

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

**Date:** 1 December 2020

**Reporting Officer:** Nicola Marshall – Greenspace Development Manager

**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 July 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



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## 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.

