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## WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Day:** Monday  
**Date:** 24 July 2017  
**Time:** 10.30 am  
**Place:** Lower Higham Visitor Centre - Werneth Low Country Park

Item No.	AGENDA	Page No
1.	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive any apologies for the meeting from Members of the Joint Committee.	
2.	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Joint Committee.	
3.	<b>MINUTES</b> The Minutes of the proceedings of the previous meeting of the Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Committee held on 13 February 2017 to be approved as a correct record.	1 - 2
4.	<b>MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2017/18</b> <b>Tameside MBC</b> Councillors Bell, Bowden, Buglass, Cooper, J Fitzpatrick, Kinsey and Robinson.  <b>Hyde War Memorial Trust</b> Messrs Ainger, Cooper, Galvin, Gradwell and Hodkinson.	
5.	<b>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR 2017/18</b> In accordance with the decision taken at the meeting of the Joint Management Committee held on 5 August 1986, the offices of Chair and Deputy Chair are held in rotation by a member of each of the constituent bodies. The Committee should in respect of this Municipal Year 2017/18, select the Chair from Tameside MBC and the Deputy Chair from Hyde War Memorial Trust.	
6.	<b>GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT</b> To consider the report of the Greenspace Development Officer.	3 - 8
7.	<b>ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17</b> To consider a report of the Greenspace Development Officer.	9 - 22

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From: Democratic Services Unit – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Charlotte Forrest, Senior Democratic Services Officer on 0161 342 2346 or [charlotte.forrest@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:charlotte.forrest@tameside.gov.uk), to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.

**8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

To approve the dates of future meetings of the Joint Management Committee as follows:-

20 November 2017	Lower Higham Visitor Centre
19 February 2018	Lower Higham Visitor Centre

**9. URGENT ITEMS**

To consider any additional items the Chair is of the opinion shall be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

# Agenda Item 3.

## WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 February 2017

**Commenced:** 10.30 am

**Terminated:** 11.20 am

**Present:** Councillors Robinson (Chair), Bell, Cooper and J Fitzpatrick  
Mr Ainger, Mr Galvin and Mr Gradwell

**In Attendance:** Nicola Marshall Greenspace Development Manager  
David Cannon Greenspace Development Officer

### 15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Committee held on 21 November 2016 were approved as a correct record.

### 17. GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

The Greenspace Development Officer submitted a report informing Members of the activities undertaken within the Country Park since the last meeting of the Joint Management Committee held on 21 November 2016.

The report outlined the following:-

- Maintenance of Sites
- Environmental Stewardship – Higher Level Agreement 2010 - 2010 Update
- Public Events
- Werneth Low Country Park Greenspace Volunteer Services
- Visitors 2016
- Wildlife Nature Conservation

With regards to Maintenance of Sites an update was provided on the footpath near Higham Cottages. The contractor had visited the site on 8 February 2017 and would return at a later date to commence the work. The Greenspace Development Manager was pleased to announce that some funding had been secured to improve the footpath and riding track parallel to Werneth Low Road facing the Hare and Hounds Public House. Detailed quotes would be sought and include for new fencing, a stile and signage. The work was planned to commence in the summer months.

The report included attendance at public events for the Country Park's 2016/17 winter programme and details of activities planned for spring. Visitor monitoring data for 2016 was also provided.

It was reported that since the last meeting of the Joint Management Committee the volunteers had held three meetings. At their October meeting the major projects to be undertaken during winter and spring 2016/17 were agreed, a list of which were appended to the report. The aim was to complete the projects by April 2017 however any projects still underway would be carried forward onto next year's programme of works. The Greenspace Development Officer explained that in

addition to the planned work the volunteers undertook a variety of other tasks including litter picking, urgent repairs and responding to queries from members of the public. It was announced that across Tameside during 2016 18,000 hours of work were carried out by volunteers; members of the committee expressed their gratitude for this impressive contribution.

