



## Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

**Wednesday 28 July 2021 at 7.00 pm**

This will be held as an online virtual meeting via MS Teams

### Membership:

#### Members

Councillors:

Parvez Ahmed

Anne Clarke

George Crane

Saira Don

John Hart

Vincent Lo

Roxanne Mashari

Nagus Narenthira

#### Representing

London Borough of Brent

London Borough of Barnet

London Borough of Brent

London Borough of Barnet

London Borough of Barnet

London Borough of Brent

London Borough of Brent

London Borough of Barnet

#### Substitute Members (Brent Council)

Councillors:

Amer Agha, Liz Dixon, Harbi Farah and Shama Tatler

#### Substitute Members (Barnet Council)

Councillors

Alex Prager and Helene Richman

## **Membership continued:**

### **Organisations**

Brent River Catchment Partnership  
Canal and River Trust  
Cleaner Earth UK  
Environment Agency  
Friends of Welsh Harp  
Hendon Rifle Club  
Local Agenda 21  
London Wildlife Trust  
Natural England  
Phoenix Canoe Club  
Princes Park Youth Football Club  
Thames 21 (Welsh Harp Education Centre)  
Thames Water  
Training Ship Broadsword  
Welsh Harp Conservation Group  
Welsh Harp Sailing Association  
West Hendon Allotment Society  
West Hendon Community Forum  
West Hendon Residents' Association /  
Friends of York Park  
Woolmead Residents' Association

<p><b>For further information contact:</b> Andrew Phillips, Governance Officer 0208 937 4129, Andrew.Phillips @brent.gov.uk</p>
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<p>For electronic copies of minutes, reports and agendas, and to be alerted when the minutes of this meeting have been published visit:</p>
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**[democracy.brent.gov.uk](http://democracy.brent.gov.uk)**

**The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting as an online virtual meeting. The link to attend and view the meeting is available [HERE](#)**

## **Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:**

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest\* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest\*\* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also a Prejudicial Interest (i.e. it affects a financial position or relates to determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission, or registration) then (unless an exception at 14(2) of the Members Code applies), after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

### **\*Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences** - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

### **\*\*Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

- (a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party or trade union).

- (b) The interests of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision, the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who employs or has appointed any of these or in whom they have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000, or any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are a director
- any body of a type described in (a) above.

# Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
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<b>1</b>	<b>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair 2021-22</b>	
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Councillor representatives on the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) are asked to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for the 2021-22 Municipal Year.

In accordance with the JCC Constitution, the nominee for position of Chair in 2021-22 should be from amongst the council members appointed by the London Borough of Brent. The nominee for Vice-Chair should be from amongst the council members appointed by the London Borough of Barnet.

<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and clarification of any alternate members</b>	
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<b>3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interests</b>	
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Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.

<b>4</b>	<b>Deputations (if any)</b>	
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By prior arrangement with the Chair, persons who are not members of the Committee may attend to address the Committee on a particular issue or item. Any members of the public wishing to address the committee should submit their request at least 3 days in advance of the meeting to the contact officer named on the agenda. The request will then be passed to the Chair for consideration.

<b>5</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b>	<b>1 - 6</b>
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To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 4 March 2021 as a correct record.

<b>6</b>	<b>Matters arising</b>	
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<b>7</b>	<b>Membership Application</b>	<b>7 - 8</b>
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In accordance with the Joint Consultative Committee Constitution, the Committee is asked to consider a membership application received from Silver Jubilee Park Residents Association.

The Joint Consultative Committee is asked to note that in considering the application, members must be satisfied that the organisation has sufficient interest in the Welsh Harp to justify its nomination.

## **8 Management Plan (Brent)**

9 - 26

This report presents progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan since the last meeting of the Committee and during the 2020/21 year to date.

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.

## **9 Management Plan (Barnet)**

27 - 32

The Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee comprises British Waterways, Brent Council, Welsh Harp Conservation Group, Welsh Harp Sailing Association and Barnet Council. The committee is a consultative committee and meets on a quarterly basis. The committee is invited to note and make comments on the on-going site management issues identified within the report during this quarter.

## **10 Welsh Harp Vision - Verbal Report**

To receive a verbal update on the Welsh Harp 'Vision' project that involves Brent and Barnet Councils, the Canal and River Trust; the London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority and Thames 21.

## **11 Dates of Future Meetings**

To note the following dates for future meetings of the Joint Consultative Committee:

- Wednesday 17 November 2021 at 7pm – to be held as an online meeting
- Thursday 10 March 2022 at 7pm – to be held as an online meeting

## **12 Any other urgent business**

No business other than that appearing on the agenda shall be transacted at the meeting unless the Chair decides that it is urgent. Any member of the committee wishing to raise an item of urgent business should provide sufficient notice to permit consideration by the Chair.

