

WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, 16 July 2018

Commenced: 10.30 am

Terminated: 11.20 am

Present: Councillors Bell, Bowden, Robinson, Mr Galvin, Mr Gradwell and Mr Hodkinson

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Buglass, Cooper, J Fitzpatrick, Mr Ainger and Mrs Evans

Mr Alasdair Barclay

The Greenspace Development Officer advised the Committee on the death of Mr Alasdair Barclay in March 2018. Mr Barclay was the first warden of Werneth Low Country Park from 1979 – 1987.

A minutes silence was held in his memory.

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 19 February 2018 were approved as a correct record.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2018/19

It was reported that the following representatives had been appointed to serve on the Joint Management Committee for the Municipal Year 2018/19:-

Representing Tameside MBC –

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

Hyde War Memorial Trust –

Messrs Ainger, Galvin, Gradwell and Hodkinson and Mrs Evans.

4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR 2018/19

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Mr Gradwell, Hyde War Memorial Trust, be appointed Chair of the Joint Management Committee for 2018/19.
- (ii) That Councillor Robinson, Tameside MBC, be appointed Deputy Chair of the Joint Management Committee for 2018/19.

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 19 February 2018.

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
- Peace Day Service of Remembrance 2018
- The Lower Higham Visitor Centre
- Wildlife Centre Conservation

With regards to Maintenance of Sites it was reported that quotations had been received from contractors for a number of small projects. It was confirmed that the costs associated with reforming ditches along the riding track next to the golf course, repairing 30 metres of drystone wall at Quarry Car Park and installing new drainage at Baron Fields would be funded by the Council. The resurfacing of footpaths from Lower Higham to Hackingknife and from the Cenotaph across Hackingknife Meadow was on Trust owned land, it was therefore agreed that the funding for these projects would be submitted for a decision at the forthcoming Hyde War Memorial Trust meeting and Council officers would attend the meeting to outline the proposed project.

The Greenspace Development Manager was pleased to announce that funding had been secured to improve the footpath and riding track parallel to Werneth Low Road facing the Hare and Hounds Public House and would also include new fencing, a stile and signage. Work was due to commence in August 2018. The Operations Maintenance Team were installing new steps at Ash Cottage picnic area on Higham Lane and replacing a wooden seat at Lower Higham over the summer months.

The report included attendance at public events for the Country Park's winter / spring 2017/18 programme including the Christmas and New Year's ramble around Werneth Low and the popular Easter Egg Hunt, which attracted 485 visitors. The summer 2018 programme of public events was currently underway and visitor monitoring data for January to June 2018 was provided.

Since the last meeting of the Joint Management Committee volunteers had held three meetings and the 16 volunteers had assisted the Greenspace Development Officer with public events, the maintenance and general upkeep of sites and staffing the visitor centre. Volunteers were currently undertaking a project to replace 1,800 fence posts across the Park, which had been installed in 2007 and had badly deteriorated. The 4,693 metres of fencing remained in good condition and to date volunteers had replaced 600 wooden posts.

The Greenspace Development Manager provided an update on the renewal of the 1979 agreement, which was due to expire in 2020. The document was currently under review by Legal Services and any comments would be considered by the Head of Operations and Greenspace. The Greenspace Development Manager would circulate an update to members of the committee in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

6. ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

The Greenspace Development Officer presented the Werneth Low Country Park Annual Report, which highlighted activities undertaken during 2017/18 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 2017/18 were provided and included:-

- An unprecedented long, cold, snowy winter
- The 30th Anniversary of the Volunteer Service
- 3,433 visitors were welcomed to the Lower Higham Visitor Centre
- The Country Park Greenspace Volunteers completed a total of 4,182 work hours
- The Greenspace Development Officer had organised 11 events, which 558 people attended
- Environmental Stewardship grant income since commencement of the agreement in January 2010 totalled £42,420.

Fly-tipping continued to be a problem at sites around the Country Park, which was dealt with by colleagues within the Greenspace team. It was confirmed that enforcement action was carried out against perpetrators where applicable. The recent hot weather had attracted some elements of anti-social behaviour in the form of noisy, rowdy behaviour and an increase in litter, which was dealt with by the Greenspace Development Officer and the volunteers.

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 Management Committee meets as follows:-

DATE	VENUE	TIME
Monday 19 November 2018	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	10:30 am
Monday 18 February 2019	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	10:30 am