An update was provided on the bequest of £1000 to the Country Park as previously reported (Minute 11 refers). It was announced that following discussions with Natural England, Emorsgate seed suppliers and a local tenant farmer a mixture of wildflower and grasses had been purchased and cast on South Meadow near Windy Harbour. It was confirmed that a Natural England ecologist had advised on the mix of traditional seeds which would be suitable for the soil and an illustration of the wildflowers would be provided at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED:**  
**That the report be noted.**

#### **18. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED:**  
**That the Joint Committee meets as follows:-**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>VENUE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
Monday 24 July 2017	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	10:30 am
Monday 20 November 2017	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	10:30 am
Monday 19 February 2018	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	10:30 am

#### **19. 10 YEARS OF VOLUNTARY SERVICE PRESENTATION**

The Chair presented awards to four volunteers who had achieved their 10 year service to volunteering. Committee members joined him in their thanks and appreciation for the volunteers' hard work and commitment often in inclement conditions. They made a significant contribution to the upkeep and maintenance of the Country Park, staffing the visitor centre and assisting with public events.

#### **20. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

# Agenda Item 6.

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>24 July 2017</b>
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Assistant Executive Director, Place David Cannon, Greenspace Development Officer
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	To inform Members of activities undertaken within the Country Park since the last meeting of the Joint Management Committee (13 February 2017).
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That the report be noted.
<b>Links to Community Strategy:</b>	To ensure that the Country Park is an attractive and environmentally friendly place to visit.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The activities in the Country Park are in accordance with Council policy priorities.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)</b>	The funding for the projects is met by the Operations and Greenspace revenue budget.
<b>Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	It is important that the Joint Management Committee is kept informed of activities undertaken in the Country Park.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	Activities in the Country Park are kept under review in order to ensure any potential risks are dealt with adequately.
<b>Access to Information:</b>	Background papers and information can be obtained by contacting David Cannon, Greenspace Development Officer  phone: 0161-368-6667  e-mail: david.cannon@tameside.gov.uk

## **1. MAINTENANCE OF SITES**

- 1.1 Fairway Landscapes Ltd has now completed the installation of 38 metres of new steps at the Higham Cottages access point. The final cost for this project was £3,524. This project was funded by The Hyde War Memorial Trust.
- 1.2 Following formal site inspections around the Country Park contractors working on behalf of the Country Park Joint Committee have completed drainage repairs in the car park at Lower Higham. The gully, with protective grill, near the herb garden, has been removed and a wider gully with new protective grill has been installed. The cost of this project was £1,841 and was paid by Tameside Council.
- 1.3 The summer grass cutting programme for 2017 started in April. The programme includes the grass cutting of the Lower Higham Visitor Centre area, car parks, access points, picnic areas and strips along footpaths. The cost of this programme of maintenance is paid by Tameside Council.
- 1.4 The Operations Maintenance Team have been very busy around the Country Park during spring. This is a list of the works completed by the Team since the last meeting of the Joint Committee:-
- At Cock Brow Entrance to South Meadow installed new kissing gate.
  - At Ash Cottage installed 10 metres of flagged path.
  - At New Piece Field Meadow installed new 12 foot field gate.
  - At entrance to Golf Course, Hackingknife Meadow, installed new stile.
  - At entrance to Baron Meadows replaced gate in kissing gate.
  - At Hackingknife Meadow installed new 12 foot field gate.
  - On riding track network repaired 6 metres of post and rail wooden fencing.
- 1.5 At current contractor prices this programme would cost £2,850. The cost of this work was paid for by Tameside Council.

