

## WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Day:** Tuesday  
**Date:** 1 December 2020  
**Time:** 10.30 am  
**Place:** Zoom

Item No.	AGENDA	Page No
1.	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive any apologies for the meeting from Members of the Joint Committee.	
2.	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Joint Committee.	
3.	<b>MINUTES</b> The Minutes of the proceedings of the previous meeting of the Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Committee held on 21 July 2020 to be approved as a correct record.	1 - 4
4.	<b>GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT</b> To consider the report of the Greenspace Development Officer.	5 - 10
5.	<b>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b> To note the dates of future meetings to be held on:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9 February 2021</li></ul>	

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 3.

## WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

21 July 2020

**Commenced:** 10.30 am

**Terminated:** 11.25 am

**Present:** Councillors Chadwick, Kitchen, Owen and Robinson  
Mr Bell, Mr Gradwell and Mrs Evans

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

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Cooper and Mr Ainger

Councillor Robinson advised the Joint Committee that as David Cannon was retiring this would sadly be his last meeting. Members of the Joint Committee joined the Chair in thanking him for his outstanding commitment and support over 33 years and wished him well for a long and happy retirement.

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Committee held on the 24 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE 2020/21

It was reported that the following representatives had been appointed to serve on the Joint Management Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/21:-

#### ***Representing Tameside MBC –***

Councillors Bowden, Chadwick, Cooper, J Fitzpatrick, Kitchen, Owen and Robinson.

#### ***Hyde War Memorial Trust –***

Messrs Ainger, Bell, Gradwell and Mrs Evans

### 4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR 2020/21

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That Mr Gradwell, Hyde War Memorial Trust, be appointed Chair of the Joint Management Committee for 2020/21.**
- (ii) That Councillor Robinson, Tameside MBC, be appointed Deputy Chair of the Joint Management Committee for 2020/21.**

## 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 24 February 2020.

The report outlined the following:-

- Maintenance of Sites
- Environmental Stewardship – Higher Level Agreement 2010-2020 Update
- Public Events
- The Lower Higham Visitor Centre
- Werneth Low Country Park Greenspace Volunteer Service
- Wildlife Nature Conservation

With regards to Maintenance of Sites it was reported that the summer grass cutting programme had commenced in March, which included the grass cutting of the Lower Higham Visitor Centre area, car parks, access points, picnic areas and strips along footpaths. Owing to the effects of the pandemic the programme had been temporarily suspended due to the redeployment of staff to support essential Council functions. The programme had recently recommenced and would conclude in October.

The Joint Management Committee were informed that the footpath resurfacing works from Lower Higham to Hackingknife and from the Cenotaph across Hackingknife Meadow had unfortunately been delayed due to restrictions associated with Covid-19 involving the contractor. The easing of restrictions meant that the implementation of the project would commence shortly.

The Greenspace Development Officer had conducted an audit of all the footpaths within the Country Park and had identified four sections that required remedial works, which had been forwarded onto the Engineer Department at the Council for further development. An update would be provided at a future meeting.

The Joint Management Committee were notified that the Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Agreement had ceased with a final payment received in December 2019. Since the agreement started in January 2010 the Country Park had received £52,206 of grant income. It was confirmed that officers would seek details of further appropriate schemes in the future.

It was reported that due to Covid-19 restrictions all public events had been cancelled until the end of September 2020 and the Lower Higham Visitor Centre would remain closed until it was deemed safe to re-open. The Volunteer Service had been suspended since March, however work was progressing on a Risk Assessment and it was anticipated that the volunteers would return imminently. Greenspace Development Officers had been undertaking a variety of tasks within the Country Park in their absence. The Park had been an invaluable asset to members of the public during the period of lockdown, many of whom had commented on the improved air quality and a significant reduction in noise pollution, which had enabled an exceptionally loud Dawn Chorus during April and May.

**RESOLVED:**  
**That the report be noted.**

## 6. ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Greenspace Development Officer presented the Werneth Low Country Park Annual Report, which highlighted activities undertaken during 2019/20 within the Country Park.

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, conserving habitats and wildlife and planned developments for 2020/21.

The highlights of 2019/20 were provided and included:-

- 2,338 visitors were welcomed to the Lower Higham Visitor Centre
- The Country Park Greenspace Volunteers completed a total of 3,650 work hours
- The Greenspace Development Officer had organised 11 events, which 557 people attended
- Alder Community High School cross country run around Werneth Low Country Park raised £5,000 for The Christie Hospital

Members of the Joint Management Committee commented on the marked increase of anti-social behaviour in the Country Park since the lockdown had been introduced in March. Although this had decreased slightly since restrictions had eased, mainly in part due to the recent inclement weather, it continued to be a problem. The Greenspace Development Manager advised that they would alert the relevant Council officers but stressed the importance of reporting any incidents of anti-social behaviour to GMP via 101 or the "Live Chat" function on the website.

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. The Greenspace Development Officer confirmed that the 33 Annual Reports he had written would be archived in the library in addition to the photographs he had taken over the years.

