

WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Day: Wednesday
Date: 10 February 2021
Time: 10.30 am
Place: Zoom

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 1 December 2020 to be approved as a correct record.	1 - 2
4.	GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT To consider the report of the Greenspace Development Officer.	3 - 8
5.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS To approve the dates of future meetings of the Joint Management Committee as follows, commencing at 10:30am:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 28 July 2021• 24 November 2021• 23 February 2022	

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Agenda Item 3.

WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1 December 2020

Commenced: 10.30 am

Terminated: 11.10 am

Present: Mr Gradwell (Chair), Councillors Robinson (Vice-Chair), Bowden, Cooper, J Fitzpatrick, Kitchen and Owen, Mr Bell and Mrs Evans

In Attendance: Nicola Marshall Greenspace Development Manager
Katie Lowry Greenspace Development Officer

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Chadwick and Mr Ainger

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9. MINUTES

The minutes of the Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Committee held on the 21 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

10. GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

The Greenspace Development Manager submitted a report informing members of the activities undertaken within the Country Park since the last meeting of the Joint Management Committee held on 21 July 2020.

The report outlined the following: -

- Appointment of Staff
- Maintenance of Sites
- Public Events
- The Lower Higham Visitor Centre
- Werneth Low Country Park Greenspace Volunteer Service
- Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Agreement

Members of the Joint Management Committee were introduced to Katie Lowry who had joined Tameside Council as a Greenspace Development Officer on 5 October 2020. She had previously worked at The Conservation Volunteers for 17 years working with volunteers on sites across Greater Manchester. There had been a month of induction activities and Katie had been introduced to the Volunteers and other members of the team. Thanks were extended to Peter Longbottom for acting as the interim Greenspace Development Officer for the site whilst the new member of staff was recruited.

With regards to Maintenance of Sites it was reported that the summer grass cutting programme for 2020 had been completed, which included the Lower Higham Visitor Centre area, car parks, access points, picnic areas and strips along footpaths. The footpath resurfacing works from Lower Higham to Hackingknife and from the Cenotaph across Hackingknife Meadow had unfortunately been further delayed due to additional local restrictions followed by a second national lockdown. An audit of all

the footpaths within the Country Park had identified four sections that required remedial works, which had been forwarded onto the Engineer Department at the Council for further development.

It was reported that due to Covid-19 restrictions all public events had been cancelled up to the end of 2020 and the Lower Higham Visitor Centre would remain closed until it was deemed safe to re-open. 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 held people visited the Memorial and maintained social distancing whilst visiting. The Council had worked on new policies and procedures along with a new operational Risk Assessment, which included 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 2020 and had completed much needed work around the Visitors Centre.

The Greenspace Development Manager provided an update on the Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Agreement. Members were informed that Council Officers had been working to redraft the Joint Agreement between the Council and Hyde War Memorial Trust. Officers had met with colleagues in Legal Services and were now in the final stages of producing a new Agreement for consideration by both parties. The Trust would need to seek their own legal advice on the matter. It was expected that the new Agreement would be circulated in December for input from all parties and a working group meeting would be arranged following the circulation of the report.

Members of the Joint Committee stressed the importance of signing off the agreement as soon as possible and suggested that the new agreement contained detail around the Visitor's Centre following the complexities that arose due to staffing changes over the summer, which could be discussed further at the working group meeting. Concern was raised around the footpath repairs from Quarry car park to the cenotaph and it was requested that an alternative was explored rather repairing on a like for like basis.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted; and**
- (ii) A Working Group meeting be arranged following circulation of the new Werneth Low Country Park Joint Management Agreement.**

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Greenspace Development Officer requested that meetings of the Joint Management Committee be held on a Wednesday going forward due to the Volunteer Service taking place on a Tuesday.

RESOLVED:

That the Joint Management Committee meet on a Wednesday going forward with the next meeting arranged for: -

- 10 February 2021**

Agenda Item 4.

Report To:	WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date:	10 February 2021
Reporting Officer:	Emma Varnam - Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods Katie Lowry - 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 (1 December 2020).
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 Katie Lowry, Greenspace Development Officer,

 phone: 07519 617 515

 e-mail: katie.lowry@tameside.gov.uk

1. MAINTENANCE OF SITES

- 1.1 The summer grass cutting programme for 2021 will be reviewed by the Greenspace Development Officer and Greenspace Development Manager to review the frequency of cuts and whether these are appropriate for the needs of the park. The programme includes: the grass cutting of the Lower Higham Visitor Centre area, car parks, access points, picnic areas and strips along footpaths. This programme of maintenance is paid for by Tameside Council.
- 1.2 A full site inspection was carried out during November 2020 by the Greenspace Development Officer and actions were discussed with the Greenspace Development Manager at meetings in December. These actions will be carried out through a mixture of Volunteer work and contractors.
- 1.3 Due to staffing changes, coronavirus and winter weather, the implementation of the footpath resurfacing projects have been delayed. However, the Greenspace Development Officer met with the Tameside MBC Engineers Department in December 2020 to update the quotes from contractors for the cost of the works, as set out below:-

Visitors Centre Carpark path to where it meets Cow Lane main path to the cenotaph:

Top section above kissing gate - 112m	£3,351.60
Lower section - 112m	£3,351.60

Higham cottages culvert:

