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WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Day: Monday
Date: 19 November 2018
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 16 July 2018 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:- 18 February 2019	

From: Democratic Services Unit – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Charlotte Forrest, Senior Democratic Services Officer on 0161 342 2346 or charlotte.forrest@tameside.gov.uk, to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.

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Agenda Item 3.

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

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Agenda Item 4.

Report To:	WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date:	19 November 2018
Reporting Officer:	Ian Saxon, Director of Operations and Greenspace 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 (16 July 2018).
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 2018 has been completed. 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 We have now received quotations from our contractors in regards to a small number of footpath repair projects. The projects and costs are as follows:-

- Resurfacing the footpath from Lower Higham to the Hackingknife: Cost: £6,384.
- Resurfacing the footpath from the Cenotaph across Hackingknife Meadow: Cost: £3,327.

1.3 Recently completed projects include the following:-

- Reforming ditches along Riding Track alongside Golf Course: Cost: £300.
- Repairing 30 metres of drystone walling at Quarry Car Park: Cost: £4,860.
- Installing new drainage at Baron Fields: Cost: £580.
- Ash Cottage Picnic area on Higham Lane installing new steps: Cost: £600.
- Lower Higham Visitor Centre installed new oak bench: Cost: £400.
- Cow Lane path to the Cenotaph installed new wooden gate: Cost: £400.
- Higham Lane dry stone walling repairs: Cost: £1,944.

All the above projects were funded by Tameside Council

1.4 During September and October work on installing a usable surface on the footpath and riding track along Werneth Low Road has been completed. Though the route is not within the official boundary of the Country Park the right of way links directly into it. The project also included path pitching, fencing, drystone walling, installing new gates and stiles. The total costs were £30,000. The project was funded by Tameside Council.

1.5 On 14 August, during the evening, a large number of stone flags were stolen from around the entrance to the Visitor Centre. The incident was reported to the Police but unfortunately there were two more thefts, at the same location, after that date. The cost of replacing the flags is £3,800 and is subject to an insurance claim by the Hyde War Memorial Trust.

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
- 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 Since the agreement started in January 2010 the Country Park has received in total to date £42,420 of grant income from Natural England.

3. PUBLIC EVENTS

- 3.1 The winter/spring 2018 to 2019 programme of events at Werneth Low Country Park have been planned and dates and details are as follows:-

Date	Event	Attendance
2 December 2018	Christmas Ramble Around Werneth Low	--
27 January 2019	Ramble Around Werneth Low	--
24 March 2019	Roman History of Werneth Low Walk	--
21 April 2019	Easter Egg Hunt	--
28 April 2019	Ramble to Chadkirk Chapel	--
Total		

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 2 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 16 members in the volunteer service.
- 4.2 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 at 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 target spreadsheet and number of hours completed by the Volunteers for this year can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.3 In 2007 the Country Park replaced all its post and wire stock proof fencing right across land belonging to both Tameside Council and the Hyde War Memorial Trust. This capital expenditure was secured by the Joint Committee from Council funds and the total cost for replacing 4,693 metres was £25,248. At this time suppliers of treated timbers had without consultation changed the chemicals of the timber preservation treatment. The outcome of this action has been the significant reduction in the viability of outdoor land management timbers such as post and wire fencing. Following a survey of the Country Park we are now in the process of replacing fencing posts the number of which amounts to many hundreds. This work is being undertaken by the Park's Volunteer Service.
- 4.4 At the September meeting of the Country Park Volunteers the list of work and wildlife nature conservation projects for the period October 2018 to April 2019 was discussed and agreed. We undertake this planning every year, which helps to monitor progress and gives direction to the work of the Volunteer Service. A copy of the project list can be found in **Appendix 2**.

5. SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE 11 NOVEMBER 2018

- 5.1 At the time of writing this report preparations are well underway for the 100th Anniversary of the 1918 Armistice, Service of Remembrance. Trustees of the Hyde War Memorial Trust have been working tirelessly in recent months to make all the necessary arrangements for this very special occasion.

6. THE LOWER HIGHAM VISITOR CENTRE

6.1 The number of visitors to Lower Higham is as follows:-

Month	Lower Higham Visitor Centre
January	201
February	158
March	164
April	852
May	125
June	220
July	245
August	105
September	157
October	-
November	-
December	-
2018 Totals	2,227
Previous Years Total:	3,680

6.2 A defibrillator machine has been installed at Lower Higham Visitor Centre. The wall mounted security box containing the Defib is located next to the garage doors. Signs will be placed in notice boards around the Country Park informing visitors of its location. The person who installed and delivered the machine is organising a Defib training session for all Country Park staff.

7. WILDLIFE NATURE CONSERVATION

7.1 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.

7.2 Other winter migrant birds seen around the Country Park recently include the Fieldfare and Redwing. These birds are from Northern Europe though occasionally they breed in the far north of Scotland. They are often seen stripping berries from the Park's Hawthorn trees and are a true sign that winter is on its way.

APPENDIX 2

WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK GREENSPACE VOLUNTEERS WINTER 2018 - 2019 MAINTENANCE OF SITES PROJECTS

Project Ref	Location	Task	Completion Date
1	Lower Higham Gardens	Plant 200 mixed tulips various areas	October 2018
2	Lower Higham Gardens	Late summer garden restructure planting	October 2018
3	Hackingknife	Tractor cut Rosebay Willowherb	October 2018
4	Lower Higham - Cow Lane	Cut back, prune hedgerow and sweep lane, clean-out grids	November 2018
5	Kenotaph Area	Cut grass/edge off. Clean area ready for Remembrance Day	November 2018
6	Lower Higham Gardens	Clean borders and prune shrubs ready for Remembrance Day	November 2018
7	Lower Higham Cow Lane	Tractor flail hedgerow	November 2018
8	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	Clean all banking and hedgerow around Garage Building	December 2018
9	Hackingknife Woodland	Woodland management thinning out Hazel	December 2018
10	Lower Higham Orchard	Cut back 40 metres of hedgerow	March 2019
11	Flaggy Path Hedgerow	Cut back 124 metres of hedgerow	March 2019
12	QCP Picnic Area	Cut back 54 metres of hedgerow	March 2019
13	Lower Higham Car Park	Cut back 20 metres of Holly hedgerow	March 2019
14	Werneth Low Road	Cut back 356 metres of hedgerow	March 2019
15	Rig Field Meadow	Cut back 300 metres of hedgerow	March 2019
16	Holy Trinity Paddock	Cut back 60 metres of hedgerow	March 2019
17	Riding Track Higham Cotts	Cut back 140 metres of hedgerow	March 2019
18		Total Hedge Cutting metres 1,094	
19	Lower Higham Drive	50 metres of Hedge laying	March 2019
20	Lower Higham Orchard	Winter prune fruit trees	March 2019
21	Lower Higham Orchard	Replace 4 Apple trees	March 2019
22	Outdoor Park Seating	Inspect and repaint	March 2019
23	Black Path Baron Fields	Prune Willows by side of path	March 2019
24	All Sites	Outstanding from access audit	March 2018
	Completed Projects		