## **2. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP – HIGHER LEVEL AGREEMENT 2010 – 2020 UPDATE**

- 2.1 Environmental Stewardship agreements have five primary objectives:-
- Wildlife conservation
  - Maintenance and enhancement of landscape quality and character
  - Natural resource protection
  - Protection of the historic environment; and
  - Promotion of public access and understanding of the countryside
- 2.2 Environmental Stewardship – Higher Level agreements are only suitable for land that is of “significant environmental interest”.
- 2.3 In May 2017 the Country Park received £2,175 of grant income which was the Final Payment for Year 7. Since the agreement started in January 2010 the Country Park has received in total £39,158 of grant income from Natural England.
- 2.4 At the time of this report the Country Park is compliant with all aspects of this agreement.

### 3. PUBLIC EVENTS

- 3.1 The attendance for the Country Park's Winter/Spring 2016/2017 programme of public events is as follows:-

Date	Event	Attendance
<b>25 October 2016</b>	Woods, Wands and Wizards	<b>110</b>
<b>4 December 2016</b>	Ramble to Mottram in Longdendale	<b>49</b>
<b>8 January 2017</b>	Highs and Lows Ramble	<b>22</b>
<b>5 February 2017</b>	Short Stroll Around Werneth Low	<b>18</b>
<b>12 March 2017</b>	Roman History of Werneth Low Walk	<b>15</b>
<b>16 April 2017</b>	Easter Egg Hunt	<b>323</b>
<b>30 April 2017</b>	Ramble to Chadkirk Chapel	<b>34</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>571</b>

- 3.2 The summer 2017 public events programme for Werneth Low Country Park is as follows:-

Date	Event	Attendance
<b>Tuesday 23 May</b>	History Walk Around Werneth Low	<b>8</b>
<b>Sunday 28 May</b>	Map and Compass Navigation	<b>1</b>
<b>Tuesday 13 June</b>	Flora Walk around Werneth Low	<b>10</b>
<b>Tuesday 8 August</b>	Flora Walk around Werneth Low	<b>--</b>
<b>Sunday 24 September</b>	All Day Ramble to Cown Edge	<b>--</b>
<b>Total to Date</b>		<b>19</b>

- 3.3 The Alder Community High School cross country run around the Country Park was held on Tuesday 2 May. The event, which is in its eleventh year, is in aid of The Christie Hospital. Last year £3,363 was raised, and at the time of writing this report sponsorship money is still being collected.
- 3.4 On Sunday 4 June the cycling race 'The Tour de Manchester' came over Werneth Low. The Country Park helped staff one of the race's drinks stations located outside The Hare and Hounds public house on Werneth Low Road. The race, which raised money for Manchester charities, arrived in the borough from Stockport and after going through Tameside went out to Saddleworth and Oldham.
- 3.5 The Hyde War Memorial Trust organised and held the Peace Day Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph on Sunday 25 June. About 60 people attended the service which commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Versailles 1919 which was the official end of World War One.
- 3.6 The Cheshire branch of The Dry Stone Walling Association will be holding two training courses in the Country Park during the summer. These events are basic training in this countryside skill and are a good introduction into the theory and practical of wall building. The course dates are Saturday/Sunday 21/22 May and Saturday/Sunday 23/24 September. The Hyde War Memorial Trust funded the purchase of new stone required for the re-building.

### 4. WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK GREENSPACE VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- 4.1 Since the last meeting of the Country Park Joint Management Committee the volunteers have held 5 meetings. The volunteers assist the Greenspace Development Officer with public events, the maintenance and general upkeep of sites, and staffing the visitor centre. There are at present 18 members in the volunteer service.

- 4.2 At the October 2016 meeting of the Country Park Greenspace Volunteer Service the Volunteers agreed the major projects to be undertaken during winter and spring 2016/2017. The project list of works and final update of progress can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.3 The Greenspace Volunteers are very busy through the summer on a multitude of projects and none more important than the control of non-native invasive flowers. The main species is Himalayan Balsam which if left unchecked will choke out native wildflowers. We monitor the amount of time site by site and record the data on a spreadsheet. This information is analysed as the end of the year, which enables us to decide the most important sites to attack the following year and to give an overall picture of the problem the Country Park faces from these dangerous weeds. The target spreadsheet for this year can be found in **Appendix 2**.
- 4.4 In 2017 four of the Country Park's volunteers achieved their 10 year Service Award. Anita Allan, Linda Mellor, Ros Pape and Hazel Shepherdson have made a significant contribution to the care and stewardship of Werneth Low.
- 4.5 On Tuesday 2 May the Mayor of Tameside invited the four volunteers to the Mayor's Parlour at Dukinfield Town Hall for tea and cakes. It was a warm hearted occasion thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

