

Minutes of the Meeting of the NONSUCH PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held at the Mansion House, Nonsuch Park on 25 March 2024

PRESENT -

Councillor Julian Freeman (Epsom & Ewell Borough Council) (Chair); Councillors Tony Froud (Epsom & Ewell Borough Council), Peter Geiringer (London Borough of Sutton), Christine Howells (Epsom & Ewell Borough Council), Louise Phelan (London Borough of Sutton) and Christopher Woolmer (London Borough of Sutton)

In Attendance: Councillor Vanessa Udall (London Borough of Sutton), Jon Whitehead (Representative) (Nonsuch Voles), Michael Teasdale (Representative) (Friends of Nonsuch) and Rob Pinchbeck (Run Director) (Nonsuch Parkrun)

Officers present: Jackie King (Committee Clerk, Chief Executive Epsom & Ewell), Samantha Whitehead (Streetcare Manager), Lucy Buckland (Arts, Culture and Heritage Programme Officer), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Tony Foxwell (Senior Surveyor), Brendan Bradley (Head of Finance), Mitra Hagh-Shenas (Accountant), Mark Dalzell (Parks Manager, London Borough of Sutton), Ian Wolstencroft (Contract Officer London Borough of Sutton), Sarah Clift (Senior Countryside Officer) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer)

25 QUESTION AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions or statements were received from members of the public.

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors with respect to any items on the agenda.

27 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee was asked to confirm that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 January 2024 were a true record.

Councillor Louise Phelan requested that the minutes be amended to reflect that she had provided apologies for her absence. The Committee agreed to the amendment.

The Committee confirmed that the minutes were otherwise a true record and authorised the Chair to sign them, subject to the agreed amendment.

28 NONSUCH PARKRUN PRESENTATION

A Representative of Nonsuch Parkrun (Run Director) provided the Committee with a presentation on the contribution that the organisation provides to the Park and to the wider community.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Green Travel and Car Parking.** A Member asked how Nonsuch Parkrun encourages runners to travel to the Park via green means, such as walking or cycling, rather than driving. The Parkrun Representative explained that there is messaging on their website and that runners are also encouraged during the pre-run briefings. He explained that bike racks are provided for runners who arrive by bike, with a capacity for c.60 bikes. He mentioned that their website explains to runners that the car parking facilities at the Park are limited, and that they erect temporary signage setting out the no-parking areas. He explained that the information relating to the parking arrangements is also relayed to runners during the pre-run briefings.
- b) **Raising for Charity.** The Parkrun Representative explained that they support food banks in Epsom and Sutton and raise money for the Royal Marsden Hospital through their 5k run.
- c) **Cycle Racks.** The Parkrun Representative stated that they currently used four bike racks. He explained that the racks are large, heavy and require setup. He said Parkrun would like to use more racks, but there was a resourcing issue as more volunteers would be needed.
- d) **Accessibility and Attendance.** The Parkrun Representative stated that they aim to be inclusive and accessible to everyone. They don't make their events ticketed or put a limit of the number of runners. He said that they do their best to predict when there might be spikes in the number of runners and manage accordingly. He stated that on average, 650 people attend runs at the Park, with numbers going up to c.970 at their busiest runs.
- e) **Marshalling.** The Parkrun Representative explained that in order to help manage the runs, marshals are stationed around the Park, who adopt the role on a voluntary basis.

The Committee thanked the Nonsuch Parkrun Representative for attending and presenting.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:13 to allow for a short comfort break.

29 OUTDOOR DONATION POSTS

The meeting resumed at 11:20.

