

WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Day: Monday
Date: 20 November 2017
Time: 10.30 am
Place: Lower Higham Visitor Centre - Werneth Low Country Park

Item No.	AGENDA	Page No
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive any apologies for the meeting from Members of the Joint Committee.	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Joint Committee.	
3.	MINUTES The Minutes of the proceedings of the previous meeting of the Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Committee held on 24 July 2017 to be approved as a correct record.	1 - 4
4.	GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT To consider the report of the Greenspace Development Officer.	5 - 10
5.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS To note the dates of future meetings to be held on:- 19 February 2018 Lower Higham Visitor Centre	
6.	URGENT ITEMS To consider any additional items the Chair is of the opinion shall be dealt with as a matter of urgency.	

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WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, 24 July 2017

Commenced: 10.30 am

Terminated: 11.10 am

Present: Councillors Bell, Bowden, Cooper and J Fitzpatrick
Mr Cooper, Mr Galvin, Mr Gradwell and Mr Hodgkinson

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Buglass and Robinson and Mr Ainger

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Committee held on 13 February 2017 were approved as a correct record.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2017/18

It was reported that the following representatives had been appointed to serve on the Joint Management Committee for the Municipal Year 2017/18:-

Representing Tameside MBC –

Councillors Bell, Bowden, Buglass, Cooper, J Fitzpatrick, Kinsey and Robinson.

Hyde War Memorial Trust –

Messrs Ainger, Cooper, Galvin, Gradwell and Hodgkinson.

4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR 2017/18

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Councillor Robinson, Tameside MBC, be appointed Chair of the Joint Management Committee for 2017/18.
- (ii) That Mr Gradwell, Hyde War Memorial Trust, be appointed Deputy Chair of the Joint Management Committee for 2017/18.

5. 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 13 February 2017.

The report outlined the following:-

- Maintenance of sites;
- Environmental Stewardship – Higher Level Agreement 2010-2020 Update;
- Public Events;
- Werneth Low Country Park Greenspace Volunteer Service;
- Visitor Monitoring; and,
- Wildlife Nature Conservation.

It was reported that the installation of 38 metres of new steps at Higham Cottages had now been completed and drainage repair work had been carried out in the visitor's centre car park at Lower Higham. A list of works that had been undertaken around the Country Park was detailed in the report and included the installation of paths, gates, stiles and fencing.

Attendance at public events for the 2016/2017 winter/spring programme were highlighted and details of the Country Park's summer 2017 programme were provided. Visitor monitoring data for 2017 was also provided.

Alder Community High School participated in its 11th charity cross country run around the Country Park on 2 May 2017 in aid of The Christie Hospital and on 4 June 2017 the second 'The Tour de Manchester' cycled through Werneth Low. A Peace Day Service of Remembrance was held at the cenotaph on 25 June 2017, which was well attended and commemorated the signing of the Treaty of Versailles 1919.

The Greenspace Volunteers had worked on a multitude of projects, including the control of non-native invasive flowers such as Himalayan Balsam and Ragwort, which if left unchecked would choke out the native wildflowers, such as Southern Marsh Orchids, which for the first time had been found at Hackingknife Meadow.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

6. ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

The Greenspace Development Officer presented the Werneth Low Country Park Annual Report, which highlighted activities undertaken during 2016/17 within the Country Park. Arrangements would be made to share the report with interested parties and a wider audience via publication on the Council's website.

A history of Werneth Low, site information and the vision for the Country Park were detailed in the report alongside the management of the park, involving the community and conserving habitats and wildlife.

The highlights of 2016/17 were provided and included:-

- 3,519 visitors were welcomed to the Lower Higham Visitor Centre;
- The Country Park Greenspace Volunteers completed a total of 4,101 work hours;
- Using electronic counters the number of visitors recorded on the footpath from Lower Higham to the Cenotaph was 57,328 and the total recorded on the footpath near Quarry Car Park was 53,286;
- The Greenspace Development Officer had organised 11 events, which 284 people attended.

