

Minutes of the Meeting of the NONSUCH PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held on 25 January 2016

PRESENT -

Councillor Mike Teasdale (Chairman); Councillor Alex Clarke, Councillor Graham Dudley, Councillor Richard Broadbent (London Borough of Sutton), Councillor Mary Burstow (London Borough of Sutton) and Councillor David Hicks (London Borough of Sutton)

In Attendance: Paul Airey (Nonsuch Voles) (For items 47 - 57), Gerald Smith (Friends of Nonsuch) (For items 47 - 57) and Frances Wright (Nonsuch Watch) (For items 47 - 57)

Officers present: Frances Rutter (Chief Executive), Chris Stone (Property & Estate Manager), Michael Smith (Chief Accountant), Peter Steel (Head Gardner, EEBC), Samantha Whitehead (Streetcare Manager) and Fiona Cotter (Democratic Services Manager)

47 PUBLIC SPEAKERS

Mr. Pinchbeck of Parkrun addressed the Committee. He informed those present that Junior Parkruns had been taking place since 6 December 2015 and had proved a great success. Mr. Pinckbeck reiterated that the organisers remained committed to the park and were conscious of the potential impact of the events on ground conditions. Conditions around the summer and winter routes were, and would continue to be, monitored: some events had been cancelled. Mr. Pinchbeck encouraged members of the Committee to contact him regarding any issues connected with Parkruns and undertook to remind Marshals to be courteous when dealing with members of the public.

48 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee held on 19 October 2015 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

With reference to Minute 13 (Minutes of the previous meeting) it was commented that whilst the automatic announcement informed passengers that the bus was travelling passed Nonsuch Park, the announcement was made between stops and was therefore too late for those wishing to alight at the London Road gate.

49 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made by members of the Committee regarding items on the Agenda.

50 **BUDGET 2016/17**

The Joint Management Committee (JMC) received and considered a report which provided a latest estimate of income and expenditure for the current financial year and sought approval of its budget for 2016/17.

It was noted that forecast net expenditure for 2015/16 was approximately £4k under budget. The main reason for this variance was because the budget contained provision of £4k for the review of the Habitat Management Plan which was carried out every five years and last undertaken in 2014/15.

It was confirmed that the estimates for 2016/17 accommodated general inflationary pressures (* see *postscript*) and noted that increases in contribution of 2% were requested from both Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and the London Borough of Sutton. Whilst the JMC was mindful of the financial pressures facing both authorities, members were reminded of the JMCs obligations to the freeholder, Surrey County Council, under the headlease.

It was noted that the condition of the roads and parking surfaces had been highlighted as a continued financial risk but that there was nothing specifically included in the budget report about addressing this. The Committee was reminded of the previous reports and discussions around the Maintenance Plan and priority works and the conflicting demands on the JMCs budget. The state of the car parks was included in the JMC's risk register. The priority, in accordance with the JMCs obligations under the lease, was to deal with the most urgent issues around health and safety and the maintenance of the Mansion House itself. This year's proposed priority works would be included in a report to the JMC in April and it was confirmed that a more substantial repair of car parks, particularly to the Mansion House car park, was on the "wish list" of works as the temporary repairs had not been as successful as had been hoped.

It was queried why actual spend as at 30 November against some heads was low or nil. It was explained that this was an issue around the timing of invoices but that the Committee's Treasurer was comfortable with the forecast outturn on expenditure as set out in Annexe 1 to the report.

It was confirmed that the reference to the inclusion of provision of up to £5,000 for contribution to London Borough of Sutton staffing costs was a reference to the potential submission of a lottery bid (Minute 31 refers). It was further confirmed that separate dog waste bins were no longer provided in the park and that the reference in Annexe 1 to the emptying of dog bins was in fact a reference to emptying bins in general.

Accordingly, it was agreed that:

- (1) The Joint Management Committee's revenue budget for 2016/17 be agreed as set out in Annexe 1 to the report;
- (2) Contributions of £99,400 be sought from both Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and the London Borough of Sutton for the financial year 2016/17;
- (3) If necessary, a Member Working Party should be established to look at the on-going budget situation in the face of continuing budgetary pressures facing both authorities.

* *Postscript: It was confirmed after the meeting that additional pension Fund contributions were also a significant factor*

51 SOUTH & SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM AWARD

The Joint Management Committee received and considered a report which sought permission to pursue a South & South East in Bloom Award for Nonsuch Park. This would be instead of the applying of the Green Flag award.

The appeal of the scheme was that, whilst similar to Green Flag, the application process appeared simpler and would require less resource. It was further noted that, in recent years, the London Borough of Sutton had also moved away from the Green Flag award in favour of an "In Bloom" scheme.

Accordingly, it was agreed that an application to the South & South East in Bloom Award scheme should be trialled for 2016 with a view to replacing the annual application for the Green Flag award.

