

Minutes of a meeting of the Monks Wall Nature Reserve Management Committee, 12th July 2017, in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Sandwich at 6:00pm

Present: The Mayor, Cllr Paul Graeme (in the Chair)
 Cllr Mrs Liote
 Cllr JE Franklin
 Cllr R Daw
 Mr A Henderson
 Mr M Chandler
 Mr K Chapman

Officer: Ms A Irwin

05.07.17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Watts (who was away) and Dr A Lipczynski (who was on holiday). No apologies were received from Dr Walkey.

06.07.17 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

07.07.17 MINUTES

(i) The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of 26th April 2017 and there were no matters arising not already covered elsewhere on the agenda.

(ii) The Committee also received and noted the minutes of the meeting between the Environment Agency, Sandwich Town Council and the MWNR Warden on 12th June 2017.

08.07.17 REPORT: FINN'S

The Committee received a verbal report from Mark Chandler (Finn's) regarding management of the Reserve, as well as updates regarding negotiations with the Environment Agency and related issues. A copy of this report is attached to the official minutes. Negotiations with the Environment Agency on a global compensation figure have stalled somewhat and the proposal is that a meeting be arranged between the Environment Agency, Sandwich Town Council and Finns to try and bring all parties to an acceptable agreement. It was noted that once the fencing work has been completed Mr Chandler can then make the application to Natural England for the grant at £4.90/m.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(i) Sandwich Town Council office to supply dates to Mr Chandler for the meeting between the Environment Agency, Sandwich Town Council and Finns and Mr Chandler then to arrange said meeting.

(ii) When the outcome of negotiations with the Environment Agency regarding a global compensation figure is known Mr Chandler will inform the Committee.

(iii) Mr Chandler will obtain quotes as soon as possible for ditch clearance work and hedge cutting with the aim of having the work carried out in August or September 2017.

(iv) Mr Chandler will submit quotes for repairs to the gate in the centre of the reserve that is in poor condition.

09.07.17 REPORT: WARDEN'S

The Committee received two written report from the MWNR Warden, Mr Ken Chapman covering May and June 2017. A copy of these reports is attached to the official minutes. Discussion at this meeting centred on the issue of falling water

levels despite the Environment Agencies assurances that there are no leaks around the various sluices. The possibility of introducing scrapes to the reserve to encourage year round bird life for an improved and more consistent visitor experience was discussed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(i) Mr Chapman will attempt to review possible water egress from the reserve by taking a trip up the Stour when water levels on the reserve are high; maybe water egress will be visible along the river bank.

(ii) The new Management Plan should include visitor experience.

(iii) Sandwich Town Council office will contact Finns to ask that they make an application to DEFRA for funding for creation of scrapes on the reserve.

10.07.17

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee received and considered a quote from Mark Chandler to draft a Management Plan. Mr Chandler used the Interim Plan and the Pre-Environment Agency Plan as templates in terms of level of detail for the new plan. It was agreed that the £600.00 quote outlined by Mark Chandler was unlikely to allow for the level of detail required as it is intended that the new Management Plan will be a reference document for the mid-term at least. Mark Chandler anticipates producing a draft that can then be modified if the level of detail needs to be altered.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(i) It was agreed that a budget of £1,200.00 for 8 hours work (double the quote) be recommended and that Mr Chandler will work towards a completed Plan within that sum.

11.07.17

MEETING TIMETABLE 2017/18

The Meeting Timetable detailing revised Monks Wall Nature Reserve Committee Meeting dates for the 2017/2018 year was received and duly noted.

12.07.17

FINANCE

(i) The statement of the Monks Wall Nature Reserve balance as at 31.05.2017 was received and noted.

(ii) The Committee considered any forthcoming expenditure / income relevant to the Monks Wall Nature Reserve budget and noted that any specific proposals for forthcoming expenditure had been addressed as they arose earlier in this meeting.

(iii) The Committee considered allocation of a budget for annual chemical spray applications to the thistles on the reserve. 2016 estimations provided by Mr Chandler were roughly £700.00 for Thistlex applications during 2016 and roughly £350.00 for flailing although it was acknowledged that flailing may not always be required as frequently as in 2016 depending on grazing each year.

RECOMMENDATION:

(i) An annual budget of £1,000.00 be allocated to flailing and applications of Thistlex to manage thistle growth on the reserve.

13.07.17

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 11th October 2017 at 6pm, in the Council Chamber.