## 5. VISITORS – 2016

- 5.1 Active monitoring data for The Lower Higham Visitor Centre 2017:-

Month	Lower Higham Visitor Centre
January	207
February	202
March	357
April	590
May	339
June	213
July	--
August	--
September	--
October	--
November	--
December	--
<b>2017 Totals to Date</b>	<b>1908</b>
<b>Previous Years Totals:</b>	<b>3,719</b>

## 6. WILDLIFE NATURE CONSERVATION

- 6.1 The Country Park's hay meadows have once again delivered a colourful seasonal display of grasses and wildflowers. At Hackingknife Meadow, for the first time, Southern Marsh Orchids (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*) have been found. This species is well distributed throughout the south of England as far north as North-east Yorkshire but is absent from Scotland and Ireland where it is replaced by the Northern Marsh Orchid. The presence of such special wild flowers in the Park's hay meadows is a reassuring point that our sympathetic environmental management is helping to conserve this increasingly rare habitat.



# APPENDIX 1

## Werneth Low Country Park Greenspace Volunteers 2016 2017 Winter Maintenance of Sites Projects Final Update

Project Ref	Location	Task	Completion Date
1	Hackingknife Woodland	Plant 1,000 Pseudo narcissi	October 2016
2	Quarry Car Park Frontage	Plant 1,000 Pseudo narcissi	October 2016
3	Lower Higham Gardens	Plant 1,000 Pseudo narcissi	October 2016
4	Lower Higham Drive	Cut back 30 metres of hedgerow	October 2016
5	Lower Higham Gardens	Plant 600 Tulip bulbs	October 2016
6	Lower Higham - Cow Lane	Cut back, prune hedgerow and sweep lane, clean-out grids	October 2016
7	Cenotaph Area	Cut grass/edge off. Clean area ready for Remembrance Day	October 2016
8	Lower Higham Gardens	Clean borders and prune shrubs ready for Remembrance Day	October 2016
9	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	Clean all banking and hedgerow around Garage Building	October 2016
10	Werneth Low Country Park	Complete audit of all sites of Non Native Species	October 2016
11	Higham Lane	Install 2 metres of pitched path at stile at Shepley's Meadow	November 2016
12	Baron Fields Hazel Coppice	Coppice Hazel in Memorial Coppice and process timber	January 2017
13	Rear of Hillcrest	Thin-out Coppice	January 2017
14	Flaggy Path	Edge -off and clean 134 metres of flag stones	January 2017
15	Hackingknife Woodland	Selective thinning	January 2017
16	Lower Higham Orchard	Cut back 40 metres of hedgerow	March 2017
17	Flaggy Path Hedgerow	Cut back 124 metres of hedgerow	March 2017
18	QCP Picnic Area	Cut back 54 metres of hedgerow	March 2017
19	Lower Higham Car Park	Cut back 20 metres of Holly hedgerow	March 2017
20	Ash Cottage Picnic Area	Cut back 46 metres of hedgerow	March 2017
21	Holy Trinity Paddock	Cut back 60 metres of hedgerow	March 2017
22	Riding Track	Cut back 140 metres of hedgerow	March 2017
23	Higham Lane	298 metres of hedge cutting layed hedgerow	March 2017
24		<b>Total Hedge Cutting 812 metres</b>	March 2017
25	South Meadow	286 metres of hedgelaying - Mike Kelly	March 2017
26	Flaggy Path	Improve footpath into Ash Cottage Picnic area	March 2017
27	All Country Park	Review sign posting and way marking/install new signs	March 2017
28	Windy Harbour Hedge	Grub out base	March 2017
29	New Piece Meadow	Re- form drain at base of Blackthorn Hedgerow	March 2017
30	South Meadow	Clear all cuttings from Hedge Laying works	March 2017
31	Lower Higham Gardens	Plant "in the green" 3,000 Galanthus nivalis	March 2017
	Completed Projects		

