

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the NONSUCH PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held at the Mansion House, Nonsuch Park on 24 March 2025**

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### **PRESENT -**

Councillor Louise Phelan (London Borough of Sutton) (Chair); Councillors Julian Freeman (Epsom & Ewell Borough Council) (items 33-37 only), Tony Froud (Epsom & Ewell Borough Council), Christine Howells (Epsom & Ewell Borough Council), Vanessa Udall (London Borough of Sutton) (as nominated substitute for Councillor Peter Geiringer) and Christopher Woolmer (London Borough of Sutton)

In Attendance: Richard Harris (Representative) (Friends of Nonsuch), Peter Lockwood (Representative) (Nonsuch Voles), Martin Howe (Representative) (Ewell Astronomical Society) (items 30-33 only) and Suzanne Fox (Representative) (Ewell Astronomical Society) (items 30-33 only)

Absent: Councillor Peter Geiringer (London Borough of Sutton)

Officers present: Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Tony Foxwell (Senior Surveyor), Samantha Whitehead (Interim Assistant Head of Service - Streetcare), Mitra Hagh-Shenas (Accountant), Ian Wolstencroft (Contracts Officer London Borough of Sutton) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer)

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### **30 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

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

### **31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

#### **Events in the Park**

Councillor Louise Phelan, Other Interest: In the interest of openness and transparency, Councillor Louise Phelan wished to declare that she was the current Chair of the Sutton Council Licensing Committee. It was noted that the proposed licence application would be submitted and administered by Epsom and Ewell Officers, and that Councillor Phelan would not be involved in the submission or the determination of the application.

### **32 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee confirmed as a true record the public minutes and the restricted minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 January 2025 and authorised the Chair to sign them.

### 33 SOLAR SYSTEM EXPLORATION WALK PROPOSAL

The Committee received a report providing an updated proposal for a Solar System Exploration Walk in Nonsuch Park.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **General Information.** The representative of the Ewell Astronomical Society provided an opening statement:
  - He stated that the Ewell Astronomical Society had considered the use of information boards versus QR codes for the walk, recognising that information boards would be more visual impactful, with the QR codes being less costly. He advised that a hybrid approach would be best, with information boards at either end of the walk and QR codes in between. He explained that QR code usage could be tracked in order to gauge popularity.
  - He explained that the Ewell Astronomical Society had recently entered into collaboration with Whistlestop Arts, who would be providing artistic visuals and other enhancements to the project.
  - He explained that Ewell Astronomical Society had submitted an application to Your Fund Surrey to fund the project.
  - He explained that the walk could be done in either direction, with arrow markers along the way to direct people, with one end of the walk proposed near the London Road entrance car park, and the other near the Mansion.
  - He stated that the walk would also provide people with historical information relevant to Nonsuch Park, with respect to astronomy and the solar system.
- b) **Accessibility Consideration.** A Member suggested that, depending on the height of the large notice boards, some people such as children or wheelchair users may have difficulty reading the information on them. The representative of the Ewell Astronomical Society stated that the notice boards do not have a predetermined height and that he would seek advice on the most appropriate height for them.
- c) **Digital/Physical Content Considerations.** With respect to the QR codes for the solar system walk, the Committee considered that mobile data can oftentimes be unreliable in certain parts of the Park. The Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) advised that investigations would be conducted to ascertain the viability of QR codes along the proposed route for the walk. The representative of the Ewell Astronomical Society stated that if QR codes proved unviable, printed information leaflets could be provided as an alternative. The Interim Assistant Head of Service

(Streetcare) explained that the leaflets for the tree trail were printed at Epsom Town Hall, and the cost of leaflets for the solar system walk could likely be covered within existing budgets. The representative of the Nonsuch Voles stated that the leaflets for the tree trail had proven very popular, with the dispenser needing daily refilling. The Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that the leaflets produced by Whistlestop Arts, with whom the Ewell Astronomical Society had recently entered into collaboration, also had a track record of popularity and success.

