

Minutes of the Meeting of the NONSUCH PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held at the Mansion House, Nonsuch Park on 14 October 2024

PRESENT -

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

In Attendance: Councillor Vanessa Udall (London Borough of Sutton), Michael Teasdale (Representative) (Friends of Nonsuch) and Jean Teasdale (Representative) (Friends of Nonsuch)

Officers present: Jackie King (Committee Clerk, Chief Executive, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council), Samantha Whitehead (Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare), Epsom & Ewell Borough Council), Kevin Hanlon (Interim Chief Finance Officer, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council), Mitra Hagh-Shenas (Accountant, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council), Ian Wolstencroft (Contract Officer, London Borough of Sutton), Jeremy Harte (Bourne Hall Museum Curator, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council)

10 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

11 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirmed as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 17 June 2024 and authorised the Chair to sign them.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

13 A TRIBUTE TO GERALD SMITH

The Bourne Hall Museum Curator provided a tribute to the late Gerald Smith, in memory of his long years of service and dedication to Nonsuch Park.

Representatives of the Friends of Nonsuch announced to the Committee that they intended to repair the wall and steps at the rear of the formal gardens of Nonsuch Mansion. They explained that the idea was first put forward by Gerald Smith, and now proposed that the project be dedicated to Gerald in his memory.

The Committee enquired as to whether a plaque or other memorial feature for Gerald could be mounted on or near the repaired wall. The representatives of the Friends said they would investigate the options.

14 NONSUCH PARK VIRTUAL TOUR PRESENTATION

The representatives from Whistlestop Arts were unable to attend the meeting due to unforeseeable circumstances. The presentation on the Nonsuch Park Virtual Tour was consequently unable to go ahead.

The Committee agreed they would like to see the presentation added to the agenda for the next scheduled meeting in January.

15 COMMERCIAL DOG WALKING IN NONSUCH PARK LICENSING SCHEME

The Committee received a report proposing a 12-month pilot Commercial Dog Walking Licensing Scheme in Nonsuch Park.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Licence Fee and Dog-Limit.** In response to a Member, the Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) confirmed that the Nonsuch Park Commercial Dog Walking Working Group proposed a licence fee of £200 per annum. She confirmed that the working group proposed that the maximum number of dogs per person be set to 6, with the recommendation of 4 dogs as best-practice. She explained that in any case, each commercial dog-walker's insurance must cover them for the number of dogs they choose to walk.
- b) **Scheme Launch Date.** Following a question from a Member, the Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) confirmed that, should the Committee be minded to adopt the proposal for the 12 month pilot licensing scheme, the scheme would be due for launch in April.
- c) **Communications.** In response to a Member, the Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) explained that the licensing scheme would be advertised and promoted on the Park's notice boards and the Councils', social media platforms. She stated that information regarding the licensing scheme would likely also spread quickly via word of mouth. She explained that a Nonsuch Park email address had been established as a means for the commercial dog walkers, and any other Park users, to contact the Council with any queries they might have.
- d) **Commercial Dog-Walking Community.** Following the Nonsuch Park Commercial Dog-Walking Consultation Forum held at Bourne Hall on 20

August 2024, the Committee acknowledged that many of the Commercial Dog-Walkers of Nonsuch Park had formed a close-knit community together, and considered the benefits that the community could bring to the Park, including security and safety for Park users. The Committee noted that the Commercial Dog Walkers who attended the consultation forum were supportive of the implementation of the proposed licensing scheme.

- e) **6-Dog Limit.** The Committee noted that the proposed terms of the licensing scheme stipulated that individual commercial dog walkers would be limited to walking no more than 6 dogs at a time. The Committee considered the possibility of dog walkers meeting up, resulting in groups of dogs larger than six being walked together. The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that the matter could be addressed in the Nonsuch Park Dog Walking Code of Conduct and in the Nonsuch Park Commercial Dog-Walking Licensing Policy – she explained that both documents would be brought before the Committee in January for final approval prior to implementation.
- f) **Future Report to Review the Scheme.** The Committee agreed that a report would be brought back after a year from the launch of the scheme to allow the Nonsuch Park Commercial Dog-Walking Licensing Scheme to be reviewed.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the outcome of the Commercial Dog Walking Working Group Meeting and subsequent Commercial Dog Walking Forum.**
- (2) **Agree to adopt the proposal for a 12-month pilot Commercial Dog Walking Licensing Scheme for Nonsuch Park as set out in section 3 of the report.**
- (3) **Agree to a Dog Walking Code of Conduct to be devised and advertised for all dog walkers in the park.**
- (4) **Agree to receive a draft Nonsuch Park Commercial Dog-Walking Licensing Policy and a draft Nonsuch Park Dog Walking Code of Conduct for approval at the January meeting of the Committee.**

16 INDOOR DONATION UNITS UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received a reporting updating the Committee on the progress of the Indoor Donation Units.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Cost of Units.** The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that the initial cost estimated for the donation units in the Park was £5000. She explained that the donation units had since been quoted at £800, with a

final spend, including installation costs, etc, predicted to come to just less than £1000 overall, which was to be split evenly between the Committee and the Friends of Nonsuch. She clarified that the units would be indoor units, with an option for mobile use – she explained in large part the lower cost was a result of opting for indoor units over outdoor ones, as indoor units avoid the need for groundworks and underground cabling for power. She confirmed that Bovingdons had given approval for a donation unit to be located inside the café.