# APPENDIX 2

## Werneth Low Country Park – Non-Native Weeds Target Areas for Summer 2017

Location				Species	HOURS WORKED							TO-DATE
					2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
1	Windy Harbour Logo Gate Stream			Himalayan Balsam	20	20	10	19	15	18		
2	Windy Harbour - Near Septic Tank			Himalayan Balsam	32	25	25	17	9	6		
3	Claytons Fields			Himalayan Balsam	0	0	0	0	16	2½		
4	Werneth Low Road			Himalayan Balsam	0	0	0	0	9	8		
5	Higher Higham Meadows			Himalayan Balsam	3	6	6	8	7	2½		
6	Rear of Higher Higham			Himalayan Balsam	1	1	1	4	4	2½		
7	Lower Higham Wood Store			Himalayan Balsam	7	7	5	5	2	½		
8	Baron Fields Pond and Woodland			Himalayan Balsam	24	20	20	10	4	28		
9	Rear of Orchard Rise			Japanese Knotweed	7	5	4	4	1	0		
10	Rear of Hilcrest Avenue			Himalayan Balsam	36	35	25	10	8	8½		
11	Milkwort Bank			Himalayan Balsam	24	20	9	1	4	6½		
12	Quarry Car Park			Himalayan Balsam	16	16	12	8	4	5½		
13	South Meadow			Himalayan Balsam	25	15	4	3	2	4½		
14	Higham Cottages			Japanese Knotweed	5	0	20	5	2	0		
15	Higham Cottages Riding Track			Himalayan Balsam	0	0	0	0	0	16		
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>195</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>109</b>	

# Agenda Item 7.

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24 July 2017
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ian Saxon – Assistant Executive Director, Place David Cannon – Greenspace Development Officer
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	To inform Members of activities undertaken within the Country Park during the period 2016/17.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That the report be noted.
<b>Links to Community Strategy:</b>	To ensure that the Country Park is an attractive and environmentally friendly place to visit.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The activities in the Country Park are in accordance with Council policy priorities.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)</b>	The funding for the projects is met from existing budgets.
<b>Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	It is important that the Joint Management Committee is kept informed of activities undertaken in the Country Park.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	Activities in the Country Park are kept under review in order to ensure any potential risks are dealt with adequately.
<b>Access to Information:</b>	Background papers and information can be obtained by contacting David Cannon, Greenspace Development Officer:  phone: 0161 368 6667  e-mail: david.cannon@tameside.gov.uk

# **Werneth Low** **Country Park**

**Annual Report**  
**2016/2017**



**WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**  
**(TAMESIDE COUNCIL AND HYDE WAR MEMORIAL TRUST)**



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(Front cover photograph: Peace Day Service at the Cenotaph 26<sup>th</sup> June 2016).



## 1. Werneth Low – A History

Werneth Low is an area rich in history and interest. The story of this special place begins over 4,000 years in the Bronze Age when the Low was used as an outdoor Cathedral for worship and burials.

Tribal Britons were defeated in a great battle fought on Werneth Low as the Roman occupation of Britain spread north. A Romano-British fort was built which included a system of ditches and earthworks.

Werneth is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as *Warnet* where it is described as waste, containing woodland three leagues long and two leagues wide and was assessed at 1 Virgate. It was held before 1066, by a free man as a manor, and probably formed part of the Anglo-Saxon Lordship of Longdendale. By 1086 it was held directly by the Earl of Chester.

