

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

19 MAY 2009 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Barnes, Chairman; Councillors Cole and Emery (until 7.55 pm) plus Mr C Carson, Mr C Catling, Mr M Hawes and Mr R Miller. In addition, Mr T Savage (until 7.30 pm), Mr D Stevens and Mr S Stevens attended as observers.

Apologies: Councillors Archer and Buckton.

The minutes of the meeting of 14 April 2009 were confirmed and signed.

SC1/09 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

All matters arising from the last meeting were covered by items on the agenda for this meeting.

SC2/09 Management Plan

(1) Fishing – income/fees

Mr Catling raised the matter of the need to have realistic and equitable levels of fees for fishing permits. In this context, he made the point that the current cost of a season ticket is £18, whereas day tickets cost £5.

There was a considerable amount of debate regarding the appropriate level of charge for the fishing facilities at Manea Pit and reference made to the decision at minute SC22/08 (1) in relation to the decision to no longer operate a closed season (whereby season tickets are only valid between June of one year and March of the following one).

The Sub-Committee decided that

(1) the cost of an annual season ticket for an adult (using no more than 2 rods) be increased to £50 for the period June 2009 to June 2010;

(2) the new cost of an annual season ticket for a senior citizen or a child be £25 for the period June 2009 to June 2010;

(3) the new season tickets be available from 1 June 2009;

(4) Carp Syndicate fees for 2009/10 be reviewed at a future meeting;

(5) all fishing fees be reviewed following completion of the improvement works to the swims.

(2) Improvement/development works

Further to minute SC28/08 (3), the Chairman reminded the Sub-Committee that the approved management plan proposes undertaking improvement and development works at the pit in three phases and he detailed each of those phases and the current progress position in that regard. He made the point that excellent work had been undertaken by the volunteers in terms of the new swims.

The Sub-Committee decided that the current situation be noted.

SC3/08 Street Pride

Jeanette Milner, Fenland District Council's Street Pride Co-ordinator, explained the aims of the Street Pride initiative and how it could be utilised to support the improvement works at the pit. She detailed some of the work that had been undertaken in Fenland in general and in Manea in particular. She informed the Sub-Committee that she is having discussions with Councillor Archer regarding improvement and repair works at Pump Corner (including the purchase and installation of a pump) and that painting of the pavilion and a litter pick in the village have been arranged for 4 July 2009.

Mrs Milner stated that she is able to provide manual labour, via the Probation Service, to work on development of a picnic area at the pit. She informed attendees that she had seen photographs of the area and that it would be possible for her to provide a team to begin the necessary works during the second week in June 2009. In addition, she offered to investigate the possibility of obtaining funding to purchase picnic tables.

The Sub-Committee noted the information presented by Mrs Milner and agreed to accept the offer of assistance under the Street Pride initiative.

SC4/08 Projects update

Further to minute SC29/08, Mr Catling expressed his concern regarding some of the works that had been undertaken recently and stated that he has sympathy with the views expressed by Mr Risbridger (as detailed at minute SC31/08) in terms of the "damage" that has been caused to the natural landscaping around the pit, to make it "pretty". He expressed the view that the "damage" that had been caused to trees, bushes etc would take some time to remedy.

Mr Catling stated that the Sub-Committee has, in his opinion, failed to protect the natural habitat and environment of the pit; he added that unless a sufficient amount of natural landscaping is retained, the pit will develop the appearance of a swimming pool and not a natural area of water.

Members discussed in detail and at length the concerns of Mr Catling as well as how to progress development and improvement works in the future.

It was felt by a number of Sub-Committee members that some unnecessary clearance works had been undertaken, by keen volunteers, and that, in future this could be prevented by having one member of the Sub-Committee present during work parties, to provide supervision, management and direction to the volunteers. The supervisor/manager would ensure that only works that had been agreed by the Sub-Committee were undertaken. Mr Hawes suggested that the most appropriate member of the Sub-Committee to perform that role would be Mr Catling. It was suggested also that, under such an approach, Mr Carson should inspect the site of the proposed work area prior to the work party commencing site clearance activities to ensure that no harm would be caused to wildlife habitats as a result of the proposed works.

Mr Carson stated that he also has concerns regarding the removal of trees and bushes and the possible resultant adverse impact upon nesting sites for birds. He suggested that any works which could cause such impact should not be undertaken until later in the year (possibly July or August). He made the point that care must be taken not to breach the Countryside and Wildlife Act in terms of damaging nests; it is necessary to demonstrate that all reasonable precautions have been taken not to cause damage to nests and it is advantageous if it is possible to prove, before removing a tree, that no nests existed.

The Sub-Committee discussed also the undertaking of appropriate weed control measures for the pit. In this regard, Mr Carson advised that any spraying of weeds should ideally not take place until late September.

The Sub-Committee decided that

- (1) future works undertaken by work parties would be on the basis of a scheme being approved in principle by the Sub-Committee and then delivered operationally through management by a designated member of the Sub-Committee (following liaison with Mr Carson);
- (2) there is a need to ensure that the necessary health and safety works required to the swims are undertaken;
- (3) the next area of development at the pit be swim number 3;
- (4) the next work party be arranged for 30 May 2009;
- (5) C Carson will identify, during the summer, the existence of any rare plants in the pit, to enable the spraying of lilies during July and the selective spraying of reeds in September.

SC4/09 Grant funding

Further to minute SC30/08, The Chairman reported, in the absence of Councillor Buckton, that there currently no new grant applications "in the pipeline" but Councillor Buckton is currently investigating the possibility of obtaining funding from the sources mentioned at minute SC30/08 in relation to the development of play areas.

SC5/09 Next meeting

Members decided that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee be held on 16 June 2009, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the Pavilion.

Meeting finished at 8.45 pm.

Signature:.....(Sub-Committee Chairman).

Date:.....