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Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.00 pm**Members Present:**

Councillor John Hart  
 Councillor Roxanne Mashari  
 Councillor Helene Richman  
 Councillor Anne Clarke  
 Councillor Nagus Narenthira  
 Councillor Parvez Ahmed  
 Matthew Gunyon  
 Leslie Williams  
 Peter Eros  
 Derrick Chung  
 Lucy Shuker  
 Neil Earnshaw  
 Dale Langdale  
 Dianne Murphy  
 John Shepherd  
 Judy Shepherd  
 Liz Hall  
 Geoffrey Johnson  
 Andrew Haynes  
 Phil Atkinson  
 David Johnson  
 Louise Crothall  
 Leo Batten

London Borough of Barnet  
 London Borough of Brent  
 London Borough of Barnet  
 London Borough of Barnet  
 London Borough of Barnet  
 London Borough of Brent  
 Greenspaces & Leisure  
 Parks Service, Regeneration & Environ.  
 Cleaner Earth UK  
 West Hendon Residents' Association  
 Brent River Catchment Partnership  
 Canal and River Trust  
 Hendon Rifle Club  
 London Wildlife Trust  
 Welsh Harp Sailing Association  
 West Hendon Community Forum  
 West Hendon Allotment Society  
 Woolmead Residents' Association  
 Welsh Harp Conservation Group  
 Phoenix Canoe Club  
 Environment Agency  
 Natural England  
 Welsh Harp Conversation Group

**1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was noted that the application to the Green Recovery fund was unsuccessful but a second attempt to access the grant would be made.

Peter Eros offered suitable methods to tackle the Japanese Knotweed which would be shared with Officers following the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 November 2020 were approved as a correct record.

**2. Absence of Members**

Apologies for absence were received from Roy Beddard and Maria Bailey.

**3. Disclosable Pecuniary interests and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations made within the current agenda.

The Chairman paid tribute to the late Mrs Julie Johnson who had been a prominent member of the Committee and offered his condolences to Mr Geoffrey Johnson on behalf of the Committee.

**4. Report of the Monitoring Officer**

None.

**4a. Proposed Work Updates**

Nathan Smith provided an update to the proposed works since the last meeting. The project had been completed subject to minor works and photos were shown at the

meeting. It was noted that works for a new amenity area close to the water next to the bridge had been completed as part of the s.106 planning obligation.

Barratt London, West Hendon Partnership Board and the Canal River Trust (CRT) had consulted on the design and proposed works of the four amenity areas and tree reduction projects.

Logs from the tree reduction project have been used to create an insect habitat in agreement with Natural England and coir rolls would be installed in line with guidance from the CRT. A comprehensive litter pick of the area had also been completed.

A member of the Welsh Harp Conservation Group raised an issue regarding the stretch of willows which acted as a screen to reduce visual disturbance for the water birds on the reservoir and enquired about the height of reeds to be planted. Nathan Smith confirmed that input and full agreement of relevant parties had been presented to the Committee before implementation. The height of the reeds was to be confirmed. Natural England confirmed that there were sufficient screens and protection in the area.

A new knee height timber fence was to be replaced between the water and the amenity area which would be managed by First Port Limited, the estate manager of West Hendon along with the litter bins. It was noted that rough sleepers could be a major contributor to rubbish being dumped in the Welsh Harp. Residents were disputing the increased service charges imposed for littering and fly tipping.

Councillor Mashari commended volunteers for their efforts in rubbish clearance from the SSSI and surrounding areas and recommended that threatening letters from First Port Management be stopped. Councillor Richman offered to work with residents and volunteers to come up with a suitable resolution with First Port in relation to the unwarranted charges.

Members suggested that the log pile stacked up near the water should be left at a safe distance to prevent them from falling in the water.

## **5. Actions for Current Issues and Future Vision**

Matthew Gunyon provided an update on the current situation and future works to be carried out at the reservoir following discussions with Brent, the Canal River Trust, London Wildlife Trust, Thames 21, and the Greater London Authority (GLA). Mr Gunyon thanked volunteers for the thousands of bags of litter that had been collected. The Environment Agency (EA) reported that litter clearance was carried out on a weekly basis.

MP Matthew Offord contacted the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on the issue of trash screens and received a response which Mr Gunyon would forward to the Committee post meeting.

It was noted that there had been no clear strategic plan for match funding or capital revenue to improve the area. Habitat management issues particularly on the Barnet side needed improvement. Invasion species and Japanese Knotweed were treated on a cyclical basis, but clear tracking was needed to reduce rising issues.

It was noted that a strategic and joined up approach on improvement to the Welsh Harp was needed. Therefore, development of a Welsh Harp Vision would include a review of the management plan and identification of key work streams such as



unified signage for the whole site, target dredging and access points to the Welsh Harp that could be easily identified as the SSSI area. A contractor specialist would be procured to help develop the master plan to improve work streams. In addition to the s.106 money that was available, funding from the GLA of £10,000 would be put towards the project combined with another £10,000 from Barnet.

The Chairman raised the issue of de-silting to ensure prevention of solidification and whether it had been taken into consideration. It was noted that although dredging of the whole reservoir was needed, the lack of funding meant that targeted dredging would be carried out as an interim measure. Innovative approaches were being explored to reduce organic matter within the sediments and sectioned off areas could potentially be drained to allow targeted dredges. A catchment wide approach was being done to look at preventative measures upstream of siltation.