- d) **Timescale.** In response to a question from a Member, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that the cut-off date for applications was the end of March, and that it could take 6-8 weeks from that time to know if the application was successful.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Support and approve the updated proposal for a Solar System Exploration Walk in Nonsuch Park, as at appendix 1 to the report, subject to a successful funding application to Your Fund Surrey.**

#### 34 NONSUCH PLANNED MAINTENANCE REPORT UPDATE AND 2025-26 PRIORITY WORKS

The Committee received a report providing an update on the current financial year 2024-25 priority planned maintenance programme (including additional Health & Safety and emergency works undertaken during the year), and seeking approval for the forthcoming 2025-26 priority planned maintenance works.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Car Park Works.** In response to a question from a Member, with respect to the issue of potholes in the car parks, the Senior Surveyor stated there was insufficient budget/reserves to carry out the works necessary to resurface the car parks, and that the budget only allowed for potholes to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. He stated that Nonsuch Park had recently been successful in securing grant funding for various works across the Park, and that he was hopeful that possible future grant funding might be able to go towards works within the car parks. Members of the Committee considered that Surrey County Council or local private contractors might be able to fill potholes in the Park's car parks for a reduced rate.
- b) **Mansion House Maintenance.** In response to a question from a Member, the Senior Surveyor explained that Bovingdons were responsible for the internal areas of the Mansion, with the Committee responsible for the communal/external areas and the public toilets. He explained that the Mansion was a grade II listed building, and if Bovingdons were made responsible for all of the building's costs, they would be unable to afford to use the building. He explained that their rent goes in part towards the

repair costs covered by the Committee. The Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) informed the Committee that Bovigdons employs a permanent caretaker dedicated to the maintenance of the building's interior. The Head of Property and Regeneration explained that Bovigdons' contract requires them to keep the interior of the Mansion in a good state of repair, explaining that prior to their tenancy the building was empty and its interior deteriorated, and that Bovigdons had brought the building's interior back to its current restored state for their wedding business.

- c) **Formal Gardens Works.** The Senior Surveyor informed the Committee of the works that had recently been completed in the formal gardens, funded by the Friends of Nonsuch. He explained that the wall by the Greenhouse had been successfully rebuilt and that replacement stone lions had been installed by the steps.
- d) **Mansion House Roof Works.** In response to a question from a Member, the Senior Surveyor explained that the works to the roof would need listed building consent and that Bovigdons would be consulted prior to any works taking place due to the possible effect it may have on their wedding business.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the progress of the works (including the additional Health & Safety and emergency works) carried out during the current financial year 2024-25.**
- (2) **Approve the proposed planned maintenance priority works for 2025-26.**

## 35 EVENTS IN THE PARK

The Committee received a report seeking approval to explore the possibility of hosting children's funfairs in the park as a new income stream and visitor attraction, seeking delegated authority for appointed officers to negotiate the standard terms and conditions of hire as necessary and to apply for a premises licence for the London Road Picnic Area, and presenting the committee with details of events taking place in the park in 2025.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Funfair for Young Children in the Park.** The Committee were informed that the operator of 'Spectacular' children's funfairs had expressed interest in holding an event at Nonsuch Park, in the London Road London Road Picnic Area, for September time. The Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) and the Contracts Officer stated that the operator had previously held funfair events in Epsom & Ewell and in Sutton, and had a track record of being flexible, responsible, and reliable. The Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) confirmed that contractually any

ground damages caused by the funfair would be the responsibility of the operator.

- b) **Larger Funfair Considerations.** In response to a question from a Member, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that the gated entrance to the Park was not wide enough to accommodate larger scale funfairs in the Park, such as the ones held at Hook Road Arena, and that widening the gates would be very costly and require planning permission. She stated that larger scale funfairs aimed at an older audience come with an increased risk of damages and antisocial behaviour, and advised that they may not be a suitable fit for Nonsuch Park.
- c) **Extent of Premises licence Application.** In response to a question from a Member, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) confirmed that the proposed application for the premises licence as set out in the report would cover the London Road picnic area only. She stated that in the future, if necessary, application(s) could be made for additional area(s) in the Park.
- d) **Gardens as Space for Events.** In response to a question from a Member, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) advised that the formal gardens space can be used to hold events, but would require consultation with Bovingdons in each case.
- e) **Potential Event Consideration.** A Member enquired as to whether Nonsuch Park could be used to hold open air cinema events. The Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that the matter would be investigated.
- f) **Event Marketing and Advertisement.** In response to comments from a Member, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that the extent to which the Park can be promoted and advertised to companies and event organisers as a hireable space was limited by Council staff resource. She stated that there was currently no budget for a dedicated post to fill a Nonsuch Park event coordinator role.
- g) **Upcoming Cancer Race Event.** In respect of the upcoming Cancer Research charity run event, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) Sam stated it was expected that the Park could accommodate the number of people predicted to attend, though parking availability might prove challenging.
- h) **Upcoming Music Festival Event.** The Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated that the upcoming 'Beats & Eats Summer Festival' would be run by the same operator as the Town & Country Show. She addressed Members' concerns by explaining that the music festival would be treated as a family event, and would not go on late or involve any camping.