The Greenspace Development Manager informed the Joint Management Committee that an advert had been placed for a new Greenspace Development Officer and virtual interviews would be held following the shortlisting procedure. The post would have responsibility for the same portfolio of sites but would no longer be based from the Lower Higham Visitor's Centre. Details of the appointee would be shared with the Chair and Deputy Chair in due course and the interim arrangements were shared with members of the committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the report be noted.**

**7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED:**


**That the Joint Management Committee meets as follows:-**

- **10 November 2020**
- **9 February 2021**

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 4.

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date:</b>	1 December 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nicola Marshall – Greenspace Development Manager
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	To inform Members of activities undertaken within the Country Park since the last meeting of the Joint Management Committee (21 July 2020).
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That the report be noted.
<b>Links to Community Strategy:</b>	To ensure that the Country Park is an attractive and environmentally friendly place to visit.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The activities in the Country Park are in accordance with Council policy priorities.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)</b>	The funding for the projects is met by the Operations and Greenspace revenue budget.
<b>Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	It is important that the Joint Management Committee is kept informed of activities undertaken in the Country Park.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	Activities in the Country Park are kept under review in order to ensure any potential risks are dealt with adequately.
<b>Access to Information:</b>	Background papers and information can be obtained by contacting Katie Lowry, Greenspace Development Officer

 phone: 07519 617 515

 e-mail: [katie.lowry@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:katie.lowry@tameside.gov.uk)

## 1. APPOINTMENT OF STAFF

- 1.1 Dave Cannon, Greenspace Development Officer, retired from Tameside Council at the end of July 2020. Thanks to Peter Longbottom for acting as the interim Greenspace Development Officer for the site whilst the new member of staff was recruited. Katie Lowry joined Tameside Council on 5 October 2020; Katie previously worked at The Conservation Volunteers for 17 years working with volunteers on sites across Greater Manchester. Katie has had a month of induction activities, been introduced to the Volunteers and other members of the team.



## 2. MAINTENANCE OF SITES

- 2.1 The summer grass cutting programme for 2020 has been completed. The programme includes: 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.
- 2.2 Due to staffing changes and Corona Virus, the implementation of the footpath resurfacing projects have been delayed.

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

It has been agreed that the combined costs of the above projects will be funded equally by Tameside Council and the Hyde War Memorial Trust.

- 2.3 As reported at previous meetings of the Joint Management Committee, the Greenspace Development Officer has audited all the footpaths within the Country Park. Some of these paths have not been resurfaced in several years and the condition is such that it is now time to undertake some repair works. There are 4 sections:-

1. Lower Higham to Higher Higham	160 metres
2. Higher Higham to Shepley's Meadow	70 metres
3. Shepley's Meadow along Higham Lane	280 metres
4. Quarry Car Park to New Piece Meadow	675 metres
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,185 Metres</b>



We have received an estimate of £11,345 from one of our contractors for the resurfacing works. This project has now been passed on to Engineers Department, Tameside MBC for further development.

### 3. PUBLIC EVENTS

- 3.1. Due to covid-19 restrictions all public events have been cancelled up to the end of 2020. However the Cenotaph and Cow Lane were cleared of vegetation, leaves and debris by the Volunteers and Tameside Street Cleansing Team in preparation for Remembrance Sunday. Although no official ceremony was planned we knew that people would still want to visit the Memorial and we were pleased that people maintained social distancing whilst visiting.



Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday 2020



### 4. THE LOWER HIGHAM VISITOR CENTRE

- 4.1 Due to covid-19 restrictions the Visitor Centre was closed on Tuesday 17 March 2020 and will remain closed for the foreseeable future.
- 4.2 The site has been valued by members of the public as a local place to visit during 2020 and visitors have been respecting the Social Distancing rules on site. Entrances have had the signs to encourage social distancing replaced following the announcement of the second National Lockdown on Thursday 5 of November.

### 5. WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK GREENSPACE VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- 5.1 Following the National Lockdown where the Volunteer Service was stood down, Tameside Council worked on new policies and procedures along with a new operational Risk Assessment, which include all safety controls to make the delivery of Volunteer Conservation Days as Covid Secure as possible. The Volunteers Service resumed activities on Tuesday 4 August with Peter Longbottom assisting. The Volunteers completed much needed work around the Visitors Centre and on site after the long break. From Tuesday 6 August Katie Lowry has been leading the Volunteer group (with help from Peter for the first two weeks to ease the transition) and examples of the work completed can be found in **Appendix 1**.

**6. WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT**

- 6.1 Officers have been working to redraft the Joint Agreement between the Council and Hyde War Memorial Trust. Officers have met with colleagues in Legal Services and they are now in the final stages of producing a new Agreement for consideration by both parties. It is expected the new Agreement will be circulated in December for input from all parties – the Trust will need to seek their own legal advice on the matter. A working group meeting will be arranged following the circulation of the report.



This page is intentionally left blank