- b) **Damages and Warranty.** In response to a Member, the Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) explained that the donation units were not being rented and were owned by the Committee. She had confidence that there was a low risk of the units becoming damaged or vandalised due to the fact that they were located indoors. She stated that, in the event that they do become damaged, the units were under warranty.
- c) **Payment Method.** Following a question from a Member, the Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) confirmed that the donation units allowed for card payments only. She stated that, for Park users who wish to or are only able to donate to the Park via cash, the Nonsuch Voles had a cash box placed in the café.
- d) **Units Display.** The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) explained that the agreed fundraising objective agreed by the Committee would be displayed on the digital screen on the donation units, to inform Park users on what their donations will go towards. A Member suggested that the display ought to include a graph to show progress towards a fundraising target – the Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that she would investigate the possibility of including a progress graph.
- e) **Review of Fundraising Objective.** A Member enquired as to what the process would be for reviewing the fundraising objective and success of the donation units. The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) suggested that the Committee could receive a report on a semi-regular basis to allow opportunity to amend or change the fundraising objective. The Committee agreed that information on the success of the donation units would be included within the finance report brought to the January meeting.
- f) **Fundraising Objective Considerations.** The Committee considered the following:
- **Repairs and Maintenance.** The Committee considered that the fundraising objective could focus on repairs, maintenance, and general upkeep requirements within the Park. The Committee noted that Commercial Dog-Walkers at the recent consultation forum suggested they would be keen for CCTV within the Park's car parks. The Committee considered that comments relating to the car parks, with respect to repair and maintenance needs, were frequently received from Park users.

- **Arts, Culture and Heritage Projects.** The Committee considered that the fundraising objective could focus on arts, culture and heritage projects within the Park. The Committee noted that the Friends of Nonsuch were keen for additional signage and information in the Park with respect to the Palace site. The Committee considered the positive public opinion on the recent wooden sculptures created in Bourne Hall's grounds, and suggested that Park users would enjoy similar projects in Nonsuch Park.

Following consideration, Councillor Woolmer proposed that 'Art and Information Installations, Repairs and Maintenance,' be agreed as the first fundraising objective for the donation units. Councillor Freeman seconded the proposal.

Subsequently, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the progress of the project.**
- (2) **Agree 'Art and Information Installations, Repairs and Maintenance,' as the first fundraising objective for the launch of the Good Box Donation units.**

17 AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE FOR A PLAYGROUND IN NONSUCH PARK

The Committee received a report seeking permission from the Committee to pursue a bid to Your Fund Surrey for a toddler playground in the London Road Dog Free area.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Partner to Put Bid Forward.** The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) confirmed that the Nonsuch Voles and Little Oak Nursery would both be happy to put the bid forward on behalf of the Park.
- b) **Intended Age-Group.** The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) explained that the available funding was too low to afford costly playground staples such as swings and slides, but could afford a small-scale playground, suitable for young children, such as a trim-trail. Following concerns raised by the Committee with respect to inappropriate age-groups potentially using the playground, the Contracts Officer suggested that signage could be put in place specifying the playground's intended age-group.
- c) **Appearance and Materials.** The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) explained that the intention was for the playground to have a 'natural' appearance and to be made chiefly of rustic materials such as wood and rope. The Committee expressed their approval of this choice of materials and expressed that they would not want a prevalent use of metal or for the playground to be visually incongruent with the natural aesthetic of the Park.

- d) **Location of Playground.** The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that the London Road dog-free area was a large space, and that the small scale of the playground meant a low risk of noise related nuisances being caused for visitors of the area. She explained that if the playground were located outside of the dog-free area, the playground would need to be fenced off for safety from dogs, which would incur a higher cost.
- e) **Maintenance and Insurance.** In response to a Member, the Contracts Officer informed the Committee that playground inspections are conducted regularly, with maintenance carried out as required. The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) explained that she had spoken with the relevant officers and had been advised that there would be capacity to include the Nonsuch Park playground within regular playground inspection routines. She explained that all Council playgrounds are covered by insurance.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Give authority for officers to investigate the viability of a playground in Nonsuch Park London Road Dog Free Area.**
- (2) **Agree to receive a further report on progress of this application at the next meeting on 20 January 2025.**

18 MID YEAR BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a report advising the Committee of the mid-year financial position for 2024/25 and the forecast outturn.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Financial Position Review.** In response to queries from Members, the Interim Chief Finance Officer advised that the January finance report could provide a review of the Committee's current financial position and inform the Committee on the structure and commerciality of the Committee's current fees and charges.
- b) **Filming in the Park.** The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) explained that income from filming in the Park was inconsistent due to the unpredictable nature of when and how often filming requests are received. She explained that Bovingdons were responsible for any filming taking place inside the mansion, with the Committee responsible for any filming taking place in the grounds or car parks.
- c) **Fuel Cost Variance.** In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) explained that, following a change in legislation in 2022, one of the Park's tractors had been switched from using red diesel to white diesel. This incurred a cost due to a required

deep clean and installation of new fuel gauges to ensure compliance with legislation. She explained that white diesel is also more expensive than red diesel.

- d) **Unplanned Costs.** Following a question from a Member, the Accountant explained that a portion of the 2024/25 expenditure was due to unplanned mandatory works. She explained that it is challenging to accurately incorporate a contingency for unplanned planned in the budget due to the unpredictable nature of such works.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Note the mid-year financial position.**

19 URGENT DECISIONS

The Committee received a report on the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with the requirements of the Epsom & Ewell Constitution.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Damages and Costs.** The Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that the unauthorised encampment had resulted in minimal damages and costs for the Committee.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Note the urgent decisions taken and the reasons for those decisions, since the last meeting of the committee.**

The meeting began at 10.05 am and ended at 11.25 am

COUNCILLOR LOUISE PHELAN (CHAIR)

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