Members recommended trash traps to be placed up river to collect silt and mud and the possibility of implementing another trash trap near the Brent Cross. Trash traps could also be modified to catch a wider area of rubbish flowing through especially during heavy rainfall.

Councillor Clarke informed the committee that the above suggestions were discussed by the Brent Cross team to include in their plan which was no longer funded by the shopping centre. Reporting from the local consultation exercise would be an open and transparent process and a vision would be developed in consideration of input from all parties.

Matthew Gunyon went through the plan on upcoming works in further detail. Some of the activities included:

- Supporting community clean-up: Materials and equipment would be provided through coordinated efforts with Brent Council and the CRT.
- Installation of additional safety signage: To ensure a balance between welcoming and educational signs.
- Installation of Recycling bins: Two bins were recently installed.
- Manage rough sleeping: An ongoing issue tackled by the rough sleeper team in Barnet to ensure rubbish was collected when possible and suitable accommodation provided.
- Manage invasive plant species: Cyclical treatment of Japanese Knotweed through stem injection or spraying. Additional patches were treated when identified and were being tracked. Volunteers were encouraged to assist with the Himalayan Balsam.
- Improvements projects for the reservoir: Consultation on dredging the water bed, improving access and view points were part of the long-term plan.
- Waste Management Plan working with EA: Forming localised waste lines with local environment agency, local businesses, and communities to address littering and fly tipping using a catchment wide approach.

## **6. London Borough of Brent Welsh Harp Management Plan**

Leslie Williams informed the committee that Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) were in place to tackle issues including gatherings that would pose health and safety hazards. Brent Council had limited personnel to cover park enforcement but worked closely with services to tackle issues. Members were encouraged to raise any issues with the council directly, so that resources could be deployed accordingly. Police Officers were suggested to be involved where possible.

**7. London Borough of Barnet Welsh Harp Management Plan**

This item was covered under item 5.

**8. Welsh Harp Waste Crisis**

Ben Watt, musician, writer, and bird watcher presented a piece in relation to the crisis of the Welsh Harp. Mr Watt had been campaigning to improve conditions at the harp. The lowering of water levels in January revealed unsightly rubbish and a deeply rooted crisis.

All land owners including Barnet and Brent Councils, the Canal River Trust, the Environment Agency and Natural England were facing a number of rising issues and other factors including pollution. Rubbish from the in flowing rivers, Dollis Brook and Silk Streams, were having a negative impact on water quality, animal and plant species. Intervention was considered inadequate as seen in photos taken. It was noted that the management of the wetlands was part of CRT's statutory duty.

The decades of silt build up was toxic and whilst key parts of the reservoir had been dredged, selected parts of the reservoir needed to be dredged to protect natural habitats which have been said to be off limits.

The EA said that they cleared the traps weekly which did not seem to be the case, according to members of the committee. Without proper tools and manpower, a large island of silt and branches were left in the trapped filling the trap again within a week. Surface oil collection and petrol inceptors in the drain needed to be investigated further as well as the debris left down stream.

The odour of chemical residue had continued to linger in affected areas of the woodlands because of the paint factory fire in 2018. It had been revealed that Barnet Council had no bio diversity plan, ecologist intervention or park enforcement for the onshore area.

The lack of accurate mapping meant that there was no systematic management of invasive species like giant Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, Crack Willow or other SSSI plant species.

There was a central environmental crisis with staggering amounts of discarded plastic, toxic silt, water airborne contaminants, gunk waste and inaccurate mapping of species which were all detrimental to the SSSI and which had not been addressed appropriately.

Mr Watt recommended that the CRT reassess their current Welsh Harp plan and devise a long term intensive clean up programme for both offshore and shore line plastic pollution.

Selected dredging around the wetlands was required to make use of responsible habitat management, mend broken breeding rafts and work with the EA to improve water quality.

A transcript of the waste crisis report and photos could be found via the following link:  
<http://benwatt.com/play/article/the-slow-death-of-welsh-harp-crisis-update>

Councillor Clarke pointed out that Barnet Council needed to declare a climate emergency and imminent change was needed.

Andrew Smith from Natural England intended to respond to the distressing issues raised at the meeting with appropriate resources.

The dates of the next meetings have been scheduled for 28 July 2021 and 17 November 2021.

**9. Any Other Business**

None.

**10. Any Other Items that the Chairman Decides are Urgent**

None.

*The meeting finished at 8.50 pm*

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**Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee**

Organisations may apply to the Committee to be represented. Applications should be forwarded in writing to the Secretary who will arrange for the request to be reported to the Committee for decision.

Please note that when considering an application, the committee must be satisfied that the organisation has sufficient interest in the Welsh Harp to justify its nomination.