The manor of Werneth is first recorded as belonging to the Higham family as early as 1330. This family were referred to as freeholders in Werneth by 1445 when a John Higham was listed amongst the knights, gentleman and freeholders of Cheshire.

For the Medieval period the survival of extensive ridge and furrow earthworks, coupled with early field boundaries and farm sites, make the Werneth Low landscape one of the best surviving medieval areas in Greater Manchester.

The best known landmark on Werneth Low is the stone Cenotaph commemorating the 710 lives lost in the Great War 1914 to 1919. The majority of those killed were in the Cheshire Regiment in the years 1916 and 1917. The loss of so many from such a small town as Hyde was devastation. At a council meeting in the Mayor's Parlour at Hyde Town Hall on 3rd March 1920 it was decided to remember those fallen soldiers, sailors and airmen from Hyde by purchasing by public subscription the Lower Higham Farm Estate. The land to be kept open and free for the ***“health and recreation of the people of Hyde”***.

The Hyde War Memorial Committee reported to the townspeople of Hyde ***“Those who lived through the war will not forget but those who come after us should be reminded of the sacrifices which have been made”***

The appeal for public subscriptions raised by the end of May 1920, £14,013 14s. 8d.

The Lower Higham farm and land was purchased for £4,000 and the memorial cenotaph was erected at a cost of £2,000.

The Cenotaph was unveiled on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1921 by Mrs Evelyn Welch, built of Grey Cornish Granite the total weight is 34 tons. It was designed by Messrs J. Whitehead & Sons of London.



**Unveiling of the Cenotaph 25<sup>th</sup> June 1921**



## **2. Werneth Low – Site Information**

### **Location and Size**

Werneth Low Country Park is located 15km (9½ miles) east of the city centre of Manchester on the edge of the Pennines. All the land in the Country Park is in the Borough of Tameside. The town of Hyde, along with the villages of Gee Cross and Newton, are just 2.5km (1½ miles) away to the west.

The Country Park consists of approximately 81 hectares (200 acres) of hilltop and hillside.

### **Ownership**

60 hectares (150 acres) belong to the Hyde War Memorial Trust, including the visitor centre building. Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council owns the remaining 21 hectares (50 acres) of land in the park.

### **Creation of the Country Park**

The Country Park was officially established in 1980 when the Hyde War Memorial Trust and Tameside MBC and the Greater Manchester Council entered into a formal agreement relating to the management of the park. Responsibilities relating to the Greater Manchester County Council were passed on to Tameside MBC in 1986 when the County Council was abolished.



**View from Werneth Low across the Cheshire Plain October 2016**

### 3. Vision for Werneth Low Country Park

The Vision for Werneth Low Country Park is of a place where landscape and nature conservation and informal countryside recreation are in balance. It is a place where natural beauty is enhanced, where wildlife will thrive, and where visitors, regardless of their ability or background, can spend an enjoyable and fulfilling time. It is a place that is cared for and looked after, not just for now but for future generations.

#### Country Park Overall Aims:

1. To manage the Country Park in a way that sustains and improves the quality and variety of its wildlife and landscape, and where recreation activity is in harmony with this.
2. To facilitate access for all, irrespective of ability or background.
3. To manage the Country Park for its cultural and historic importance.
4. To engender an understanding of the various aspects of the Country Park through programmes of lifelong learning.
5. To provide a high quality service to visitors, involving them in decision making about how the Country Park is run.
6. To maintain a safe and health environment, befitting the Country Park.

#### These general management aims are supported by the Tameside Greenspace Service Priorities:

1. Improving the quality of Greenspace for residents.
2. Building capacity amongst Friends Groups and Volunteers.
3. Conserving the natural environment and increasing biodiversity.
4. Maximising opportunities to improve the health of all residents.
5. Developing opportunities to bring in external funding.



