

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**