<b>Organisation (name and type)</b>
<b>SILVER JUBILEE PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION</b>

<b>Description of the organisation:</b>
<b>SJPRA is an active association whose members are actively involved in a number of local issues, in particular those associated with the well-being of the “Welsh Harp”.</b>

<b>Interest in the Welsh Harp:</b>
<b>Being a residents Association where the majority of its members are living very close to the Welsh Harp, using it regularly, love very much, we are keen to both improve and protect this special ‘oasis’. We have a very good track record of challenging proposals which could potentially be damaging to the area i.e. 10 years ago we protested against an application alongside other local organisations, which successfully defeated the proposal.</b>
<b>More recently, we opposed a housing proposal on the Barnet side which we successfully involved the London Mayor, which once again resulted in the proposal being defeated.</b>

<b>Name and position of person making the application on behalf of the organisation.</b>
<b>CHAIR SILVER JUBILEE PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION</b>

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 <b>Brent</b>	<b>Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee</b> 28 July 2021
	<b>Report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration &amp; Environment</b>
<b>WELSH HARP MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	One Appendix A: Welsh Harp/Brent Reservoir Management Action Plan 2020-21
<b>Background Papers:</b>	▪
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Leslie Williams, Project Officer, Parks Services, Brent Civic Centre. Email: <a href="mailto:Leslie.Williams@Brent.gov.uk">Leslie.Williams@Brent.gov.uk</a> Tel: 020 8937 5628

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report presents progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan since the last meeting of the Committee and during the 2020/21 year to date. 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.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the Report.

## 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The current version of the Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan, (dated 15 March 2016) is available on the Brent Council website at:

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/culture-leisure-and-parks/parks-and-allotments/park-finder/welsh-harp-reservoir/>

- 3.2 Other partner organisations will update the Committee on the Welsh Harp 'Vision' project that involves also Barnet Council, the Canal and River Trust; the London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority and Thames 21.
- 3.3 The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan includes an Action Plan that lists current year progress and actions that may require a longer time-frame and/or for the resources to be identified to undertake the action. For this committee the Action Plan is updated as Appendix A. The 'Progress' column indicates current progress. For Brent Council, additional notes are provided in the following paragraphs:

#### Marshland work

- 3.4 Marshland conservation work continued until December 2020 and was then postponed due to the Covid situation. The work is due to recommence after the bird breeding season, in September 2021. The work is mainly within the Canal and River Trust's land on the marshland edge of the reservoir and also involves Brent Council. The work has been conducted by volunteers of the Welsh Harp Sailing Association. The focus will be on the margins of the southern shore of the reservoir (Neasden Recreation Ground). The Canal and River Trust, and the Welsh Harp Sailing Association have obtained consent from Natural England for the programme of works.
- 3.5 The work involves the reduction of shade from scrub and from coppiced (previously cut and regrown) trees, to enable the marshland flora to regenerate. A range of trees are retained, particularly less common species locally, for example most of the Alder, Silver Birch, Apples, clumps of Osier, regenerating Elms and large Willows. The work is in the marshland and on paths alongside the marshland, which often coincide with a belt of acid grassland. The works aim to improve:
- Habitat and wildlife: The marshland and the marshland flora are valuable for wildlife. The marshland is typically 5-20 metres wide.
  - Water wind-sports: Trees on the edge of the reservoir create a wind shadow that can extend over the reservoir and which reduces the wind for water sports.
  - Landscape and amenity: The growth of the trees can reduce the view of the reservoir and the views across the reservoir.

The marshland edge on the southern side of the reservoir includes some intricate variations in vegetation and the works will consider the detail. In particular, the method of working to re-open views and the stacking of the cut material will be considered.

#### Litter

- 3.6 Brent Council have continued to work with partner organisations on clearing some of the long-term accumulations of litter and rubbish.

#### Healthy Walks programme

- 3.7 The walking programme has continued with walkers following social distancing guidelines. Details may change depending upon the Covid regulations and guidance current at the time of the walk: See:



### 3.8 Oak Processionary Moth

- 3.8 Oak Processionary Moth has been reported at the Welsh Harp Open Space during the spring / early summer; and following reports during recent years. The hairs of the caterpillar can cause an irritation to the skin and to the respiratory tract. The Forestry Commission and others have been attempting to control the spread of the species since it was introduced to the UK in about 2005. More information is on the Forestry Commission website, including guidance on reporting of the caterpillars:

<https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/fthr/pest-and-disease-resources/oak-processionary-moth-thaumetopoea-processionaea/>

## 4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan is primarily a land-use document to guide land managers and others in the maintenance, management and legislative issues affecting the land management of the Brent Reservoir and associated land. The Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan also has a forward planning role, particularly in identifying the needs of land management over timeframes into the future.
- 4.2 The actions in the accompanying Action Plan (Appendix A) are achievable over varying time-frames, though many are not affordable within existing budgets in the short term. More details of works are included in Appendix A. Where those works are not currently achievable, the Action Plan highlights key issues. Works are only undertaken when approved by the service responsible for delivering the works within existing approved budgets.
- 4.3 As is being reported to the Committee, the main land-holding organisations at the Welsh Harp and some other organisations are currently working on a 'vision' exercise, which will include a review of possible sources of funding and income for those works currently not affordable

## 5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp is a designated 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' ('SSSI'). Section 28E of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 ('CROW') and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) sets out the duties in relation to SSSIs. Land owners or occupiers, and also public bodies, are required to give notice to and consult with Natural England where they wish to carry out, or cause or permit to be carried out 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). Natural England will issue consent, which may have conditions or refuse consent. It is a criminal offence to carry out a listed operation without Natural England's consent or to ignore any conditions of a consent which may result in

an unlimited fine and a restoration order. 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 a SSSI. When advice is obtained from Natural England prior to carrying out the works, an explanation of how the Council has taken into account any advice Natural England has given should be provided –

The Council must be able to show that it considered alternatives that could reduce the impact on the SSSI and the methods being used are those that cause as little damage as practicable to the land:-

The Council should demonstrate how it has assessed differing interests (including the special interests of the SSSI) before deciding to go ahead with the works.

