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WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Day: Monday
Date: 25 July 2016
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 29 February 2016 to be approved as a correct record.	1 - 2
4.	MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2016/17 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.	
5.	APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR 2016/17 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 2016/17, select the Chair from Hyde War Memorial Trust and the Deputy Chair from Tameside MBC.	
6.	GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT To consider a report of the Greenspace Development Officer.	3 - 10
7.	ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16 To consider a report of the Greenspace Development Officer.	11 - 24

From: Democratic Services Unit – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Charlotte Forrest on charlotte.forrest@tameside.gov.uk or 0161 342 2346, 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:

21 November 2016	Lower Higham Visitor Centre
13 February 2017	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, 29 February 2016

Commenced: 10.30 am

Terminated: 11.30 am

Present: Councillors Robinson (Chair), Bell, Bowden, Cooper, J Fitzpatrick, R Miah, Mr Ainger, Mrs Eddowes, Mr Errington, Mr Galvin and Mr Gradwell

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Peet

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

15. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 November 2015 were approved as a correct record.

16. 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 23 November 2015.

It was reported that following a review of the Borough's tractor grass cutting programme, two sites on Baron Fields had been identified as areas that potentially would not be cut this summer. It had been suggested that the areas could be transformed into woodland, however no final decision had been made.

Members voiced concern over the areas being transformed into woodland and stated their preference that the two sites remained as recreational areas. Members suggested reducing the frequency of cuttings and exploring alternative ways of cutting the grass.

Following on from a request at the previous meeting for an approximate market price of carrying out works (Minute 11 refers) a cost analysis was provided to Members of the Country Park Volunteer Service compared against the market price. From January 2015 until December 2015 volunteers completed 3,730 hours of work, which, based on an hourly rate for an agricultural worker, would have cost over £30,000.

Public events for the 2015/2016 winter/spring programme, visitor monitoring data for 2015 and combined visitor figures over a ten year period were highlighted.

Members were informed that signage, as per appendix 2 of the report, would be displayed around the Country Park in the coming weeks requesting that visitors kept to footpaths to protect ground nesting birds. A discussion ensued around responsible dog ownership including keeping dogs on a lead and dog fouling. It was confirmed that the Greenspace team actively promoted responsible dog ownership and enforcement was carried out by Neighbourhood Officers.

The Greenspace Development Manager updated Members with regards to their previous request for internet access in the visitor's centre (Minute 11 refers).

RESOLVED:
That the report be noted.

17. PLANNING MATTERS

The Planning Officer advised Members of a planning application relating to a property on Werneth Low Road.

RESOLVED:
That the update be noted.

18. URGENT ITEMS

The Greenspace Development Officer advised Members of two donations to Werneth Low Country Park.

The Chair presented a 'Book of Remembrance' to be displayed and utilised in the visitor's centre of the Country Park.

Mr Errington notified Members of his retirement. Members of the Joint Committee joined the Chair in thanking him for his commitment and support as both a Member of the Joint Management Committee and Hyde War Memorial Trust and wished him well in his future endeavours.

CHAIR

Agenda Item 6.

Report To:	WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date:	25 July 2016
Reporting Officer:	Ian Saxon, Assistant Executive 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 (29 February 2016).
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 2016 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.
- 1.2 A new stile near Ash Cottage has been installed on the footpath through Higher Higham Meadows. Completed by the Operations Maintenance Team this new stile maintains the stock-proofing of this Environmental Stewardship meadow.
- 1.3 After last winter's storms the footpath near Higham Cottages has gradually become a danger to walkers (see **Appendix 1**). Members of the public have commented on the dangerous condition and at least one person has slipped injuring themselves.
- 1.4 Three contactors have been approached to tender for the installation of 36 metres of steps, a new stile, and the replacement of a short section of Country Park post and rail wooden fencing. At the time of submitting this report we are awaiting the final contractor's quotation.

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

Environmental Stewardship – Higher Level agreements are only suitable for land that is of “significant environmental interest”.

- 2.2 In November 2015 the Country Park received **£1,993** of grant income which was the interim payment for Year 6. Since the agreement started in January 2010 the Country Park has received in total **£30,821** of grant income from Natural England.
- 2.3 At the time of this report the Country Park is compliant with all aspects of this agri-agreement.

