise a meeting to be held at Hendon Town Hall, The Burroughs, Hendon, London NW4 4BG on 1st August between 15.00-18.00. Mr Gunyon added that the meeting will have a longer session in order to allow some residents who may not be able to attend or to drop in at a time which best suits them.

Members then raised concerns about water quality to which the representatives of the Environment Agency responded. There then followed a brief discussion after which it was agreed that the assessment of the site and a report be a standing agenda item for the next and future meetings.

8. MANAGEMENT PLAN (BRENT)

Mr Leslie Williams (Project Manager, Brent) presented this report which updated Members on progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan since the last meeting of the Committee. The Management Plan is jointly managed by the three main land-holding organisations: Brent Council, the London Borough of Barnet, and the Canal & River Trust. He drew attention to the appendix to the report that outlined the management considered necessary to sustain the Welsh Harp for wildlife, recreation, landscape, flood-control, economic and other benefits of the reservoir under the Management Plan. The Action Plan tracked current year progress while also highlighting projects with a longer timeframe. Mr Williams highlighted the significant areas of work.

Marshland work: Following the work on the marshland reported to the Committee meeting in March, officers will arrange discussions with interested organisations to review the earlier work, priorities and the best approach for work during the autumn and winter of 2019/2020. The aims of the work were to improve the reservoir for wind-water sports, conservation of the marshland habitat and to re-open views of the landscape.

Public Spaces Protection Order. A Public Spaces Protection Order became effective in all of Brent's parks, open spaces and cemeteries from 3rd April 2019. At the Brent Reservoir this included Neasden Recreation Ground, and the Welsh Harp Open Space. The Public Spaces Protection Order will prohibit a range of anti-social behaviour in all Brent parks. He added that although education rather than enforcement was the initial focus, Brent Council would be looking at how enforcement can be best achieved.

Although the Meadow areas have been enhanced at Neasden Recreation Ground, officers will re-visit to review the schemes.

Mr Williams informed the Committee that following monitoring, the Forestry Commission had reported the presence of oak processionary moth at the Welsh Harp this year. The purpose of the monitoring was to control and prevent further spread, wherever possible. Oak trees that have been inspected may have a colour code near to the base. For 2019 the colour code for oak processionary moth is blue and are as follows;

A blue dot indicates a tree that has been assessed as currently clear;
A blue coloured ring indicates a tree that is infested;
A blue horizontal line indicates an old nest.

He also updated members that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) was undertaking control measures to minimise and limit the chances of transfer of American Crayfish nationally. Members then noted the need for signage and although Mr Williams emphasised that this was not within the remit of Brent Council, he was requested to look into its replacement. It was also added that a letter previously sent to Metropolitan Police about illegal fishing in the Welsh Harp area be chased up to ensure regular enforcement.

9. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY - VERBAL REPORT (IF ANY)

None.

10. PLANNING ISSUES (IF ANY)

None.

11. UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES IN THE WELSH HARP

Sailing.

It was noted that weed growth had been contained and that the regular activity plan had kept the water fresh, enabling its free flow.

Marshland

Longer term plan was required for the marshland. As discussed within the management plan, willow growth was exceeding management work on the shoreline and due to scrub encroachment the area of marshland had reduced by 0.3 ha.

Events.

Members were encouraged to send any updates on issues pertaining to Welsh Harp to the Chair or the Governance Services Officer (Joe Kwateng) so that they can be highlighted in Brent Magazine.

12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Petition against the proposed car park/coach drop off

Ms Dianne Mitchell presented a petition against the proposed car park/coach drop off as part of the proposed West Hendon Playing Fields and Associated Facilities Draft Master Plan. Under the proposals, Barnet Council would form a 99 vehicle car park and coach drop off in the field adjacent to and accessed via Cool Oak Lane, behind Kinloch Drive. On behalf of the residents of and around Kinloch Drive area, Ms Mitchell emphasised that any size car park/coach drop off at this location would be opposed because it would create the following problems; pollution, noise nuisance, widespread dumping and environmental issues affecting wildlife. She added that the proposed car/coach car park via Cool Oak Lane would be inappropriate due to the narrowness and winding nature of that stretch of road.

Mr Matthew Gunyon assured Members that at this stage the Master Plan was a spatial planning document which was being consulted upon for ideas and concepts. It was agreed that the petition be presented to a meeting to be organised by Mr Gunyon and Councillor Hart at Hendon Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

