

Minutes of a meeting of the Monks Wall Nature Reserve Management Committee, 18th January 2016, in the Mayor's Parlour, Guildhall, Sandwich at 7:00pm

Present: **The Mayor, Cllr Paul Graeme (in the Chair)**
 Cllr Mrs J Dunay
 Cllr JE Franklin
 Cllr JJ Watts
 Dr M Walkey

Officer: **Ms T Weir**

14.01.16 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Daw, who was on holiday, and Dr Lipczynski, who had another engagement. No apologies were received from Mr Gibbs.

15.01.16 **DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS**

No interests were declared.

16.01.16 **MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the Management Committee meeting on 12th October 2015. There were no matters arising.

17.01.16 **UPDATE FROM MARK CHANDLER (GW FINN & SONS)**

The Committee received a verbal update from Mark Chandler (GW Finn & Sons) regarding management of the Reserve. Mr Chandler informed the Committee that he had carried out a site visit to the Reserve on 15th January, particularly with an eye to how the Reserve was meeting the requirements of its interim management plan, and to any potential health and safety issues.

Mr Chandler highlighted the following issues regarding compliance with the interim management plan:

- Baseline data: there is no recent baseline data regarding the Reserve, e.g. wildlife populations, so new data needs to be collected so that progress can be measured.

- Public access: although this is promoted in the interim management plan, there are difficulties around the terrain, the presence of grazing animals, boundary fencing, etc. There was a proposal to use the new wall constructed by the Environment Agency [EA] as a public pathway, however the presence of a security gate between the Reserve and adjoining land makes this difficult.

- Angling: again, although this is promoted in the interim management plan, in practice it would be difficult for people to fish following the EA works – access to the river is either down very steep banks or more low-lying areas which are very muddy. Jetties would have to be installed to make access easier and safer, and this would of course entail a cost. (Dr Walkey pointed out that angling was never very actively promoted but at present, it remains something of an ‘open door’ and for the reasons Mr Chandler had pointed out, a decision needed to be made as to whether it was to be permitted or not).

Mr Chandler stated that there were no major health & safety issues at present, as the site was not yet open to the public again. He had noted that an old oil pump was stored in a shed next to one of the hides – Dr Walkey confirmed that this pump had been sold and should have been picked up. Mr Chandler also pointed out that the hide by the pump shed needed more roofing felt.

The land running parallel to the new link road past the Discovery Park was getting scrubby, with brambles and some saplings up to 6' high. He suggested that an agricultural contractor should be brought in to flail and clear this area. Mr Chandler noted that this area, which totalled around 15 acres, could potentially be grazed once cleared, but would need replacement fencing before animals could be put on it.

Mr Chandler stated that he had spoken with Natural England's local liaison officer regarding re-entry onto a Higher Tier Scheme for financial support – he understood that the Reserve should qualify and that although there would be various conditions to satisfy and paperwork to do, these were not insurmountable obstacles. The deadline was likely to be in June 2016. Once on this scheme, the Reserve could also seek assistance from Natural England with environmental assessments.

Mr Chandler had noted electricity lines running across the Reserve, and advised that if no agreement was in place with National Grid, one should be drawn up and wayleave payments sought.

Lastly, Mr Chandler informed the Committee that Julian Sampson (GW Finn & Sons) would discuss use of the Reserve for grazing next year with the current grazier.

RECOMMENDATIONS: (i) That Mr Chandler be asked to seek quotations for flailing & clearing the land running parallel to the new link road past the Discovery Park.

(ii) That Mr Chandler be asked to arrange a meeting with Natural England's local liaison officer and with Dr Lipczynski regarding re-entry onto a Higher Tier Scheme.

(iii) That a site visit be arranged for all members of the Committee with Mr Chandler (Town Clerk's office to make arrangements).

(iv) That the Town Clerk's office investigate whether an agreement is in place with National Grid for power lines crossing the Reserve and advise Mr Chandler accordingly.

18.01.16 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY TIDAL DEFENCE WORKS

Ms T. Weir gave the Committee a verbal update regarding negotiations with the Environment Agency being taken forward by Julian Sampson (GW Finn & Sons). Mr Sampson had started discussing figures for compensation with the Agency and would keep the Committee informed regarding progress.

19.01.16 FINANCE

The Committee received and noted the Monks Wall Nature Reserve accounts as at 31st December 2015.