3. PUBLIC EVENTS

- 3.1 The attendance for the 2015/2016 winter/spring programme of public events at the Country Park was as follows:

Date	Event	Attendance
4 th October 2015	Martin's Maps – Instruction on Map and Compass	2
6 th December 2015	Ramble to Mottram in Longdendale	42
27 th December 2015	Mid-Christmas Ramble	19
31 st January 2016	Short Stroll Around Werneth Low	5
28 th February 2016	Roman History of Werneth Low Walk	30
27 th March 2016	Easter Egg Hunt	229
24 th April 2016	Ramble to Chadkirk Chapel	40
Total		367

- 3.2 The Country Park's summer 2016 programme of public events is now well underway. Details are published in the Council's events programme and are published on the Council's web pages. The programme and current attendance is as follows:

Date	Event	Attendance
Sunday 1 st May	Map and Compass Navigation	2
Sunday 29 th May	Henry V Walk Around Werneth Low	20
Tuesday 31 st May	Leafy Folk on the Low	119
Tuesday 7 th June	History Walk Around Werneth Low	12
Tuesday 21 st June	Flora Walk around Werneth Low	5
Tuesday 9 th August	Flora Walk around Werneth Low	--
Sunday 25 th September	All Day Ramble to Cown Edge	--
Total to Date		158

- 3.3 The Alder Community High School cross country run around the Country Park was held on Tuesday 3rd May. The event, which is in its tenth year, is in aid of The Christie Hospital. Last year £1,666 was raised, and at the time of writing report sponsorship money is still being collected.
- 3.4 On Sunday 12th June the inaugural cycling race The Tour de Manchester came over Werneth Low. The Country Park helped staff one of the race's drinks stations which was positioned 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. We have received positive feedback from cyclists and race organisers saying the Werneth Low drinks station was the best on the route.
- 3.5 The Hyde War Memorial Trust organised and held the Peace Day Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph on Sunday 26th June. About 50 people attended the service which commemorated the signing of the Treaty of Versailles 1919 which was the official end of World War One.

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 3 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 17 members of the volunteer service.

4.2 At the September 2015 meeting of the Country Park Greenspace Volunteer Service the Volunteers agreed the major projects to be undertaken during winter and spring 2015/2016. The final list of works completed by April 2016 can be found in **Appendix 2**.

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 spreadsheet from the end of last year can be found in the **Appendix 3**.

5. VISITORS – 2016

5.1 Active monitoring data for **2016**:

Month	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	Counter on path from Lower Higham to Cenotaph	Counter on path from Quarry Car Park to Cenotaph
January	202	4,455	4,011
February	218	3,798	4,036
March	546	5,384	5,298
April	260	6,056	5,320
May	502	6,065	4,924
June	223	6,187	5,685
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			
2016 Totals	1,951	31,945	29,274
Previous Years Totals:	4,114	61,228	52,431

6. WILDLIFE NATURE CONSERVATION

6.1 As summer progresses and milder weather continues the return of one of our most secretive mammals has been a welcome site. During the early evening it's now common to see Pipistrelle Bats flitting around the Lower Higham Buildings. These nocturnal mammals are Britain's most common bat and also the smallest. Colonies can be very large numbering hundreds but this one is much smaller. They can be seen, early evenings, right up to their hibernation period which usually starts in October.

Footpath at Higham Cottages, April 2016.



APPENDIX 2

Werneth Low Country Park Greenspace Volunteers 2015 2016 Winter Maintenance of Sites Projects