- 5.2 It is good practice for landowners 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 all public authorities in England and Wales, when exercising their statutory functions, must have regard to the conservation of biodiversity, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions.
- 5.4 Section 28Q of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 requires the owner of land included in a SSSI to inform Natural England within 28 days of any changes in ownership or occupation of the site, including leases, easements and rights.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 Decision makers must have due regard to the public sector equality duty in making their decisions. The public sector equality duty is set out at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and is as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

In terms of advancing equality of opportunity, this means to:

- (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;

- (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (iii) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

In terms of

- (a) Tackling prejudice, and
- (b) Promoting understanding,

The relevant protected characteristics are:

- ☐ Age
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Gender reassignment
- ☐ Pregnancy and maternity
- ☐ Race,
- ☐ Religion or belief
- ☐ Sex
- ☐ Sexual orientation
- ☐ Marriage and Civil partnership

6.2 At this stage, no potential adverse impact arising from the recommendations in this report has been identified. However, the equalities implications identified in the Equality Analysis will continue to be considered and assessed as further data / information is obtained or becomes available during the implementation process.

## **7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

7.1 None specific.

## **8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)**

8.1 None specific.

### ***Report sign off***

***Alan Lunt***

Strategic Director of Regeneration &  
Environment

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## APPENDIX A. WELSH HARP / BRENT RESERVOIR MANAGEMENT PLAN: ACTION PLAN FOR 2020-2021

The Management Plan outlines the management considered necessary to sustain the Welsh Harp for wildlife, recreation, landscape, flood-control, economic and other benefits of the reservoir. These are achievable over varying time-frames, though many are not affordable in the short term. Officers of the main land-holding organisations at the Welsh Harp and some other organisations are working on a 'Vision' exercise which will include a review of possible sources of funding and income. This Action Plan tracks current year progress while also highlighting projects with a longer timeframe.

Note also the draft of a Forward Work Programme for the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee that has been tabled by Barnet Council.

RAG colour coding is subjective and may take account of the significance of the issue and of any progress.

Action	Lead	Budget	Approximate timetable	RAG status (text column provided for use if plain printing)	Progress: 2020-21 to 14th July 2021
Dam wall and reservoir: statutory responsibility to maintain dam wall, associated structures and the dam	Canal and River Trust (Canal and River Trust)	Canal and River Trust	Maintain. On-Going	Green	Dam wall and mechanism maintained to operational and statutory standards. Statutory inspection and works conducted in January to February 2021.
Maintain open water for water sports	Welsh Harp Sailing Association (WHSA)	Undertaken by volunteers of the (WHSA)	On-Going	Green	Monitoring and actions by Welsh Harp Sailing Association.
Sailing Infrastructure: club-houses, boats, and service areas.	Sailing Clubs	Maintained by the Canal and River Trust; and by the sailing clubs.	On-going	Green	The Welsh Harp Sailing Association and clubs maintain the water sports infrastructure.  See also Phoenix Canoe Club.

Bird hides: maintenance of the hides; the surrounding vegetation (sightlines) and habitats.	Welsh Harp Conservation Group / others		On-going	Green	The WHCG organise winter projects at and near to the hides.
Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre	Thames 21, Brent Council		Thames 21 have managed the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre since January 2016 but are vacating in the summer of 2021.	Red	Activities at the Centre have been affected by the restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thames 21 are vacating the Centre in the summer of 2021. Brent Council is in discussion with partners to understand the opportunities at the location as an education centre.
Allotments	Brent, West Hendon Allotment Society	Brent: refer to Allotments and Food Growing Strategy. Barnet: West Hendon Allotments are Self-Managed by the holders.	Allotments are maintained. There are some areas for biodiversity within the Dors Close Allotments.	Green	Barnet Council: West Hendon Allotments are Self-Managed.  Brent Council: Allotments Strategy: Birchen Grove Allotments and Dors Close Allotments.
Open spaces, pitches, paths, Capital Ring, and parks furniture.	Barnet, Brent	Existing maintenance resources. Barnet; and Brent public realm budgets.	On-going.	Amber	Maintenance, particularly of the well-used paths and features.
Signage; and interpretative signage.	Brent / Barnet.			Amber	Maintained. The Canal & River Trust are currently reviewing a selection of the signage. Part of the review extends beyond the Canal and River Trust land to other areas of the Welsh Harp.

