

WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, 25 July 2016

Commenced: 10.30 am

Terminated: 11.30 am

Present: Mrs Eddowes (Chair), Councillors Bell, Cooper, J Fitzpatrick, Robinson and Mr Hodkinson

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Bowden, Buglass and Peet, Mr Ainger, Mr Galvin and Mr Gradwell

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 February 2016 were approved as a correct record.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2016/17

It was reported that the following representatives had been appointed to serve on the Joint Management Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17:-

Representing Tameside MBC –

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

Hyde War Memorial Trust –

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

4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR 2016/17

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Mrs Eddowes, Hyde War Memorial Trust, be appointed Chair of the Joint Management Committee for 2016/17.
- (ii) That Councillor Robinson, Tameside MBC, be appointed Deputy Chair of the Joint Management Committee for 2016/17.

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 29 February 2016.

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 after last winter's storms the footpath near Higham Cottages had gradually become a danger to walkers, members of the public had commented on the conditions and one person had slipped injuring themselves. Three contractors had been approached to tender for the installation of 36 metres of steps, a new stile and the replacement of a short section of post and rail wooden fencing.

It was confirmed that the footpath was a statutory right of way on Trust owned land and the installation of steps was more cost effective than path pitching. Trust Members agreed to bring the matter up for decision at their forthcoming meeting and Council officers would attend the meeting to outline the proposed project.

Members voiced concern over the lack of grass cutting on Baron Fields and emphasised the importance of gateway areas of the country park being presentable. It was confirmed that following a wet summer the water table had risen at a number of sites making it dangerous for tractors to enter onto these sites to cut the grass. The grounds maintenance manager had been consulted with and was aware of the situation and attempts would be made to flail and cut the grass dependent on the weather conditions.

The inaugural race 'The Tour de Manchester' cycled through Werneth Low Country Park on 12 June. Positive feedback has been received from both cyclists and race organisers regarding the drinks station and the event provided good promotion for both Tameside and the Country Park.

Attendance at public events for the 2015/2016 winter/spring programme were highlighted and details of the Country Park's summer 2016 programme were provided.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

6. ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Greenspace Development Officer presented the Werneth Low Country Park Annual Report, which highlighted activities undertaken during 2015/16 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 2015/16 were provided and included:-

- 4,072 visitors were welcomed to the Lower Higham Visitor Centre;
- The Country Park Greenspace Volunteers completed a total of 3,940 work hours;
- Using electronic counters the number of visitors recorded on the footpath from Lower Higham to the Cenotaph was 64,828 and the total recorded on the footpath near Quarry Car Park was 62,402;
- The Greenspace Development Officer had organised 11 events at which 1,135 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 reports be approved.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

That the Joint Committee meets as follows:-

DATE	VENUE	TIME
Monday 21 November 2016	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	10.30 am (preceded by tour of Country Park at 9.30 am)
Monday 13 February 2017	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	10.30 am (preceded by tour of Country Park at 9.30 am)

8. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.