

Report To: **WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Date: 13 February 2017

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 (21 November 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

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1. MAINTENANCE OF SITES

- 1.1 After last winter's storms the footpath near Higham Cottages has gradually become a danger to walkers. Members of the public have commented on the dangerous condition and at least one person has slipped injuring themselves.
- 1.2 Three contactors were 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.
- 1.3 Fairway Landscapes Ltd was the successful applicant tendering a price of £3,500.
- 1.4 Fairways Landscapes Ltd have confirmed Wednesday 8 February 2017 as the start date, with a completion date of Wednesday 22 February 2017.
- 1.5 At a recent meeting of the Hyde War Memorial Trust the Trustees agreed to fund all the costs of this project.

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 October the Country Park received £2,174 of grant income, which was the interim payment for Year 7. Since the agreement started in January 2010 the Country Park has received in total £36,983 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 Country Park's Winter/Spring 2016/2017 programme of public events is as follows:

Date	Event	Attendance
25 th October 2016	Woods, Wands and Wizards	110
4 th December 2016	Ramble to Mottram in Longdendale	49
8 th January 2017	Highs and Lows Ramble	22
5 th February 2017	Short Stroll Around Werneth Low	18
12 th March 2017	Roman History of Werneth Low Walk	--
16 th April 2017	Easter Egg Hunt	--
30 th April 2017	Ramble to Chadkirk Chapel	--
Total to Date		199

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 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 can be found in **Appendix 1** at the end of this report.
- 4.3 In 2017 four of the Country Park's volunteers will have 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, and they will receive their Award from the Chairperson of the Joint Management Committee following this meeting.

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	146	5,789	5,528
August	212	7,837	6,410
September	157	4,979	4,502
October	321	3,978	4,252
November	751	3,183	3,424
December	181	3,289	3,574
2016 Totals	3,719	61,000	56,964
Previous Years Totals:	3,783	59,190	57,040

6. WILDLIFE NATURE CONSERVATION

- 6.1 Earlier this year we were contacted by a local solicitor regarding a bequest from an estate. We were informed that £1000 had been left to the Country Park in the will to be put towards a suitable project to improve the Park.
- 6.2 Following discussions with Natural England, Emorsgate Seed Suppliers and our local tenant farmer it was agreed to reseed one of the Country Park's hay meadows with a wildflower mixture. A mixture of wildflower and grasses has been purchased for South Meadow near Windy Harbour and we plan to cast the seed later this month.
- 6.3 The hay meadow will flower annually, be an improvement to the ecology of the area and significantly improve the ambience and landscape of Werneth Low. Details of the seed mixture can be found in **Appendix 2** at the end of this report.

APPENDIX 1

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

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		Total Hedge Cutting 812 metres	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
	Completed Projects		

APPENDIX 2

Seed Composition for South Meadow, November 2016 - Werneth Low Country Park

English name	Latin name	Percentage of mix by weight
Grasses		
Crested dog's tail	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	10%
Common bent grass	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	10%
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	10%
Sweet vernal grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	10%
Yellow oat grass	<i>Trisetum flavescens</i>	5%
Quaking grass	<i>Briza media</i>	5%
		50%
Wildflowers		
Common bird's foot trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	5%
Common/black knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	4%
Meadow vetchling	<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	3%
Self heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	2%
Betony	<i>Stachys officinalis</i>	2%
Tufted vetch	<i>Vicia cracca</i>	2%
Native wild red clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	5%
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	15%
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	1%
Autumn hawkbit	<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>	1%
Field Scabious	<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	10%
		50%
TOTAL		100%