Parks infrastructure	Brent / Barnet			Green	<p>Parks infrastructure is checked at appropriate frequencies.</p> <p>Birchen Grove Car Park: Installation of mini-humps to deter excessive speeding and other anti-social behavior in car park: January 2020.</p> <p>Silver Jubilee Park Car Park: resurfaced and line-marked: January 2020.</p>
Monitoring: wildlife, and indicators	WHCG; and public authorities.	Mainly by volunteers of WHCG.	On-going	Amber – diverse wildlife but potential for improvements	<p>See the most recent (2020) report on wildlife produced by the Welsh Harp Conservation Group, available on their website and via the following link (try Ctrl and double click if it does not open immediately):</p> <p><a href="https://brentres.wordpress.com/publications/">https://brentres.wordpress.com/publications/</a></p> <p>Programme of activities led by Welsh Harp Conservation Group for: refer to the website.</p>
Grasslands and cutting	Barnet, Brent	Maintenance: within existing resources. Restoration work is currently unfunded.	Spring to autumn.	Green	<p>Grasslands: A grassland maintenance schedule introduced by Brent Council across the Borough (including the Welsh Harp) in spring 2018 includes emphasis on improving biodiversity value of amenity grassland. Sown areas of bee-friendly plants were added in 2019. See the following link for areas for areas of spring and summer grassland at Neasden Recreation Ground:</p> <p><a href="https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16413216/neasden-recreation-ground.jpg">https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16413216/neasden-recreation-ground.jpg</a></p>

Grasslands: paths cutting	Barnet, Brent	Maintenance: within existing resources. Restoration work is currently unfunded. Current path cutting estimated at £5,000 / year.	Spring to autumn.	Amber	<p>Paths maintained but some have narrowed with scrub growth, particularly at Neasden Recreation Ground (see notes on Marshland).</p> <p>The lower grassland path at the Welsh Harp Open Space is narrow. Work in 2020 aimed at reducing encroaching scrub, but the path width could benefit from occasional cutting.</p>
Sailing and sports development	WHSA: Welsh Harp Sailing Association and constituent clubs.	Undertaken by volunteers of WHSA.	On-Going	Amber	<p>Led by the sailing and water sports clubs. Phoenix Canoe Club are working on improvements to their club facilities for water sports, particularly for educational use; and for a café accessible from the Welsh Harp / Capital Ring path.</p>



Litter	Brent Council. Barnet Council. Canal & River Trust. Thames 21. Environment Agency.	Landowners: Brent Council, Barnet Council, Canal & River Trust. Leaseholders. Also much volunteer involvement.	On-going.	Red	<p>The January to February 2021 temporary partial drawdown of the water level within the Reservoir revealed large quantities of litter, waste and alluvium (silt). Of the alluvium, the Canal &amp; River Trust have stated that the removal is logistically beyond any resources that are currently available to the Canal and River Trust.</p> <p>The Canal &amp; River Trust mapped some of the larger items and those were subsequently removed.</p> <p>There has been much activity by the wider community to clear, where it is safe to do so; and within Covid-19 regulations; material near on the shorelines.</p> <p>There remains, in addition to litter and rubbish in the reservoir; two areas of fly-tipped waste in the wooded wetland on the southern shore of the reservoir; areas of less-accessible waste around the reservoir; and issues related to the inflow of waste on the Silk Stream and River Brent.</p>
River trash traps: at inflows of Dollis Brook, and Silk Stream	Environment Agency	Budget provided by the Environment Agency	Maintain, On-going.	Amber / Red	<p>The Environment Agency clear accumulations of litter from the trash screens on the tributary rivers entering the reservoir, at the Silk Stream and at the River Brent.</p> <p>The Environment Agency clear and remove the material on a maintenance schedule but accumulations of material in the river have been evident during recent months.</p>

Clean up projects	The community		On-going but with increased projects while the shoreline has been exposed due to lowered water levels.	Amber / Green: Much has been achieved, but much is beyond the safe reach of shore work.	As noted above, where safe to do so, litter clean-up projects have been organized over several years by the Welsh Harp Litter Pickers and by residents near to Neasden Recreation Ground. More recently that has involved also the Welsh Harp Group at Neasden Recreation Ground and a range of other volunteers organized via social media.
Bird rafts, islands. There are approximately 20 rafts.	Welsh Harp Conservation Group (WHCG)	Volunteer projects are held annually to maintain, repair or renew rafts. .	On-going. Autumn / winter.	Amber	WHCG have a programme for maintenance of bird rafts. Works are outside of the bird breeding season of March to August inclusive. Recent problems with access to the rafts for maintenance due to alluviation.
Reedbeds: remove young trees	WHCG	Volunteer projects are held annually to maintain the reedbeds.	Remove young trees. On-going. Autumn / winter.	Amber	Led by the WHCG.
Reedbeds: increase	All	Natural growth is encouraged, so costs are low, but need to remove young trees.	Periodic reviews as part of Biodiversity Action Plans.	Amber	Habitat maintained. Estimates from GIS aerial images suggest that the area of reedbed has increased by 0.09 ha between 2008 and 2016. As at 2021 there are reedbeds on the main arm of the reservoir in the eastern marsh, on the shore of Neasden Recreation Ground near to the dam wall; and on the shore of the Welsh Harp Open Space.
Wet woodland	Canal and River Trust, Barnet, Brent	Largely self-managing.	On-going.	Amber	Largely self-managing. Rubbish noted in (during the water drawdown of Jan-Feb 2021) and in the vicinity of the woodland.

