

**Minutes of a meeting of the Monks Wall Nature Reserve Management Committee,
13th October 2014, in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Sandwich at 6:00pm.**

Present: **The Mayor (in the Chair)**
 Cllr RA Daw
 Cllr Mrs P Russell
 Mr J Gibbs
 Dr M Griffiths
 Dr A Lipczynski
 Dr M Walkey

Officer: **Miss T Weir**

17.10.14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mrs Laslett (ill health) and Cllr Watts (ill health).

18.10.14 **DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS
AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS**
No interests were declared.

19.10.14 **MINUTES**
The Minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 21st July 2014 were considered. A query was raised regarding item 24.07.14 (i) as to whether a response had been received from Brian Crocker (for Pfizer Ltd.) to the Management Committee's letter. The officer present agreed to look into this and inform the Committee.

20.10.14 **PROGRESS REPORT**
The Committee received a progress report from the Warden, Dr Martin Griffiths. There was some discussion regarding damage being done by heavy plant associated with the flood defences to the flora in the reserve, and also regarding bank clearance activity (again, associated with the flood defences) and its potential impact on a bullfinch in the area. It was also suggested that if the chalk road laid through the Reserve by the Environment Agency's contractors would be of use to the Warden, that the Committee should use this as leverage to obtain financial support from the Agency in return for allowing them to leave the road and thereby to not have to pay the costs of lifting it. Lastly, it was noted that the bank clearance work had involved removal of a boundary hedge on the edge of the Reserve and that it would be important to maintain the boundary.
RECOMMENDATION: That the Town Clerk's office arrange for Dr Griffiths and Julian Sampson (G.W. Finn & Sons) to meet on site with representatives of Halcrow and Jackson's for a formal inspection of the site to assess the impact of flood defence works on sensitive flora

and fauna to date, and mitigation of further negative impact of these works.

21.10.14 RESERVE MANAGEMENT & LAND USE

The Committee felt that it was too early to consider whether fencing should be purchased for the new areas of the Reserve; whether grazing should be undertaken or whether vegetation should be controlled through an annual / biannual mowing regime; and if a cost/benefit analysis of grazing would still be required. It was noted upon information from Dr Lipczynski that a condition of all grants received is that the land to which they apply must be kept in good agricultural environmental condition, however the Committee felt that as the land cannot be grazed at the moment, the Environment Agency should be requested that once flood defence works in the area are finished, they should arrange for their contractor to mow and clear it and to fence it, so that it may be grazed if this is considered the best option. Any decision as to future use should be made after this has taken place. It was suggested that the financial benefit of the Agency leaving its chalk road in place (see 20.10.14 above) should be used as leverage.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(i) That Dr Lipczynski bring into his negotiations with the Environment Agency (through Julian Sampson) a request that once flood defence works in the area are completed, the Agency should mow and clear the relevant areas of the Reserve and fence them.

(ii) That the issue of grazing / mowing in future be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee.

22.10.14 SANDWICH TOWN TIDAL DEFENCES: COMPENSATION & SINGLE PAYMENT SCHEME

The Committee received an update from Dr Lipczynski about the SPS application for 2014 and progress regarding the issue of compensation for loss of the Reserve grazing fee due to the ongoing Environment Agency works. The Mayor thanked Dr Lipczynski for his work in this respect.

23.10.14 CAP 2015 & BASIC PAYMENT SCHEME

(i) The Committee considered the terms of future work with Julian Sampson (G.W. Finn & Sons) to navigate the change from Single Payment Scheme (Single Farm Payment) to Basic Premium Scheme and the necessary registration procedure. Dr Lipczynski strongly recommended that Mr Sampson be commissioned to take forward this work.

RECOMMENDATION: That the terms proposed by Mr Sampson in his letter of 1st October 2014 be accepted.

(ii) The Committee considered the purchase of additional Entitlements (as set out in Mr Sampson's letter of 1st October 2014).

RECOMMENDATION: That the suggested Entitlements be purchased.

24.10.14

FINANCE & BUDGET

(i) The statement of accounts for Monks Wall Nature Reserve as at 30th September 2014 was received and noted.

(ii) The Committee had been asked to consider likely expenditure requirements and income streams relating to the Reserve and to offer recommendations for incorporation in next year's Reserve budget. It was felt that until the outcome of the flood defence works was clearer, it would be too early to make such suggestions, beyond the commissioning of Julian Sampson and the purchase of Entitlements (as per 23.10.14 above) and the Warden's honorarium.

RECOMMENDATION: That this matter be deferred until the next meeting, except that the cost of commissioning Julian Sampson and the purchase of Entitlements (as per 23.10.14 above) and the Warden's honorarium should be taken into account at this stage for budgeting purposes.

25.10.14

EXPENSES

The Committee received a verbal update from the Town Clerk's office regarding progress on the issue of expenses for non-councillor Committee members. On 8th October the Town Clerk attended a meeting of the East Kent Joint Parish Independent Remuneration Panel to seek advice about remuneration for co-opted Committee Members. Democratic Services at Dover District Council had recommended that consultation with this panel was necessary in order to avoid accusations of financial impropriety. The Town Clerk informed the Panel that it was the Council's wish to have the ability, in agreed circumstances, to reimburse co-opted committee members for mileage and administrative expenses, where documentable. The Panel agreed that this would be an acceptable practice. The minutes from the Panel meeting will be issued in November, the recommendations from which, including the outcome of the query below, will then be put to Sandwich Town Council for resolution. The Committee expressed itself satisfied with this course of action and considered what the co-opted members should be able to claim for.

RECOMMENDATION: That co-opted Committee members should be able to claim for mileage / travel at Inland Revenue rates beyond attendance at Committee meetings and for miscellaneous expenses incurred in work on the Committee's behalf, such as telephone calls, printing costs and other office expenses. These claims should all be documented and may be backdated to the beginning of the 2014/15 financial year.

26.10.14

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Monday 19th January 2015 at 6:00pm in the Council Chamber, Guildhall.