52 NONSUCH PARK - GAS PIPE

A report was presented to the Joint Management Committee which informed members that Southern Gas Networks (SGN) was seeking an easement for the installation of a new section of gas pipework.

The pipework ran from the existing main to the Nursery Lodge. The work entailed SGN replacing the existing sub-deduct pipework and taking on responsibility for its maintenance. This was part of a national project instigated by OFGEM and the Health and Safety Executive to rectify an anomaly in the ownership of such pipework following the sale of the National Grid and would ensure its proper maintenance in future.

It was confirmed that the work would be undertaken at no cost to the Joint Management Committee. As yet no timescale had been given as to when the works would be undertaken. The Committee was assured that it would only involve a short period of disruption and there was no indication that the works would affect car parking at the site.

It was noted that there was one mature oak tree which could be at risk as a result of the works. Whilst the method of works undertaken were intended to minimise the risk of damage to this tree, it was confirmed that the Deed of Grant would include a five year financial indemnity requiring SGN to pay for the removal and the replanting of the tree (up to a maximum cost of £2,000) in the event of damage subsequently becoming apparent.

Officers undertook to inform the JMC when the works had been undertaken to their satisfaction.

Accordingly, the Joint Management Committee authorised Officers to enter into a Deed of Grant with SGN for the installation of a new section of gas pipework from the existing gas main to the Nursery Lodge.

53 PROGRESS REPORT - JANUARY 2016

A report was received by the Joint Management Committee which updated members on progress regarding various outstanding matters.

Farmer Memorial

The Joint Management Committee was delighted to note that the reinstatement work was underway and was due for completion by the end of February.

It was requested that the bollard to protect the newly restored memorial be installed before the reinstatement works were complete.

Asset Management Plan Working Party

It was confirmed that agents had been appointed to seek an office tenant who would be willing to refurbish the first floor of the Mansion House and that there had been some interest in this. It was further confirmed that this space did not include the Clock Room. It was also confirmed that the fireplaces on the first floor were included in the listed status enjoyed by the Mansion. It was queried whether or not it would be possible to look into the feasibility of escorted tours or some other mechanism to allow the public to view these heritage assets.

Heritage Lottery Fund

It was noted that discussions of the Working Party to date had centred on either developing a Parks for People bid for the park or a Heritage Grant for the upper floors of the Mansion House. The report informed the Committee that, should there be a strong indication in the coming months that the upper floors of the Mansion House could be successfully let on a commercial basis whilst preserving their heritage aspects, then it was proposed to concentrate on a Parks for People bid. A Stage One application could be lodged as early as February 2017, subject to sufficient match funding being identified. The Heritage Lottery Fund would be looking for a minimum financial contribution of 10%. However, voluntary work could contribute to the remaining matched funding required, being treated as a financial contribution in kind.

The JMC discussed the possibility of attracting corporate sponsorship for the park, (such as the sponsorship of flower beds), and asked that this be looked into by the Asset Management Working Party.

Walnut Grove

This had been planted and looked good. It was confirmed that a letter of thanks had been written to Mr. Ford of Epsom and Ewell's Tree Advisory Board. Mr. Ford had donated the Walnut Trees and had been instrumental in their planting.

Sustainable Planting

Sustainable planting was not a new idea and had many benefits – not in the least being cost effective. The number of beds laid out with traditional bedding plants would be reduced to three over a five year period. The colour scheme for the sustainable planting would be purple and white. However, the three beds closest to the Mansion House – the Round Bed, the Square Bed and the Library Bed – would retain seasonal bedding.

The Committee noted a report tabled by Frances Wright regarding butterfly recording in the Park and the request to bear in mind sensory planting in the Mansion House gardens. Sensory planting, whilst benefiting butterflies was also attractive to people, particularly the visually impaired. The Committee was informed by Epsom and Ewell's Street Care Manager that she was aware that grant funding of up to £5,000 was available to community groups from one of the large supermarkets following the introduction of the 5 pence carrier bag levy and suggested that this might be a project that the Nonsuch VOLES might possibly consider.

A brief update was requested regarding making the park dementia friendly. Epsom and Ewell's Streetcare Manager confirmed that she would be setting up a meeting with Lorraine Backshall from the Alzheimer's Society (whose contact she had been given by the Manager of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Wellbeing Centre) to discuss issues affecting those with dementia. She hoped to be able to report back to the next meeting. Councillor Graham Dudley asked if he could attend this meeting and it was agreed that this matter should become a regular update item on the Progress Report.

Update from Volunteer Groups

Mr. Airey of Nonsuch VOLES informed the Committee that a follow-up inspection and clearance had been undertaken of the culverts running behind Wickham Avenue. These were doing their job but it was disappointing to report that in one instance the culvert had been blocked by a make-shift bridge and in another instance, garden waste had been thrown over the park boundary. It was agreed that Officers would liaise with Ward Councillors to consider how best to address the problem.

