

Minutes of the Meeting of the NONSUCH PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held on 24 April 2017

PRESENT -

Councillor Mary Burstow (London Borough of Sutton) (Chairman); ; Councillor Richard Broadbent (London Borough of Sutton), Councillor Alex Clarke (Epsom & Ewell Borough Council), Councillor Graham Dudley (Epsom & Ewell Borough Council) and Councillor Mike Teasdale (Epsom & Ewell Borough Council).

In Attendance: Paul Airey (Nonsuch Voles), Gerald Smith (Friends of Nonsuch) and Frances Wright (Nonsuch Watch)

Absent: Councillor David Hicks (London Borough of Sutton)

Officers present: Kathryn Beldon (Chief Executive), Mark Shephard (Head of Property), Dominic Aslangul (Parks Manager, London Borough of Sutton), Stewart Cocker (Countryside Manager), Peter Steel (Head Gardener), Brian Thompson (Interim Head of Financial Services), Samantha Whitehead (Streetcare Manager) and Sandra Dessent (Democratic Services Officer)

109 ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING (IF REQUIRED)

Mr. Pinchbeck of Parkrun addressed the Committee. He provided an update of the organisation's activities in Nonsuch Park as follows:

- Following reports of parking issues in the car park and on the verges surrounding the Avenue car park, Parkrun marshals had been deployed to ensure that drivers were aware of parking policies. Mr. Pinchbeck assured the Committee that car parking regulations were always stressed at meeting/events and that they were continually seeking to recruit more volunteer marshals.
- Parkrun had now switched to the summer courses which were proving to be very popular.
- The next 'Golden Rod Day' (part of the Meadow Project) was scheduled for 24 June. Parkrun were hoping to build on the success of the previous year where volunteers carried out 180 hours of work clearing the meadow.
- A recent charity quiz night had raised £300 in aid of Alzheimers.

- A consultation paper on preserving the free use of public parks had been published by the Department for Communities and Local Government, which focused on the activities of Parkrun. Mr. Pinchbeck encouraged all members to read the document and take part in the consultation.
- The junior Parkrun had been particularly successful and in just over a year 64 events had been held, involving 1,400 4-14 year olds, and a recent event saw 199 juniors taking part.
- Mr. Pinchbeck extended the invitation to all the Committee members to take part in the running events or to join the bank of up to 50 volunteers.

The Chairman of the Committee on behalf of all the members thanked Mr. Pinchbeck for Parkrun's diligence in marshalling the car parks and congratulated him on the success of their events, especially the junior events which so positively impacted the health and fitness of young people.

110 CLERK TO THE NONSUCH JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Chairman welcomed and introduced the newly appointed Chief Executive of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and Clerk of the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee, Mrs. Kathryn Beldon.

111 TREASURER TO THE NONSUCH PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Chairman informed the Committee of the appointment of an Interim Treasurer to the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee, Mr. Lee Duffy.

112 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors in items on this agenda.

113 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee held on 30 January 2017 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

114 RESTORATION OF THE ROUND POND

The Committee received a report detailing a proposal to fence off and gate the Round Pond and converting the Sparrow Farm picnic area into a dog socialisation area which would include a dog friendly pond. In November 2016 the Committee had agreed to the removal of some tree cover and vegetation on the south side of the pond which had provided much needed light to the pond. In order to give an indication of the water quality the Nonsuch Voles had carried out water quality tests and concluded that there were indications of significant pollution and likely contributing factors were dog faeces and leaf litter. Following these findings, approval was now being sought for the next stage of the

restoration ie; fencing off of the pond and creating a new area for dogs thus allowing the pond time to recover.

Stewart Cocker, Countryside Manager for Epsom & Ewell addressed the Committee to talk about a similar project that had taken place in Horton Country Park. A pond which had been thriving in the late 90's and had been used by many dogs, experienced a steep decline in quality until it was fenced off in 2014. The condition of the pond had improved dramatically in a short amount of time, and was now completely restored to its former glory. Stewart commented that members of the public had been extremely supportive of the scheme and estimated that 90% of the people effected by the fencing off of the pond had adhered to the request to keep dogs out of the area.