- i) **Additional Upcoming Event.** Sam: The Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) informed the Committee that an additional application for an event not listed in the report had recently been received for a traditional dance performance in the Park, due to be held by the site of the old banqueting house. It was suggested that a site near the Mansion would be more suitable – the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) stated she would investigate that possibility.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Authorise officers to explore hosting children’s funfairs in Nonsuch Park to generate revenue.**
- (2) **Nominate and authorise Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s Head of Operational Services, Interim Assistant Head of Service Streetcare, and Head of Legal to complete final negotiations and agreement of contractual terms and enter into licence agreements as necessary for all events in the park as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report.**
- (3) **Nominate and authorise Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s Head of Operational Services, Interim Assistant Head of Service Streetcare, and Operational Services Business Advisor to apply for a Premises Licence for the London Road Picnic Area to ensure compliance with licencing regulations for large events.**
- (4) **Note the upcoming events in the park for 2025.**

## 36 PLAYGROUND PROJECT UPDATE

The Committee received a report updating the committee on the Playground Project for the London Road Picnic Area in Nonsuch Park.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Equipment on Offer.** In response to a question from a Member, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) clarified that all of the equipment pictured within Appendix 1 to the report would be provided as part of the playground.
- b) **Health & Safety Considerations.** In response to a question from a Member, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) confirmed that all of the proposed equipment accorded with the necessary safety requirements. She stated that the playground would receive weekly visual inspections, quarterly detailed inspections, and yearly RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) inspections. She stated that dogs would not be able to access the playground as it would be located in a fenced-off section of the Park. She stated that Initial checks indicated that the proposed location for the playground was suitable.

- c) **Accessibility and Inclusivity.** In response to questions from Members, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) and Contracts Officer stated that options for accessible and inclusive equipment would be investigated for users of the playground with mobility, mental or visual disabilities.
- d) **Equipment Lifespan.** Following a question from a Member, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) advised that the proposed equipment would have a predicted lifespan of 10-15 yrs before needing to be decommissioned.
- e) **Upkeep and Maintenance.** In response to a question from a Member, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) explained that if during routine inspections it were to become apparent that any of the equipment had fallen into a state beyond repair, then that equipment would be removed and not replaced. She stated that costs for basic repairs would be covered by Epsom & Ewell Council's parks budget. She stated that the Committee would be updated as appropriate on any significant repairs or removals of equipment.
- f) **Timescale.** In response to a question from a Member, the Interim Assistant Head of Service (Streetcare) advised that the commencement of the construction of the playground was contingent on the success of the funding application.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

**(1) Note the progress of the project**

**37 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

During the Committee's debate on item 9 of the agenda (Signing Probate/Administration Papers), the Committee agreed that, due to the sensitivity of the information contained within Appendix 1 to the report, an exclusion of the press and public would be necessary in order to enable effective debate on the matter in question.

The Committee unanimously resolved to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A 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.

**38 SIGNING PROBATE/ADMINISTRATION PAPERS**

The Committee received a report seeking to nominate and authorise the Chief Executive of Epsom & Ewell and Clerk to the Nonsuch Committee to deal in

obtaining probate/administration and sign all the necessary paperwork in connection with the same.

The summary of the Committee's debate during Part II of the meeting is recorded in a separate (not for publication) restricted minute.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Nominate and authorise the Chief Executive of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and Clerk to the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee, and in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, to act in all applications for Probate/administration of estate purposes and sign all papers in connection with such applications.**
- (2) Nominate and authorise the Chief Executive of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and Clerk to the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee, and in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, to act in the application for Probate/administration and sign all papers in connection with the application as set out in Exempt Appendix 1 to the report.**

*The meeting began at 10.02 am, was adjourned between 11:38 – 11:42, and ended at 11.46 am*

COUNCILLOR LOUISE PHELAN (CHAIR)