Mr. Smith of the Friends of Nonsuch reported that the gallery remained open every Sunday and the Friends had been busy repainting and redecorating and

where making plans for their Silver Jubilee. Epsom and Ewell's Streetcare Manager reported that a feature bed was being planned this year to celebrate this event.

The significant number of hours put in by volunteers did not go unnoticed

54 EVENTS IN THE PARK

A report setting out events approved to date for 2016 was noted and the Joint Management Committee considered whether or not to permit two additional events in the Park this year.

Events approved to date were as follows:

- Mark Caswell Fun Run (7 February 2016)
- Marsden March (13 February 2016)
- Sport Relief (20 March 2016)
- Teddy Bear's Picnic (12 June 2016)
- Nonsuch Park Awareness Day (11 September 2016)

Members were informed that towards the end of last year Officers had been contacted by a company called Classic Festivals and Events which was interested in hosting a two day "Country Fair" style event in Nonsuch Park. Mr. Edmundson, the Company's Director was in attendance.

The company specialised in country-style events with a traditional village fete feel involving local food and drink producers, cookery demonstrations, craft stalls, dog shows etc which involved the local community. Some events attracted in the region of 15,000 people after becoming established.

In return for a contribution towards the park's running costs, it was proposed to allow an event to take place on a trial basis on 25 and 26 June 2016. It was proposed that the event would be held in the dog free area at the London Road gate. It would be ticketed and entirely run and managed by the event organisers who would provide all staff and equipment necessary to ensure the event was well managed, safe and secure. Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Streetcare Manager confirmed that she would be drawing up her own event management plan for the event. In particular, she wished to make sure that the areas proposed for parking were suitable.

Members were further informed that the Chairman of the Joint Management Committee had recently been approached by the Scout's District Commissioner regarding a proposal to hold a District Beaver Scout "Party in the Park".

It was proposed that the event would be held in the dog free area at the Cheam Gate on 9 July 2016 and it was anticipated that it would be similar in scale to the

NCT Teddy Bears Picnic. Members noted that Officers were comfortable with the initial proposal and, subject to discussing hire charge with the Group, did not have any operational concerns about the event.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed:

- (4) in principle to allow a Community Country Show in Nonsuch Park;
- (5) to allow the District Beaver Scout "Party in the Park" event.

55 FUTURE REPORTS/INFORMATION - JANUARY 2016

The Committee received a report which updated Members on issues which had previously been raised with the Joint Management Committee and which there was an intention to report to future meetings.

Whilst it was accepted that a review of the byelaws would be desirable, it was a resource issue and currently not an effective use of Officer time. Joint Enforcement teams were currently being considered.

Whilst it was noted that there was a general reference to the Habitat Management Plan on the list of outstanding items, there were also two discrete items within the plan which were identified for separate consideration. These were Pond Maintenance and Haymaking. In the context of recent flooding events, it was noted that this might be an opportune time to explore funding issues with the Environment Agency in relation to pond maintenance and there were some issues around the time of hay cutting which needed to be resolved. It was noted that it was hoped to bring reports on pond maintenance and the Habitat Plan in general back to the April meeting with specific issues around haymaking being considered later in the year. Finally, the Committee was informed that the issue of licencing and/or Public Space Protection Orders to control commercial dog walking as a Borough Wide Policy in Epsom and Ewell was yet to be discussed with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Leisure Committee Chairman.

Having noted the information contained in the report, it was agreed that the outstanding reference in relation to reviewing the byelaws be removed from the list for the timebeing.

56 FUTURE DATES FOR THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Joint Management Committee received a report which set out the proposed dates for meetings in the 2016/17 Municipal Year and which proposed that dates for future years be set in October to facilitate the forward planning for the future Municipal Years'.

Accordingly, the following dates were agreed:

- Monday 20 June 2016

- Monday 17 October 2016
- Monday 30 January 2017
- Monday 24 April 2017

It was further agreed that dates for future meetings be set at the October meeting of the Joint Management Committee.

57 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Joint Management Committee passed a resolution to exclude the public from the Meeting for Part Two of the Agenda on the grounds that the business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 to Schedule 12 A to the Act (as amended) and that pursuant to Paragraph 10 of Part 2 of the said Schedule 12A the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

58 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee held on 19 October 2015 (considered exempt from publication at this time were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

59 PROGRESS REPORT ON CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS - JANUARY 2016

A report was presented to the Joint Management Committee (considered exempt from publication).

The decisions of the Joint Management Committee are set out in a separate minute (considered exempt from publication).

The meeting began at 10.03 am and ended at 12.22 pm

COUNCILLOR MIKE TEASDALE (CHAIRMAN)