**The New Year's Walk January 2017**



## 4. Managing the Country Park

The Country Park is formally managed by the Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Committee. The Committee is made up of Trustees of the Hyde War Memorial Trust and elected members of Tameside MBC. The Committee meets three times a year and the Greenspace Development Manager, and Greenspace Development Officer, report directly to the Joint Committee.

The Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Committee receives reports from its officers concerning the care and maintenance of the Park's fabric and infrastructure ensuring the area is safe and in good condition. The Committee issues instructions to its officers to implement programmes of management, which at times involves outside organisations such as approved contractors.

Programmes of management are produced annually, and triggered by the Country Park Business Plan. The funding of projects is a mixture of both joint and individual organisations which include Tameside Council and The Hyde War Memorial Trust.

All the maintenance of sites programmes are linked directly to conserving and maintaining local distinctiveness and spirit of place.

### 2016/2017 Highlights

- Annual programme of grass cutting footpaths, picnic sites, cenotaph area, car parks and areas around the visitor centre completed during April to October.
- The Hyde War Memorial Trust funded the installation of 38 metres of new steps at the Mottram Old Road access point.  
**Cost: £3,524.**
- Tameside Council funded the purchase of new fruit trees for the Orchard at Lower Higham, and the purchase of shrubs and spring bulbs for the gardens around the Visitor Centre. **Cost: £1,213.**



- **New steps at the Mottram Old Road access point.**

## 5. Involving the Community

Involving the community plays a crucial part in securing the wellbeing of the Country Park. It is an objective that is at the very heart of our management philosophy.

Examples of community involvement include: The Country Park Volunteers Service, The Hyde War Memorial Trust, Tenant Farmers, and other tenants of Country Park land such as Werneth Low Golf Club.

The Public Events programme provides an excellent opportunity for people to come together and experience the delights of the outdoors.

### 2016/2017 Highlights

- We welcomed **3,519** people to the Lower Higham Visitor Centre (Previous year's total: **4,072**).
- The Country Park Greenspace Volunteers completed in total **4,101** work hours (Previous year's total: **3,940** work hours). See Appendix 1. and Appendix 2.
- Using an electronic counter on the footpath from Lower Higham to the Cenotaph the total number of visitors recorded from April 2016 to March 2017 was **57,328** (Previous year's total: **64,828**). On the footpath near Quarry Car Park the total number recorded for the same period was **53,286** (Previous year's total **62,402**).
- During the year the Greenspace Development Officer organized **11** events at which **284** people attended (Previous year's total: **11** events at which **1,135** people attended).



**The All Day Ramble to Mottram Church 4<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

## 6. Conserving Habitats and Wildlife

In January 2010 Werneth Low Country Park, in partnership with Natural England, began a new management agreement for wildlife nature conservation. This new Environmental Stewardship agreement covers the years 2010 to 2020 and it has five primary objectives:

- Wildlife conservation
- Maintenance and enhancement of landscape quality and character
- Natural resource protection
- Protection of the historic environment; and
- Promotion of public access and understanding of the countryside

Environmental Stewardship – Higher Level agreements are only suitable for land that is of “*significant environmental interest*” so to receive this agreement is confirmation that past management of Country Park land has been correct.

The agreement is implemented through a programme of annual works and during the period of this report we have been fully compliant.

### 2016/2017 Highlights

- Environmental Stewardship agreement 7<sup>th</sup> year compliant securing **£2,175** of grant income.
- Environmental Stewardship grant income to date since commencement of agreement in January 2010 **£36,983**.
- Maintained field boundary habitats, both hedgerows and dry stone walls.
- Maintained all Sites of Biological importance and undertook removal of non-native invasive weeds from adjoining areas.



**South Meadow 286 metres of Hedgelaying completed by Mike Kelly - Volunteer  
September 2016 to March 2017**



## 7. Providing a Quality Service

We work in close partnership with visitors, the local community, groups and organisations and we listen very carefully to their comments, suggestions and ideas. The Lower Higham Visitor Centre, staffed by volunteers, has continued to be open every week throughout the period of this report. The Centre remains the main focal point for visitors for information and assistance.