Members of the Joint Management Committee congratulated the Greenspace Development Officer for a comprehensive report and another successful year and asked for their thanks to be extended to all volunteers.

RESOLVED:
That the report be noted.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED:
That the Joint Committee meets as follows:-

DATE	VENUE	TIME
Monday 20 November 2017	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	10:30 am
Monday 19 February 2018	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	10:30 am

8. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

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Agenda Item 4.

Report To:	WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date:	20 November 2017
Reporting Officer:	Assistant Director, Place David Cannon, Greenspace Development Officer
Subject:	GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT
Report Summary:	To inform Members of activities undertaken within the Country Park since the last meeting of the Joint Management Committee (24 July 2017).
Recommendations:	That the report be noted.
Links to Community Strategy:	To ensure that the Country Park is an attractive and environmentally friendly place to visit.
Policy Implications:	The activities in the Country Park are in accordance with Council policy priorities.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	The funding for the projects is met by the Operations and Greenspace revenue budget.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	It is important that the Joint Management Committee is kept informed of activities undertaken in the Country Park.
Risk Management:	Activities in the Country Park are kept under review in order to ensure any potential risks are dealt with adequately.
Access to Information:	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 The summer grass cutting programme for 2017 finished at the end of September. The programme included 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.
- 1.2 Tameside Council Engineers have repaired two sections of tarmac on the main drive at Lower Higham Visitor Centre.

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 agri-agreement.

3. PUBLIC EVENTS

- 3.1. The summer 2017 public events programme for Werneth Low Country Park concluded at the end of September with the last event, The Cown Edge Ramble. The attendance for all the events was as follows:-

Date	Event	Attendance
Tuesday 23 May	History Walk Around Werneth Low	8
Sunday 28 May	Map and Compass Navigation	1
Tuesday 13 June	Flora Walk around Werneth Low	10
Tuesday 8 August	Flora Walk around Werneth Low	6
Sunday 24 September	All Day Ramble to Cown Edge	38
Total to Date		63

- 3.2 The winter/spring 2017 to 2018 programme of events at Werneth Low Country Park is as follows:-

Date	Event	Attendance
17 December 2017	Christmas Ramble Around Werneth Low	--
28 January 2018	New Year's Ramble Around Werneth Low	--
25 March 2018	Roman History of Werneth Low Walk	--
1 April 2018	Easter Egg Hunt	--
30 April 2018	Ramble to Chadkirk Chapel	--
Total		--

- 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. The organisers have confirmed that this year's run raised £3,000.
- 3.4 The Cheshire branch of The Dry Stone Walling Association have held 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 were Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 May and Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 September. The Hyde War Memorial Trust funded the purchase of new stone required for the re-building and site preparation works. Cost £228.00.

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 4 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 2017 meeting of the Country Park Greenspace Volunteer Service the Volunteers agreed the major projects to be undertaken during winter and spring 2017/2018. The project list of works with update of progress can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.3 The Greenspace Volunteers have been 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 also have two sites where Japanese Knotweed is present. At these locations we have for several years hand pulled these weeds and this has been very successful. The Volunteers also hand pull Ragwort out of our wildflower meadows before the hay is cut, which helps the tenant farmers. The target spreadsheet for this year can be found in **Appendix 2**.
- 4.4 Volunteer Mike Kelly is very busy this autumn re-laying 200 metres of hedgerow near Higham Lane in Shepley's Meadow. This project is Heritage Lottery Funded and jointly managed with Woodland Officer, Andy Long from Manchester City of Trees. We expect to receive £5.00 a metre for the completed project.

5. VISITORS – 2017

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	165
August	390
September	179
October	173
November	--
December	--
2017 Totals to Date	2,815
Previous Years Total:	3,719

6. WILDLIFE NATURE CONSERVATION

- 6.1 Once again Pink-footed geese have been seen flying high over Werneth Low on their annual migration south. These birds have been resting at Martin Mere on the Lancashire wetlands having left their summer breeding grounds in Greenland and Iceland. This autumn migration is one of the great wildlife spectacles in the North West and Werneth Low is a great place to watch it.

