

**Minutes of a meeting of the Monks Wall Nature Reserve Management Committee, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018, in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Sandwich at 6:00pm**

**Present:** Cllr PG Graeme (in the Chair)  
Cllr JE Franklin  
Cllr JJ Watts  
Mr M Chandler, Finns

Cllr D Friend also attended

**Officer:** Amandajayne Hollobon-Baxter

The Mayor asked Cllr P G Graeme to Chair the meeting and the Deputy Mayor agreed.

**08.10.18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllrs Daw, Mrs Hunter, Mr K Chapman and Mr A Henderson gave their apologies.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**10.10.18 MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

**RECOMMENDATION: There were no matters arising**

**11.10.18 FINNS**

**(i)** To receive a verbal update from Mark Chandler, Finns.

In advance of the meeting a written report had also been circulated by email.

An excellent report with a lot of great news. M Chandler was asked to obtain quotation for the renewal of the fence under the underpass. M Chandler advised that he will request that the grazier contribute half the costs.

**RECOMMENDATION: M Chandler to obtain quotation for fencing under the underpass and to request Grazier to contribute 50%.**

**(ii)** To approve payment for J Thompson who has supplied and erected one kissing gate and reposition one sign. *Please note that the approval to build the kissing gate has already been agreed.*

**RECOMMENDATION: Proposed by Cllr Graeme, seconded by Cllr Franklin and carried that retrospective approval be given to pay J Thompson £470.00**

**(iii)** To approve invoice received from Julian Sampson dated 4<sup>th</sup> September 2018 in relation to Basic Payment Scheme 2018.

**RECOMMENDATION: Proposed by Cllr Graeme, seconded by Cllr Watts and carried that J Sampson, Finns, be paid**

**(iv)** To receive a verbal update in relation to Environment Agency compensation monies update.

A full and final settlement of £48,601 had been received. Both J Sampson and M Chandler, Finns, advised that this should be accepted. Written confirmation should be received at the end of October/beginning of November.

**RECOMMENDATION: Proposed by Cllr Graeme, seconded by Cllr Watts that STC accept offer from the Environment Agency of £48,601.**

**12.10.18 WARDEN'S REPORT**

Councillors received and considered the Warden's Report from the Reserve Warden, Mr Ken Chapman covering late June to late September 2018 which is attached to these minutes. A good report with thanks to Mr Chapman for all his efforts.

**RECOMMENDATION: To note this report.**

**13.10.18 REQUIRMENTS TO OPEN**

(i) To receive and consider a report and map in relation to the sluices and to agree payment of each sluice as per recommendations.

With the aim being to open 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019 the main sluice is crucial and should be installed as a matter of urgency. M Chandler, Finns, advised that installation would be circa £10,000. Sluices 2,3 and 4 would be considered once the Warden and Management Company, Finns, has established what sluice 1 would achieve.

**RECOMMENDATION: Cllr Watts proposed that Sluice 1 be installed as a matter of urgency. Seconded by Cllr Franklin and carried.**

(ii) To receive and consider quotation for four buoys.

**RECOMMENDATION: To purchase buoys.**

(iii) To receive and consider quotation for erecting and positioning buoys.

**RECOMMENDATION: J Thompson to erect and position buoys.**

(iv) To discuss and consider a permit system

Permits and printing costs were discussed but this idea was considered irrelevant.

VIC staff to be tasked with giving padlock codes and obtaining collection of data for the public using the reserve.

**RECOMMENDATION: Cllr Graeme proposed, and Cllr Franklin seconded that padlock codes to be given to the visiting public and VIC staff be tasked with data collection.**

(v) To consider a combination padlock for permit holders for Ramsgate Road gate access point and Monks Way access point.

After discussions it was decided that combination locks would be placed on both gates and changed every fortnight by the Warden.

**RECOMMENDATION: Cllr Graeme proposed that the warden be tasked with changing the code to the combination locks on both gates every fortnight. Cllr Gisbey seconded and was carried.**

**14.10.18. FINANCE**

(i) To receive a statement of the Monks Wall Nature Reserve draft balance as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

**RECOMMENDATION: Noted and agreed**

(ii) To consider any forthcoming expenditure/income relevant to the Monks Wall Nature Reserve.

**RECOMMENDATION: This had taken place during the meeting item by item.**

**15.10.18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019, at 6pm, in the Council Chamber.

**SANDWICH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MONK'S WALL NATURE RESERVE**  
**WARDEN'S REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2018**

**This report covers the period from late June to late September 2018.**

**MANAGEMENT ISSUES:**

**1. Water Management:**

By mid-Summer 2018, the water level in the ditches on the Reserve had become very low because I had not abstracted water from the river following the suspension in July 2017 of all water abstraction agreements on the Lower Stour by the Environment Agency.

On resuming the opening of the main sluice from the River Stour in mid-July 2018, the ditches were filled again by mid-August. It is planned to keep the water levels as high as possible through the winter.

Once proper controls on the internal water-levels have been made put in place by the installation of sluices, it will be possible to manage the Reserve's water-levels much more accurately and to the benefit of the water-birds that use the area.

**3. Other management work** has been completed by various contractors. Some of this is routine work which is needed to maintain the Reserve in good condition for wildlife, while other work is in preparation for the planned re-opening of the Reserve to the public.

This work has included: fencing of sluices; clearance of scrub vegetation on the island near the second hide; 'topping' of all field areas.

Signage has been ordered and collected from the supplier. At the time of writing, other work is being planned, including the construction of internal sluices of different types, following a site meeting that I held with the contractor from 'Rhino' in mid-September.

**3. Other issues:** I have only seen **two members of the public** on the Reserve in any of my many visits over the summer months, with the exception of the previous Warden, who still visits the Reserve on a regular basis, but less often than in the past.

**WILDLIFE NOTES, SUMMER 2018**

As in all the recent years since I took over as Warden, there were **no ground-nesting wetland bird species** (Lapwing, Redshank, Common Snipe etc.) present on the Reserve at all during the 2018 breeding season. These are 'indicator species' of a healthy wetland. Their absence is due to:

- the on-going difficulty with maintaining a high water level

- predation due to Foxes, Crows and Magpies
- the presence of extensive stands of Hard Rush and Creeping Thistle which provides cover for the above mentioned predators. (This vegetation was 'topped' in September but will need repeated 'attacks' in order to weaken and hopefully remove it altogether)

Several pairs of Mallard bred successfully and other breeding species included Mute Swan (which raised three young) Coot and Moorhen. Non-water bird species which were known to have bred included Grey Partridge, a bird which has become increasingly scarce in the wider countryside in recent years. A Kingfisher re-appeared on the Reserve in September, but it may well have nested a good distance away. A few migrant waders such as Green Sandpiper and Whimbrel stayed briefly on the Reserve in August but the absence of extensive muddy shallow margins does not encourage such species to stay any length of time. A White Stork was on the Reserve in mid-September. It could possibly be an 'escape' from a zoo or other bird collection, but wild birds from the Continent do occasionally appear here as rare wanderers.

**Butterflies** had a good season, with a good number of a range of the commoner species, such as Gatekeeper. A transect survey of the butterflies of the Reserve was done on a number of days throughout the summer by Ian Hodgson, formerly Warden of the Bird Observatory. The results have yet to be written up, but will be reported to the Management Committee in due course.

**Dragonflies** of a range of species were a feature of the Reserve this year and it is to be hoped that their populations will increase further as wetter conditions are developed.

Ken Chapman  
(Warden, Monks Wall Nature Reserve)  
September 25<sup>th</sup> 2018