Project Ref	Location	Task	Completion Date
1	Lower Higham - Cow Lane	Cut back, prune hedgerow and sweep lane, clean-out grids	October 2015
2	Genotaph Area	Cut grass/edge off. Clean area ready for Remembrance Day	October 2015
3	Lower Higham Gardens	Clean borders and prune shrubs ready for Remembrance Day	October 2015
4	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	Clean all banking and hedgerow around Garage Building	October 2015
5	Lower Higham Main Drive	Crown Lift trees and clean-off banking	October 2015
6	Lower Higham Car Park	Prune trees/shrubs along border with houses on Spring Ave	October 2015
7	Higham Lane	Install 2 metres of pitched path at stile at Shepley's Meadow	November 2015
8	Baron Fields Hazel Coppice	Coppice Hazel in Memorial Coppice and process timber	January 2016
9	Rear of Hillcrest	Thin-out Coppice	January 2016
10	Flaggy Path	Edge -off and clean 134 metres of flagg stones	January 2016
11	Hackingknife Woodland	Selective thinning	January 2016
12	Lower Higham Orchard	Cut back 40 metres of hedgerow	March 2016
13	Flaggy Path Hedgerow	Cut back 124 metres of hedgerow	March 2016
14	QCP Picnic Area	Cut back 54 metres of hedgerow	March 2016
15	Lower Higham Drive	Cut back 30 metres of hedgerow	March 2016
16	Lower Higham Car Park	Cut back 20 metres of Holly hedgerow	March 2016
17	Ash Cottage Picnic Area	Cut back 46 metres of hedgerow	March 2016
18	Holy Trinity Paddock	Cut back 60 metres of hedgerow	March 2016
19	Riding Track	Cut back 140 metres of hedgerow	March 2016
20	Earl of Warrington Meadow	Grub out 128 metres of new laid hedgerow	March 2016
21	Higham Lane	298 metres of hedge cutting layed hedgerow	March 2016
22	Baron Fields Woodlands	Selective thinning especially along rights of way	March 2016
23	Lower Higham Gardens	Clean-out long border and remove Lonicera	March 2016
24	Rig Field Meadow	252 metres of Hedgerow Laying	March 2016
25	Country Park	Audit and install waymarking/Open Access signs	March 2016

Completed Projects									
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APPENDIX 3

WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK NON-NATIVE INVASIVE WEEDS												
AREA TARGETS MONITORING SUMMER 2015 - 6th September 2015												
Location			Species	HOURS WORKED					TO-DATE			
				2011	2012	2013	2014	2015				
1	Windy Harbour Logo Gate Stream		Himalayan Balsam	20	20	10	19	15				
2	Windy Harbour - Near Septic Tank		Himalayan Balsam	32	25	25	17	9				
3	Claytons Fields		Himalayan Balsam	0	0	0	0	16				
4	Werneth Low Road		Himalayan Balsam	0	0	0	0	9				
5	Higher Higham Meadows		Himalayan Balsam	3	6	6	8	7				
6	Rear of Higher Higham		Himalayan Balsam	1	1	1	4	4				
7	Lower Higham Wood Store		Himalayan Balsam	7	7	5	5	2				
8	Baron Fields Pond		Himalayan Balsam	24	20	20	10	4				
9	Rear of Orchard Rise		Japanese Knotweed	7	5	4	4	1				
10	Rear of Hilcrest Avenue		Himalayan Balsam	36	35	25	10	8				
11	Milkwort Bank		Himalayan Balsam	24	20	9	1	4				
12	Quarry Car Park		Himalayan Balsam	16	16	12	8	4				
13	Cock Brow Entrance to South Meadow		Himalayan Balsam	25	15	4	3	2				
14	Higham Cottages		Japanese Knotweed	5	0	20	5	2				
TOTAL						195	170	141	94	87		87

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Agenda Item 7.

Report To:	WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date:	25 July 2016
Reporting Officer:	Ian Saxon – Assistant Executive Director, Place David Cannon – Greenspace Development Officer
Subject:	ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16
Report Summary:	To inform Members of activities undertaken within the Country Park during the period 2015/16.
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 from existing budgets.
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

Werneth Low **Country Park**

Annual Report
2015/2016



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



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(Front cover photograph: Common Spotted Orchids, Higher Higham Meadows – June 2015)



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 25th June 1921 by Mrs Stanley 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 25th 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.



Higher Higham Meadows June 2015

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.



View towards the Cenotaph from Higham Lane March 2016

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 Management Plan guides the work of the Joint Committee in safeguarding and protecting all land in the Park. The document covers the years 2011 to 2016. It includes an annual programme of management prescriptions which filter down to action undertaken by the Greenspace Development Officer, Greenspace Volunteers, contractors working on behalf of the Joint Management Committee and other partners with an interest or connection with the Country Park.

In 2016 the Country Park Management Plan will be reviewed in full and a new Management Plan will be redrawn and adopted. All the maintenance of sites programmes are linked directly to conserving and maintaining local distinctiveness and spirit of place.