Clean out the open ditch at the bottom of the bridle path	£ 437.00
Excavate for and construct pcc flag drainage channels 4nr	£1,722.00

Higham cottages end of riding track:

130m long	£3,931.20
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Cenotaph end of the Disabled path from Quarry carpark:

Wheelchair access path - 128m long	£3,830.40
Supply and install timber marker posts - 2nr @ £89.25	£ 178.50

Quarry Carpark end of the Disabled Path:

Wheelchair access path - 518m	£9,790.20
*Excavate for and install 4 sections of land drain (approx. 80m)	£1,848.00
(* dependent on approval from Greater Manchester Ecology Unit with reference to Great Crested Newts on site)	

Quarry Car Park end Picnic Area:

Sand down and re-stain 2nr picnic benches	£ 294.00
Excavate to form 2 short paths to improve access	£ 330.75

TOTAL: £29,065.25

Additional Works (previously quoted to Dave Cannon):

- a) Excavate the vegetation and supply, spread and consolidate Gritstone surfacing from the Cenotaph across to the riding track Corner adjacent to the golf course £3,237.60
- b) Carry out vehicle barrier and stone kerb renewal and straightening in the visitor centre car park £ 730.00

- 1.4 These prices are subject, that all excavated materials being spread on site. They are also based on the works being carried out in much drier conditions if possible. We can accept all or some of these quotes.
- 1.5 Over the Christmas and New Year period BT Openreach have been laying new cables to improve the broadband connections in the area, unfortunately communications attempted by BT to make Tameside Council aware of this was missed and therefore we were unaware of the work taking place. After the Christmas break we found the riding track along Werneth Low road leading from Queen's Piece to the Hare and Hounds in a poor condition from diggers accessing the area in very wet conditions. After further communications with BT Openreach it has been agreed that remedial works to this area will take place as soon as the weather and ground conditions allow.
- 1.6 The Council are proposing that some fences on site, which are beginning to fail, are not replaced as laid hedges are now creating that boundary. This will provide a more attractive country park, increase important hedge habitats and remove the need to maintain fencing. A photo is shown at **Appendix 2**.

2. PUBLIC EVENTS

- 2.1. Due to Corona Virus restrictions all public events have been cancelled until restrictions have been lifted.

3. THE LOWER HIGHAM VISITOR CENTRE

- 3.1 Due to Corona Virus restrictions the Visitor Centre was closed on Tuesday 17 March 2020 and will remain closed for the foreseeable future.
- 3.2 The site has been valued by members of the public as a local place to visit during 2020 and the start of 2021 with both carparks over-full at times. Entrances have had the signs to encourage social distancing replaced following the announcement of the second National Lockdown on Thursday 5 of November.

4. WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK GREENSPACE VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- 4.1 The Volunteers Service has continued every Tuesday since the last report, completing various essential tasks around the site. Examples of the work completed can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2 We did manage a small socially distanced celebration of all of the works achieved on site during 2020 on 15 December with a small fire, potatoes and cakes (thanks to the Hyde War Memorial Trust for the cake!). A photo is shown at **Appendix 2**. The volunteers still completed jobs around the centre such as cutting back the holly hedge around the wood-store and litter picking but came together with the Trust members to share poems and speeches at lunch-time, all staying within the guidelines, bringing our own plates and cutlery to ensure no sharing and staying 2m apart to ensure everyone's safety.
- 4.3 Since the latest National Lockdown was announced on 4 January 2021 with the Stay at Home message the Volunteering activities were reviewed by the Greenspace Development Manger and Senior Management team at TMBC. It was found that following Government Guidance that the Volunteering activities could still continue and this was communicated out to the volunteers. At present, due to the cold weather and not wanting to use the garage space for shelter during this Lockdown we are finishing the volunteering activities at 1pm.

APPENDIX 1

Project Ref	Location	Task	Completion
1	Lower Higham Gardens	Cut back dead vegetation in the gardens, prune back holly tree on the corner of Visitors centre to improve view and access and along hedge leading to Cow Lane	Nov 2020
2	Quarry Carpark Picnic Area	Cut back boundary hedgerow	Nov 2020
3	Pipers Clough	New Culvert grate installed	Nov 2020
4	Higham Lane footpath culvert	Blocked Culvert which was causing damage to footpath and flooding on the road cleared of debris and dog balls!	Nov 2020
5	Various	Repairing Dry Stone Walls on site - Sam Simpson	Dec 2020
6	Baron Fields	Cut back along Orchard Rise, remove flag from the Culvert, clear cross-drains, path alongside the allotment and throughout the site, litter pick	Dec 2020
7	Werneth Low Road	Strimming and clearance of footpath at Hare & Hounds end	Dec 2020
8	Various across the whole site	Litter picking after New Year	Jan 2021
9	Various-across whole site	Emergency Culvert checking and clearance in preparation for storm Christoph	Jan 2021
10	Riding Track and in 'New Piece'	Clear encroaching blackthorn from the Riding Track and field and make dead hedge	Jan 2021
11	Higham Lane Hedgelaying	Hedgelay the remaining section - Mike Kelly	

Completed

APPENDIX 2

New Year at Werneth Low



Example of fence to be removed and hedge to be laid



Socially distant Christmas celebration with the volunteers



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