### Planned Developments 2017/2018

- Complete Year 8 of the Environmental Stewardship Agreement.
- Complete the 2017/2018 Maintenance of Sites Programme.
- Complete the 2017/2018 Wildlife Nature Conservation Programme.
- Complete programme of repairs to footpaths and riding track network.

### How Much Does it Cost

During the period of this report the costs of looking after Werneth Low Country Park was provided from the Greenspace Development Budget of Tameside Council with contributions from the Hyde War Memorial Trust. Based on past expenditure and this year's financial accounts it has cost around **£53,000** to run the Country Park during 2016 to 2017. This works out at about **23p** a year for each person over the age of 18 who live in Tameside. The costs are for:

- Maintaining the Country Park.
- Organising public event programmes.
- Promoting the Country Park locally and regionally.
- Delivering visitor services including the Visitor Centre.
- Staff Salaries.



**Dry Stone Walling Weekend at Hackingknife Meadow September 2016**

## Appendices

### Appendix 1.

#### List of Staff and Volunteers at Werneth Low Country Park 2016 -2017:

**Nicola Marshall** – Tameside Greenspace Development Manager

**David Cannon** – Tameside Greenspace Development Officer

#### Greenspace Volunteers:

**Anita Allan**

**Alan Bamforth**

**Norman Bamforth**

**Mark Bruniges**

**Colin Bates**

**Dorothy Hollingworth**

**John Jones**

**Mike Kelly**

**Raymond Knowles**

**Linda Mellor**

**Denis Middleton**

**Rob Nicholls**

**Ross Pape**

**Hazel Shepherdson**

**Sam Simpson**

**Maurice Smith**



## Appendix 2.

### Maintenance of Sites Programme, Greenspace Volunteers, October 2016 – March 2017

Project	Location	Task
1	Lower Higham Gardens	Plant 1,000 Pseudo narcissi
2	Lower Higham Gardens	Plant 3,000 Snowdrops in the green
3	Lower Higham Gardens	Plant 600 Tulip bulbs
4	Lower Higham - Cow Lane	Cut back, prune hedgerow and sweep lane, clean-out grids
5	Cenotaph Area	Cut grass/edge off. Clean area ready for Remembrance Day
6	Lower Higham Gardens	Clean borders and prune shrubs ready for Remembrance Day
7	Lower Higham Orchard	Plant six fruit trees
8	Lower Higham Car Park	Prune all borders
9	Lower Higham Orchard	Cut Back 40 metres of hedgerow
10	Flaggy Path Hedgerow	Cut Back 124 metres of hedgerow
11	QCP Picnic Area	Cut Back 54 metres of hedgerow
12	Lower Higham Car Park	Cut Back 20 metres of hedgerow
13	Ash Cottage Picnic Area	Cut Back 46 metres of hedgerow
14	Holy Trinity Paddock	Cut Back 60 metres of hedgerow
15	Riding Track	Cut Back 140 metres of hedgerow
16	Higham Lane	Cut Back 298 metres of hedgerow
17		<b>Total Hedge Cutting 812 metres</b>
18	South Meadow	286 metres of hedgelaying by Mike Kelly
19	Quarry Car Park	Plant 2,000 Pseudo narcissi
20	All Sites	Complete control of non-native invasive plant species
21	Baron Fields Woodlands	Selective thinning especially along rights of way
22	Baron Fields Woodlands	Clear drains on Baron Road to Aspland Road footpath
23	Country Park Waymarking	Audit of Country Park Signs
24	Country Park	Completed weekly litter patrols of all sites







**Remembrance Garden, Lower Higham Visitor Centre, June 2016.**

**David Cannon  
Tameside Greenspace Development Officer  
(April 2017).**

**(All the photographs in this report were taken April 2016 to March 2017).**



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