The Committee was assured that if there were any plans to remove/relocate large areas of trees or vegetation, relevant specialists would be consulted. Members noted that there would be a gate in the fence to allow access for maintenance but that it would initially stay locked to the public. It was further noted that the creation of a pond in the new dog socialisation area would likely benefit the drainage in the area which was not often used due to being waterlogged the majority of time.

Having considered the proposals, the Committee agreed to the following recommendations:

- (1) To grant permission for the Lower Mole Project to bid for funds to fence off and gate the Round Pond, and if successful to commence works during summer 2017.
- (2) To convert the Sparrow Farm picnic area to a dog socialisation area.
- (3) To construct a small, dog friendly area to a dog socialisation area.

In addition, the following recommendations were proposed and agreed:

- (4) An annual report in April to come before the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee with an update on the progress of the project for both the Round Pond area and the dog socialisation area
- (5) A review of the project to be undertaken after five years to assess the success of the scheme.

115 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS & OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Marking out boundaries of the Old Palace

Councillor Mike Teasdale outlined the progress to date as follows:

- It had been suggested that the rubble from the original palace stored in the basement could be used with a mixture of chalk to mark out the

boundary of the original palace. The Museum of London, who own the rubble had been approached with the proposal to use only the small pieces of stone that they were willing to give up. It was agreed that a Committee representative would write to Professor Biddle who was involved with the original project in 1959 to mark the stones, to inform him of the proposals and reassure him that no pieces of stone would be destroyed or crushed to use in the project.

- The cost of constructing the boundary markings was also being investigated, however it was not possible to obtain any quotes until the materials to be used had been confirmed. The Committee noted the progress to date, and it was agreed that a report detailing the options for construction and the estimated costs would be provided at the next Joint Management Committee meeting.

Linking with Historical Palaces

The Committee was informed that a response had been received to a letter of enquiry advising that as the original palace was no longer standing the current site/buildings could not demonstrate a relevant connection with its former 'royal use' required to fit in with the charity's main cause 'to help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society in some of the greatest palaces ever built.'

Children's Play Area in the Dog Free Zone

The Committee noted the progress to date, and it was agreed that in order to consider the project further, a report would have to be submitted detailing the equipment costs and options (with supporting literature), maintenance costs and project timetable, bearing in mind that planning permission would have to be granted prior to commencement. It was also suggested that naturalistic equipment would be more suited to the park environment and that a park adjacent to Vauxhall Bridge was a good example.

Assurance of the demand for a children's play area was given and supported by the 2014 Nonsuch Park visitor survey that placed this type of project at the top of the list of requests.

Flying Drones in Nonsuch Park

Due to a growing concern regarding the use of drones in Nonsuch Park, the Committee was asked to consider the displaying of posters on the park notice boards outlining people's responsibilities when using drones in public places. The Committee was informed that the existing byelaws governing Nonsuch Park did not cover the use of drones and officers were seeking legal advice regarding the viability in terms of cost and timescales of banning the drones.

Members discussed the implications of displaying the drone code. Councillors voted and agreed to put up posters on the noticeboard whilst continuing to investigate a long term solution. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

Sponsorship Proposal

The Committee was informed that with the Chairman's and Clerk's approval officers were currently in discussion with a company called Agriframes about a sponsorship proposal. It was explained that Agriframes were the suppliers and manufacturers of the metal Rose Arbour in the Formal Gardens, which was purchased some years ago for the benefit of the Park by the Friends of Nonsuch. The Company were keen to use photographs in their advertising literature and display a small plaque in exchange for £3,000 worth of products from their catalogue and a 25% discount on future purchases for the duration of the agreement.

It was noted that an agreement had been drawn up by Epsom & Ewell's legal team was currently with Agriframes to sign.