The Committee received a report providing an update on the Outdoor Donation Post project and seeking approval from Members to progress the project with a view to installing the donation post in the first quarter of the new financial year.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Installation.** The Streetcare Manager explained that the Company providing the donation post would not be responsible for its installation, and that the responsibility and cost of installing it would fall under the Committee. She confirmed that the post would be installed close to the café.
- b) **Planning Permission.** A Member enquired as to whether planning permission would be required for the post's installation. The Streetcare Manager confirmed that the matter was being investigated.
- c) **Donations.** The Streetcare Manager confirmed that the post would provide a means for card donations only, with no option for cash donations.
- d) **Donation Amount.** The Arts, Culture and Heritage Officer confirmed that the post would be set to a standard donation amount. The Streetcare Manager advised that most donation posts are set to £3 as standard, though suggested that a set amount up to £5 was considerable. Following a question from a Member, The Arts, Culture and Heritage Officer explained that donation posts designed for indoor use at other facilities such as museums provide the option for users to vary the amount that they donate, saying that it could be investigated as to whether that could be an option for the outdoor post at the Park.
- e) **Communications.** The Streetcare Manager suggested that marketing and public communications would be an important factor in the success of the donation post and its associated fundraising goal. She cited the example of wording used in the messaging employed by the Royal Parks: 'The magic of a Royal Park is priceless, but it doesn't come for free'; she suggested that similar messaging could be used for the Nonsuch Park donation post, and that the matter would be considered further.
- f) **Reward for Donating.** A Member enquired as to whether there was a means to provide something in return to donators, to encourage and reward people's generosity. The Streetcare Manager explained that the post technology would not allow for that. The Arts, Culture and Heritage Officer suggested that an option could be explored for a QR to be provided next to the posts with a link to information about the Park for people to read.
- g) **Power.** The Arts, Culture and Heritage Officer explained that solar panels had been explored as an option to power the post, but it was not stable or reliable.

- h) **Funding.** The Streetcare Manager explained that the Committee was being asked for an estimated £2500 for the post which would constitute 50% of the overall cost. She explained that the money had been found from previous underspending from the Committee's budget, with the remaining 50% being offered by the Friends of Nonsuch. The total anticipated cost of £5000 would include the cost of the installation of the post.
- i) **Buying/Renting.** The Streetcare Manager explained that the rental scheme, mentioned at paragraph 4.3 of the report, was not an option, and that the only option was for the outright purchase of the post. She explained that precise costs were not yet known, and further investigations were underway to ascertain the exact financial implications of the post.
- j) **Installation Timeframe.** A Member enquired as to whether the post, should it be agreed by the Committee at the June meeting, would be installed and ready by the start of the summer holidays. The Arts, Culture and Heritage Officer explained that following Committee agreement, the post would have an anticipated 4-week lead-time prior to installation. The Senior Surveyor added that building consent can take 3 months.
- k) **June Report.** It was agreed by the Committee that a follow-up report on the donation post would be brought to the June meeting, providing further information from the findings of the investigations and considerations discussed during the debate.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Accept the 50% contribution from the Friends of Nonsuch towards the supply and installation of an outdoor donation post.**

The Chair proposed that recommendations 2 and 3 of the report be combined, with wording as follows:

'Agree to authorise the Committee Clerk and Chair to make the decision for the capital investment of the remaining 50% from the NPJM cttee's 2024-25 repairs and renewal fund for an outright purchase of the donation post.'

Councillor Louise Phelan seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed (5 for, 1 abstention) to the proposal.

Subsequently, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (2) Agree to authorise the Committee Clerk and Chair to make the decision for the capital investment of the remaining 50% from the NPJM cttee's 2024-25 repairs and renewal fund for an outright purchase of the donation post.**

The Committee considered the following matters:

- l) **Recommendation 4.** The Arts, Culture and Heritage Officer explained that recommendation 4 of the report had been suggested following conversation with the Friends of Nonsuch. The representative of the Friends of Nonsuch explained that a common question they receive from Park visitors is the whereabouts of the Palace – he stated that it is a common misconception that the Mansion House is Nonsuch Palace. He explained that the intention of recommendation 4 was to enable further information to be provided for visitors with respect to the Palace and the Banqueting Suite in the form of panels, maps, information boards, etc. The Committee expressed concern that agreement to recommendation 4 would be too limiting in terms of how the funds raised by the donation post could be used, voicing that, whilst in agreement with the ideas suggested by the Friends, the Committee may wish for the funds to go towards other matters too. The Friends of Nonsuch Representative confirmed that the 50% contribution towards the donation post offered by the Friends was not contingent on the Committee agreeing to recommendation 4.