Woodland	Brent, Barnet, WHCG, Canal and River Trust	Largely self-managing. Un-funded: management of woodland to increase diversity, but potential for creative use of material.		Amber	Largely self-managing, but control of willow and other scrub required in marshland at edge of Reservoir.
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Marshland: maintain	Brent Council, Welsh Harp Sailing Association, Canal and River Trust.	Increase the extent of the marshland around the shores of the Reservoir for nature conservation, landscape, and to increase wind for water sports (by Reducing excess growth of trees).	Reduce young tree growth on shores of Neasden Recreation Ground, Welsh Harp Open Space.	Amber	<p>Willow and scrub growth has exceeded management work on the shoreline. Estimates from GIS aerial images suggest that the area of marshland (including fen, marsh and swamp) has reduced by 0.3 ha between 2008 and 2016, due to succession to scrub woodland.</p> <p>Discussions from autumn 2018 onwards by Canal &amp; River Trust, Welsh Harp Sailing Association, Brent Council; and from summer 2020 with Barnet Council and Welsh Harp Conservation Group.</p> <p>Welsh Harp Open Space: trial marshland works by Welsh Harp Sailing Association, February 2019.</p> <p>January and February 2020: Continuation of work in marshland edge by Welsh Harp Sailing Association on north shore (Welsh Harp Open Space).</p> <p>2020: Works commenced in September 2020 organised by Welsh Harp Sailing Association (with the Canal &amp; River Trust; and Brent Council). Northern shore. Due to Covid restrictions, work was postponed in January to February 2021, to recommence from September 2021.</p>
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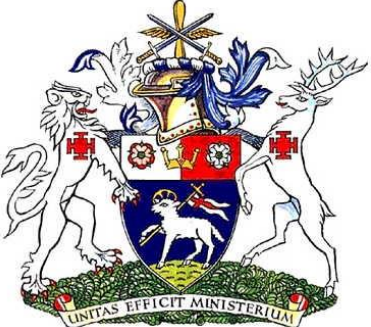
Marshland: increase	Brent, Barnet, Brent Catchment Partnership	Investigate sources of finance for long-term restoration of river catchment; and for flood alleviation.	Increase the extent of the marshland around the shores of the Reservoir for nature conservation, landscape, and to increase wind for water sports.	Amber	Marshland habitat at risk of scrub encroachment. See the comments for 'Marshland maintain', above.
Marshland: orchids	WHCG, Brent	Marshland work by Brent Council. Volunteer work by WHCG.	WHCG to provide information.	Status currently not known.	As for Marshland, above. Several of the species of marshland orchids present at the Reservoir would benefit from relatively open (un-shaded) situations or may have other specific requirements.
Marshland (northern arm of Reservoir)	Barnet, Barratt PLC		Restoration of shore by Phase 1 of West Hendon Redevelopment.	Green	Refer to Barnet.
South-bank boardwalk	Canal and River Trust	Canal & Rivers Trust budget: periodic work.	As required.	Red / Amber	The Canal and River Trust have plans to restore a boardwalk in 2021. The Canal & River Trust are looking at options.

Invasive species: Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and other invasive species. Invasive species at the Welsh Harp extends also to a number of other species where growth is across paths, excessively shading marshland or causing other issues.	Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council	Brent Council Parks actions: Knotweed Reduced at the Brent Reservoir including at Neasden Recreation Ground; and Giant Hogweed at the Welsh Harp Open Space. Barnet Council have Reduced Knotweed near to Cool Oak Lane bridge.	Control of these species requires continuing attention: timely short-term control; control at the time of other works; and as part of longer term management.	Red	On-going by Brent Council and Barnet Council. The Brent River Catchment Partnership are investigating how to improve control along the whole catchment. Operational knowledge is also shared via the River Brent Catchment Partnership. Thames 21 working with Brent Council and others, have been working on control of Knotweed and Giant Hogweed on the River Brent section downstream of the dam wall (spring / summer 2021).
Cool Oak Lane bridge. Cool Oak Lane bridge and Wood Lane traffic.	Barnet Highways (leading) in consultation with Brent Highways.	Barnet Council and others.	New pedestrian bridge in place.	Green	Pedestrian footbridge alongside historic, vehicular footbridge.
River Brent Catchment Management Plan	All; led by Environment Agency / Thames 21.		2011 - ongoing	Amber – in progress, with large challenges to improve the River catchment.	Action Plan published at: see website: <a href="https://www.thames21.org.uk/catchment-partnerships/brent/">https://www.thames21.org.uk/catchment-partnerships/brent/</a>