2015/2016 Highlights

- Annual programme of grass cutting footpaths, picnic sites, cenotaph area, car parks and areas around the visitor centre completed during April to October.
- At Baron Fields Tameside Council and the Hyde War Memorial Trust funded the resurfacing of all the footpaths and the installation of new drainage.
Cost: **£6,366**
- The Hyde War Memorial Trust funded the purchase of new stone for 2 dry stone walling training weekends where 30 metres of new wall was built.
Cost: **£650**.
- Completed Minor Works Programme of replacing gates, stiles, fencing and bench seating.
- Revised and updated Werneth Low Country Park Management Plan 2011 – 2016.



Baron Fields Footpath Improvements August 2015

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. To have the collective support and understanding of our local community is a major asset.

We work with and assist a wide range of community partners: Trustees of the Hyde War Memorial Trust, Tenant Farmers, other tenants of Country Park land such as Werneth Low Golf Club, schools and colleges, organisations such as Cub and Scout groups, residents of the area and local businesses. Working and engaging directly with these groups forges understanding and partnerships that have positive and rewarding outcomes.

Mention must also be made of our public events programmes which provide excellent opportunities for people to meet each other and learn about the place where they live.

2015/2016 Highlights

- We welcomed **4,072** people to the Lower Higham Visitor Centre (Previous year's total: **4,010**).
- The Country Park Greenspace Volunteers completed in total **3,940** work hours (Previous year's total: **4,908** work hours). See Appendix and Appendix 2.
- Using an electronic counter on the footpath from Lower Higham to the Cenotaph the total number of visitors recorded from April 2015 to March 2016 was **64,828** (Previous year's total: **61,870**). On the footpath near Quarry Car Park the total number recorded for the same period was **62,402** (Previous year's total **55,684**). For more information see Appendix 3.
- During the year the Greenspace Development Officer organized **11** events at which **1,135** people attended (Previous year's total: **12** events at which **871** people attended).



The 27th Cown Edge Ramble September 2015

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.

Informal countryside recreation and wildlife nature conservation on the surface seem to be incompatible elements. Promoting access while at the same time working to conserve wildlife is a constant challenge. Engaging with and informing visitors about a wide range of conservation matters helps resolve conflicts of interests. We install information signs around the Country Park in spring asking people not to wander through farmed meadows thus reducing disturbance to ground nesting birds. Such simple yet effective measures as these have a positive and beneficial impact.

2015/2016 Highlights

- Environmental Stewardship agreement 6th year compliant securing **£3,987** of grant income.
- Environmental Stewardship grant income to date since commencement of agreement in January 2010 **£34,805**.
- Implemented all wildlife nature conservation items from the Werneth Low Country Park Management Plan 2011 – 2016.
- Maintained all Sites of Biological importance and undertook removal of non-native invasive weeds from adjoining areas.



**Rig Field Meadow 252 metres of Hedgelaying
September 2015 to March 2016**

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.

Continual improvement philosophy underpins our approach in a myriad of matters. The redrafting of the Country Park Management Plan will be an important milestone in the year to come, and this document will guide the future direction of the Country Park in the immediate years up to 2020 when the present formal Country Park Management Agreement comes to an end.

Planned Developments 2016/2017

- Redraft the Werneth Low Country Park Management Plan.
- Complete Year 7 of the Environmental Stewardship Agreement.
- Complete the 2016/2017 Maintenance of Sites Programme.
- Complete the 2016/2017 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 **£68,000** to run the Country Park during 2015 to 2016. This works out at about **33p** 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 May 2015

Appendices

Appendix 1

List of Staff and Volunteers at Werneth Low Country Park 2015 -2016:

Nicola Marshall – Tameside Greenspace Development Manager

David Cannon – Tameside Greenspace Development Officer

Greenspace Volunteers:

Anita Allen

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 2015 – March 2016

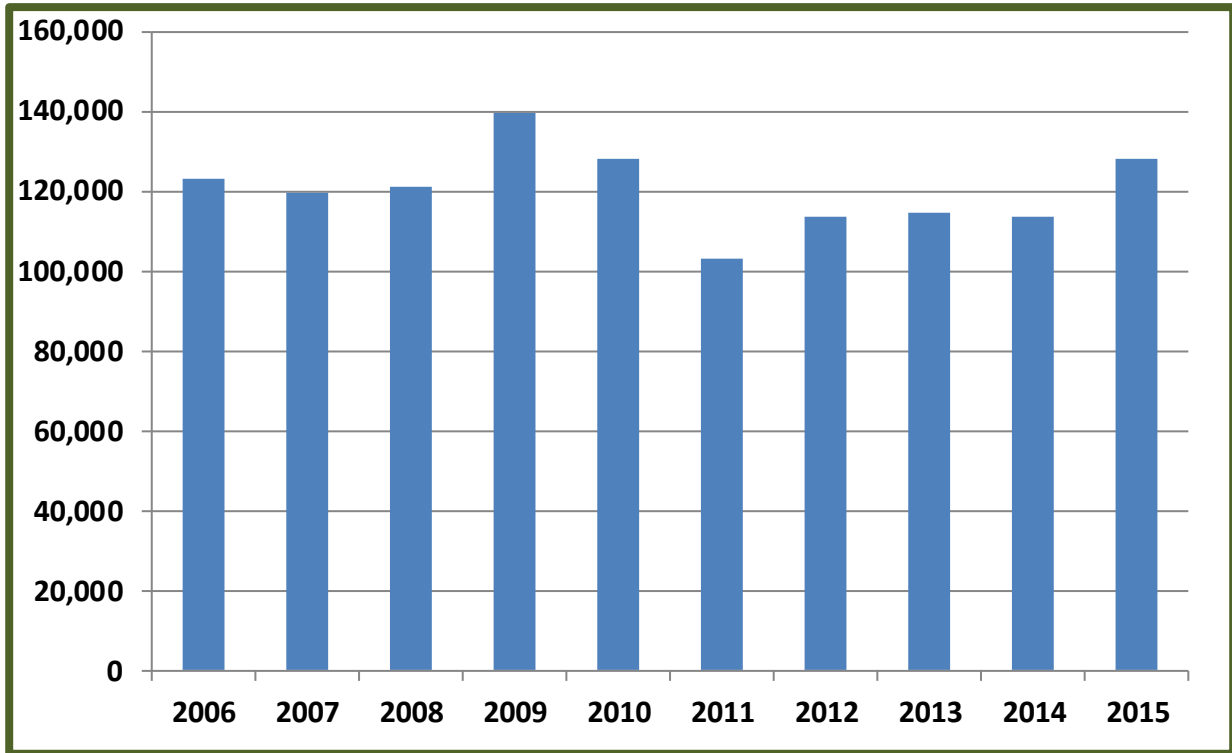
Project	Location	Task
1	Lower Higham Gardens	New planting in Wildflower Garden
2	Lower Higham - Cow Lane	Cut back, prune hedgerow and sweep lane, clean-out grids
3	Cenotaph Area	Cut grass/edge off. Clean area ready for Remembrance Day
4	Lower Higham Gardens	Clean borders and prune shrubs ready for Remembrance Day
5	Lower Higham Gardens	Plant 3,000 Snowdrops in the green
6	Lower Higham Main Drive	Crown lift evergreen trees
7	Hackingknife Woodland	Selective thinning
8	Lower Higham Car Park	Prune all borders
9	Flaggy Path Hedgerow	Cut back 124 metres of hedgerow
10	QCP Picnic Area	Cut back 54 metres of hedgerow
11	Lower Higham Drive	Cut back 30 metres of hedgerow
12	Ash Cottage Picnic Area	Cut back 46 metres of hedgerow
13	Holy Trinity Paddock	Cut back 60 metres of hedgerow
14	Riding Track	Cut back 140 metres of hedgerow
15	Earl of Warrington Meadow	Grub out 128 metres of new laid hedgerow
16	Higham Lane	298 metres of hedge cutting layed hedgerow
17	Rig Field Meadow	252 metres of Hedgelaying
18	Baron Fields Woodlands	Coppice Hazel trees in Memorial Coppice
19	Baron Fields Woodlands	Selective thinning especially along rights of way
20	Baron Fields Woodlands	Clear drains on Baron Road to Aspland Road footpath
21	Baron Fields Woodlands	Clear out Brambles from beneath Oak trees
22	Lower Higham Orchard	Prune fruit trees
23	Country Park Waymarking	Audit of Country Park Signs
24	Country Park	Completed weekly litter patrols of all sites



Appendix 3

**Bar Chart of combined visitor numbers on footpaths at Lower Higham and Quarry Car Park
January to December 2006 to 2015.**

Total: 1,205,168





Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph 8th November 2015.

**David Cannon
Tameside Greenspace Development Officer
(April 2016).**

(All the photographs in this report were taken April 2015 to March 2016).