20.01.16

BUDGET

The Committee on 12th October 2015 recommended and Council on 26th October resolved that *“while the condition of the Reserve is stabilising and negotiations are continuing with the Environment Agency regarding snagging and possible compensation, the Budget should be a recurring item on Committee agendas”* [minute points 10.10.15 and 27.10.15]. It was noted that as at 31st December 2015, £42,393.61 was in the Reserve account – however there were expenses pending totalling £3,520.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Budget continue to be brought back as a recurring item on Committee agendas until further notice.

21.01.16

MEETING DATES 2016/17

In order to inform the planning of meeting dates after 18th April 2016, the Committee considered whether quarterly would be sufficiently frequent for Committee meetings and whether 7pm remained a convenient start time; also, Committee members were asked to indicate any dates between June 2016 and June 2017 which would not be convenient for meetings.

RECOMMENDATION: That quarterly ordinary meetings starting at 7pm (with extraordinary meetings as required) remained sufficient, and that the second Monday of each month should be avoided to ensure no clashes with meetings of the Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust.

22.01.16

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

(i) It was **RESOLVED** that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

(ii) The Committee received a letter from Dr Martin Griffiths, regarding the post of Warden and membership of the Committee; and considered tendering for a contractor to take over the Warden’s role (draft advertisement attached).

RECOMMENDATIONS: (i) That the Mayor write on behalf of the Council to Dr Griffiths, thanking him for his years of service as Warden.

(ii) That a token for £100 for an outdoor clothing store be purchased as a thank-you gift for Dr Griffiths.

(iii) That the Warden role be advertised on the Council noticeboard, the Council website, and by email to local environmental interest groups, and that it be subject to an interview process.

(iv) That the draft advertisement be approved, with addition of a sentence to the following effect, “A keen interest in and good knowledge of native flora and fauna will be required, along with an understanding of issues relevant to conservation and environmental matters”; and that hours of work should remain unspecified, in order to permit flexibility as required – these arrangements to be reviewed after three months.

(iii) The Committee considered co-opted membership of the Committee going forward (Committee members are asked to make suggestions regarding suitable individuals for co-opted membership – according to the Committee’s

terms of reference, a total of four co-opted members sit on the Committee at any one time).

RECOMMENDATIONS: (i) That the new Warden be co-opted onto the Committee once appointed.

(ii) That Mr Ken Chapman be approached regarding membership of the Committee and invited to a meeting with the Mayor and Town Clerk to discuss membership. Should no other vacancies arise, it is suggested that Mr Chapman replace Dr Walkey, who has indicated an intention to retire from the Committee.

23.01.16

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 18th April 2016, at 7pm, in the Council Chamber, Guildhall.

DRAFT



SANDWICH TOWN COUNCIL
requires a

SELF-EMPLOYED WARDEN FOR THE MONKS WALL NATURE RESERVE, SANDWICH
to undertake the following duties:

- Regularly monitor/record the wildlife on the Reserve.
- Manage the water level on the Reserve.
- Submit monthly written reports to the Town Council on water levels and salinity.
- Submit written reports to each meeting of the Monks Wall Nature Reserve Management Committee.
- Upkeep of hides, access paths and points of interest.
- Walk the Reserve to ensure all public access ways are such as not to constitute a risk to any person's safety. Check that all signage and safety equipment is in place. The guidelines for the above will be set out by the Council's Health & Safety advisors.
- To report immediately to the Management Committee on any adverse or potentially adverse situation which has or could occur, particularly if it could impact the public (for example, a damaged hide or fence).
- Supervise and act as a guide for school, and other parties, visiting the Reserve, for example for pond dipping.
- Check that members of the public on the Reserve have the necessary Permit from the Sandwich Town Council Offices.
- Recommend to the Committee when situations indicate a need to close the Reserve to the public.

The hours are variable and can be undertaken at your convenience.
The annual payment is £1,500.

Please write to the Town Clerk, Miss Laura Fidler, if you are interested in this role,
detailing any relevant experience/interests that you have:

The Town Clerk
Guildhall
Cattle Market
Sandwich
Kent CT13 9AH

Tel 01304 617197

E mail: townclerk@sandwichtowncouncil.gov.uk

Closing date: 5pm on Monday 29th February 2016