South and South East in Bloom

The Committee noted that officers and Nonsuch Voles were keen to progress with this year's entries following a meeting with Peter Holman who had given good advice on how to prepare for this year's judging. It had been decided to enter more than one category to reflect all aspects of the Park and the contribution of its thriving volunteer community.

Epsom & Ewell Green Belt Study

Councillor Graham Dudley informed the Committee that Epsom & Ewell had recently published a study of their green belt and four sites had been highlighted for consideration to be included in the green belt, one of which was Nonsuch Park. A public consultation would be taking place and the Councillor Dudley had requested that the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee be a named consultee. It was agreed that members would be notified of the timetable for consultation to ensure that they had a chance to comment prior to any decision being made. It was noted that the study was available to view on the Epsom & Ewell website.

Vandalism in the Park

It was noted with regret that vandalism in the park was on the increase and Nonsuch Voles gave several examples of recent incidents. It was agreed that the Committee would receive a full report at the next meeting and a police representative would be invited to attend.

116 **PROGRESS REPORT - APRIL 2017**

Update from Nonsuch Watch

Frances Wright from Nonsuch Watch briefed the Committee on a report from the University of Exeter and the BTO regarding the health benefits of birdwatching not just as a hobby but also being around them. It was noted that unfortunately in Nonsuch Park some species of birds had declined and she hoped that

requirements of those which need each kind of habitat would be taken in account.

Bill Downey of Butterfly Conservation has submitted a list of butterflies seen on the surveys done in the main park last year. The main triumph was finding the White Letter Hairstreak in the park, the previous sighting had been in 1997. It was a rare species and its presence was due to the remaining stands of Elm and the Wych Elm trees.

Sometime during this year a biologist, Dr. June Chatfield was intending to have a close look at the lichens in the park, which were good indicators of air quality.

Update from Nonsuch Voles

It was noted that the Nonsuch Voles continued to be extremely busy and active in and around the Park as borne out in their extensive report which detailed some of the activities undertaken during the period January to end of March, which clocked up 973 volunteer hours.

The Chairman expressed thanks on behalf of the Committee for all the hard work and efforts of the Nonsuch Voles.

In addition Paul Airey, Chair of Nonsuch Voles reported that the planning application for the Shelter had been submitted. They also gave an update on damage to plants and brickwork due to vandalism.

Update from Friends of Nonsuch

Gerald Smith of Friends of Nonsuch circulated photographs of the unveiling of the new seat in the formal gardens which was attended by the Farmer family who donated the seat to commemorate their relatives, brothers Charles and Harry Farmer, soldiers who lost their lives in the First World War.

Surrey County Council Members' Allocation Fund

The Committee was pleased to receive details of the successful bid for notice boards, bird boxes hazel sapling and yew shrubs and expressed thanks to Councillor John Beckett for his support.

It was agreed that Samantha Whitehead and Councillor Graham Dudley would liaise regarding the arrangements for a press event to highlight the new dementia friendly signs.

117 EVENTS IN THE PARK

The Committee noted the updated Events Calendar including the two new events booked by St. Raphael's for Saturday 6 May (Sunflower walk) and music in the park on Thursday 6 July.

118 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee 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.

119 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - PROGRESS REPORT ON ITEMS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

The Minutes from the meeting of the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee held on the 30 January 2017 have not been published because the meeting was closed to the press and public on the grounds that the nature of the business to be transacted/nature of the proceedings dealt with information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

120 PROGRESS REPORT ON CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION - APRIL 2017

The Committee agreed a way forward as set out in the Minutes

Note: The details are considered officially sensitive at this time and the Minute for this item will be exempt from publication

121 VOTE OF THANKS

Councillor Mike Teasdale on behalf of the Committee thanked the Chairman, Councillor Mary Burstow for all her hard work and support during the year.

The meeting began at 10.10 am and ended at 12.05 pm

COUNCILLOR MARY BURSTOW (CHAIRMAN)

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