Welsh Harp Vision	Canal and River Trust, Barnet Council, Brent Council, Thames 21, London Wildlife Trust, Greater London Authority.	Funding and/or resources for the Vision have been provided by the partner organisations.	In progress.	Amber – in progress	Developing a vision and options for the Welsh Harp. Consultancy appointed and commencing work.
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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>28 July 2021</b></p>
<b>Title</b>	London Borough of Barnet Welsh Harp Update
<b>Report of</b>	Executive Director - Environment
<b>Wards</b>	West Hendon
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	None
<b>Enclosures</b>	None
<b>Officer Contact Details</b>	Matthew Gunyon, Greenspaces Service Manager <a href="mailto:matthew.gunyon@barnet.gov.uk">matthew.gunyon@barnet.gov.uk</a> 0208 359 7403
<b>Summary</b>	
To update the committee regarding the on-going site management issues and report the position on the Local Nature Reserve (LNR).	

<b>Officers Recommendations</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the committee consider and note the contents of this report and to invite the committee to make comments on the contents of the report.</li> </ol>	

## **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

1.1 The Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee is comprised of Canals and Rivers Trust, Brent Council, Welsh Harp Conservation Group, Welsh Harp Sailing Association and Barnet Council. The committee is a consultative committee only and meets on a quarterly basis.

1.2 The committee is invited to note and make comments on the on-going site management issues during this quarter as follows:

### **1.3 Illegal encampments**

The Greenspaces Team continue to work closely with the Barnet Community Safety Team, the Local Police and other partners to identify and remove encampments;

### **1.4 Litter and Flytipping**

Fly Tipping should be reported to the [BarnetCST@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:BarnetCST@barnet.gov.uk)

### **1.5 West Hendon Playing Fields Master Plan**

1.5.1 The outline business case for The West Hendon Playing Fields Master plans was presented and approved at Policy and Resources Committee 16 June 2021 under agenda item 9:

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cld=692&Mld=10888&Ver=4>

The committee approved the outline business case and £18.8m of capital funding for the delivery of the scheme.

1.5.2 The council is now forming a Programme Board and Project Team in order to develop the design and submit a planning application.

### **1.6 Welsh Harp and SSSI management**

1.6.1 The council in partnership with Brent Council, Canals and Rivers Trust, The GLA, The London Wildlife Trust and Thames 21 is developing an overarching Vision for the Welsh Harp and a review of the Management Plan.

1.6.2 DK-CM has been appointed as the lead consultant on the project.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The terms of reference of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee include that it considers and co-ordinates all the interests of recreation, leisure, maintenance and nature conservation with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp Reservoir and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation.

## **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

3.1 N/A

## **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

4.1 The committee note the actions being implemented as set out under section one.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

5.1.1 The project supports the wider strategy of the local authority and the upcoming Barnet Plan, and its four main priorities, in the following ways:

#### **Clean, safe and well-run**

- a place where our streets are clean and anti-social behaviour is dealt with so our residents feel safe; providing good-quality, customer-friendly services in all that we do
- improvements to the quality of parks infrastructure
- operational arrangements introduced to a site to ensure security, safety, maintenance and longevity
- ecological improvements to a Site of Special Scientific Interest, increasing awareness of the natural environment

#### **Family friendly**

- creating a family friendly Barnet, enabling opportunities for our children and our young people to achieve their best an informed and well-researched facility mix which caters for all age groups and considers all stakeholders
- improved offer for younger people, including improved junior pitches and new, accessible community facilities

#### **Healthy**

- a place with fantastic facilities for all ages, enabling people to live happy and healthy lives development of facilities to promote healthy and active lifestyles among residents
- inclusion of free-to-access facilities alongside more specialist options, to provide a unique offer to local residents
- improvement to community facilities

#### **Thriving**

- a place fit for the future, where all residents, business and visitors benefit from improved, sustainable infrastructure and opportunity
- Improvements to cycle and pedestrian routes through the park, increasing Barnet's offer in terms of active travel
- A significant placemaking contribution to the wider West Hendon regeneration works
- Improvement to facilities for existing local businesses

### **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.2.1 Any costs incurred from the programmes and initiatives will be met within the existing Greenspaces budget.

### 5.3 Social Value

- 5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

### 5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.4.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 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 acquire, declare and manage nature reserves. 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.

- 5.4.2 As set out in the Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee:

“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 Reservoir and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation”.

- 5.4.3 Barnet’s Constitution – Article 8 – Joint Arrangements- states at paragraph 8.1 that the Council may establish joint arrangements with one or more Local Authorities. Such arrangements may involve the appointment of a Joint Committee with these Local Authorities.

### 5.5 Risk Management

- 5.5.1 There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

### 5.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.6.1 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.

The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services

## **5.7 Corporate Parenting Principles**

5.7.1 N/A

## **5.8 Consultation and Engagement**

5.8.1 The Consultative Committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis, the committee comprises the land owners, legislative bodies, and third sector volunteer groups who work within the reserve to deliver positive outcomes.

## **5.9 Insight**

5.9.1 None

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan can be found on Brent Council's website: [www.brent.gov.uk/parks](http://www.brent.gov.uk/parks) in the biodiversity section.

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