Subsequently, the Committee voted (1 for, 2 against, and 3 abstentions) on recommendation 4 of the report, “(4) Agree to use any monies raised from public donations towards more interpretation of the Palace and Banqueting Site”, and the recommendation was not carried.

30 REPORT ON COMMERCIAL DOG WALKING IN NONSUCH PARK

The Committee received a report to consider a proposed consultation questionnaire, prior to the commencement of the six-week consultation exercise to gauge public opinion on a proposal to introduce a pilot licencing scheme to formalise and regulate commercial dog walking in Nonsuch Park.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Condensing the Questionnaire.** It was the feeling of the Committee that the questionnaire could be made more succinct and condensed. This was noted by the Streetcare Manager.
- b) **Individual Charge.** In relation to question 17 of the draft questionnaire, it was established that, in the case of dog walking companies, each dog walker would be required to have a licence instead of a company-wide licence covering all dog walkers employed by the company.
- c) **Dog Free Areas.** The Streetcare Manager explained that dogs were allowed anywhere in the Park, off-lead, except for in the formal garden and the other three designated dog-free areas of the Park.
- d) **Hi-Vis Identifiers for Dogs.** As an alternative to dog walkers wearing hi-vis identifiers, a Member suggested that perhaps the dogs being walked commercially could wear hi-vis identifiers. The Streetcare Manager said she would investigate the viability of this option.

The Chair proposed that the wording of the report's recommendation be amended as follows:

'To authorise the Chair and Committee Clerk to agree the final consultation questionnaire, following condensation and revision, so that the six-week consultation with the public and stakeholders can commence on 1 April 2024.'

Councillor Christopher Woolmer seconded the proposal. The Committee unanimously agreed to the proposal.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

- (1) To authorise the Chair and Committee Clerk to agree the final consultation questionnaire, following condensation and revision, so that the six-week consultation with the public and stakeholders can commence on 1 April 2024.**

31 NONSUCH PLANNED MAINTENANCE REPORT UPDATE AND 2024-25 PRIORITY WORKS

This report provides an update on the current financial year 2023-24 priority planned maintenance programme (including any additional health & safety and emergency works undertaken during the year). It also seeks approval for the forthcoming 2024-25 priority planned maintenance works.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Formal Garden Fence Repair.** A Member enquired as to whether the damaged formal gardens fence ought to be on the list of priority works. The Senior Surveyor explained that the repair of the fence was not considered a priority matter. The Streetcare Manager said that she would look into options for reducing the costs for repairing the fence.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved to:

- (1) Note the progress of the works (including the additional Health & Safety and emergency works) carried out during the current financial year 2023-24.**

Councillor Peter Geiringer proposed that the wording of recommendation 2 of the report be amended as follows:

'Approve the proposed planned maintenance priority works for 2024-25, as set out at section 4 of the report.'

The Chair seconded the proposal. The Committee unanimously agreed to the proposal.

Subsequently, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (2) Approve the proposed planned maintenance priority works for 2024-25, as set out at section 4 of the report.**

32 NJMC FINANCE REPORT & BUDGET 2024/25

This report provides a forecast for 2023/24 and seeks the Joint Management Committee's approval of both the 2024/25 budget and the recommended contributions to be sought from the constituent authorities.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Clarification of Contributions.** The Chief Finance Officer clarified that the figure of £111,000 was being sought from each of the two authorities, coming to a total of £222,000.
- b) **Reduced Contributions.** The Chief Finance Officer clarified that the contributions being sought had reduced compared to the previous municipal year. He explained that the reduction in sought contributions was partially offset by income from the property estate.
- c) **Equal Contributions.** The Chair explained that Epsom & Ewell and Sutton Councils were required to provide equal contributions – any reduction from one authority would be matched by the other. He stated that he believed it was important for the future of the Park for the Park to become self-funding if possible.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Note the latest 2023/24 forecast position;**
- (2) Agree the revenue budget for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;**
- (3) Agree to seek contributions of £111,000 from both Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and the London Borough of Sutton for the financial year 2024/25, as set-out in section 5 of the report.**

The meeting began at 10.00 am and ended at 12.20 pm

COUNCILLOR JULIAN FREEMAN (CHAIR)

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