APPENDIX 1

Werneth Low Country Park Greenspace Volunteers 2017 2018 Winter Maintenance of Sites Projects

Project Ref	Location	Task	Completion Date
1	Hackingknife Woodland	Plant 2,000 Pseudo narcissi	October 2017
2	Lower Higham Drive	Cut back 30 metres of hedgerow	October 2017
3	Hackingknife	Tractor cut Rosebay Willowherb	October 2017
4	Lower Higham - Cow Lane	Cut back, prune hedgerow and sweep lane, clean-out grids	November 2017
5	Cenotaph Area	Cut grass/edge off. Clean area ready for Remembrance Day	November 2017
6	Lower Higham Gardens	Clean borders and prune shrubs ready for Remembrance Day	November 2017
7	Orchard Hedgerow	Reduce height along all length to aid summer cutting	November 2017
8	Lower Higham Cow Lane	Tractor flail hedgerow	November 2017
9	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	Clean all banking and hedgerow around Garage Building	December 2017
10	Baron Fields Hazel Coppice	Coppice Hazel in Memorial Coppice and process timber	January 2018
11	Rear of Hillcrest	Thin-out Coppice	January 2018
12	Lower Higham Orchard	Cut back 40 metres of hedgerow	March 2018
13	Flaggy Path Hedgerow	Cut back 124 metres of hedgerow	March 2018
14	QCP Picnic Area	Cut back 54 metres of hedgerow	March 2018
15	Lower Higham Car Park	Cut back 20 metres of Holly hedgerow	March 2018
16	Ash Cottage Picnic Area	Cut back 46 metres of hedgerow	March 2018
17	Holy Trinity Paddock	Cut back 60 metres of hedgerow	March 2018
18	Riding Track	Cut back 140 metres of hedgerow	March 2018
		Total Hedge Cutting 484 metres	March 2018
19	Shepley's Meadow	200 Metres of Hedgelaying	March 2018
20	Ash Cottage	38 metres of Hedgelaying	March 2018
21	Milkwort Bank	Coppice/Cut Back Ulex europaeus (Common Gorse)	March 2018
22	New Piece Meadow	Remove/cut back encroaching blackthorn	March 2018
23	All Sites	Outstanding from access audit	March 2018
24	Baron Fields Woodland	Remove Blackthorn suckers from corner with Hillcrest	March 2018
	Completed Projects		

APPENDIX 2

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

WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK NON-NATIVE INVASIVE WEEDS													
AREA TARGETS MONITORING 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	10
2	Windy Harbour - Near Septic Tank				Himalayan Balsam		32	25	25	17	9	6	6
3	Claytons Fields				Himalayan Balsam		0	0	0	0	16	2½	2
4	Werneth Low Road				Himalayan Balsam		0	0	0	0	9	8	12
5	Higher Higham Meadows				Himalayan Balsam		3	6	6	8	7	2½	2
6	Rear of Higher Higham				Himalayan Balsam		1	1	1	4	4	2½	2
7	Lower Higham Wood Store				Himalayan Balsam		7	7	5	5	2	½	2
8	Baron Fields Pond and Woodland				Himalayan Balsam		24	20	20	10	4	28	18
9	Rear of Orchard Rise				Japanese Knotweed		7	5	4	4	1	0	1
10	Rear of Hilcrest Avenue				Himalayan Balsam		36	35	25	10	8	8½	8
11	Milkwort Bank				Himalayan Balsam		24	20	9	1	4	6½	6
12	Quarry Car Park				Himalayan Balsam		16	16	12	8	4	5½	8
13	South Meadow				Himalayan Balsam		25	15	4	3	2	4½	4
14	Higham Cottages				Japanese Knotweed		5	0	20	5	2	0	0
15	Higham Cottages Riding Track				Himalayan Balsam		0	0	0	0	0	16	12
16	Werneth Low Road Facing H/H PH				Himalayan Balsam		0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL							195	170	141	94	87	109	94