

MANEA PARISH COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

29 SEPTEMBER 2009 – 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Barnes, Chairman; Councillors Archer, Buckton and Cole plus Mr C Carson, Mr P Catling (from 7.30 pm), Mr M Hawes, Mr R Miller and Mr J Short. In addition, Mr R Shadbolt, Mr D Stevens and Mrs P Soames attended by invitation.

Apologies: Councillor Emery.

The minutes of the meeting of 11 August 2009 were confirmed and signed.

SC17/09 Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

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

SC18/09 Management Plan - improvement/development works and projects

The Chairman expressed the opinion that excellent progress is being achieved in respect of delivery of the works within the management plan, particularly given that they commenced only one year ago, and that there has been a considerable amount of positive comment from the community in relation to the development works to date.

The Sub-Committee discussed a number of issues in relation to delivery of the management plan, as follows:

- (1) Fishing platforms – most of the swims have been completed; although an element of work is required to a small number, all swims are capable of being used by anglers; all works, which would provide in excess of 30 swims, should be completed by the end of 2009.

Although proposed earlier in the development programme, the Sub-Committee discussed whether, in the light of experience, it is still considered necessary to provide hand rails at certain swims. The conclusion reached was that, as they are included within the plan, hand rails should be provided at the locations determined previously.

The Chairman reported that all of the works detailed within the bid for the Awards for All grant (and more) had been undertaken and he expressed thanks, on behalf of the Parish Council, to all of those who had played a part in this achievement.

The Sub-Committee discussed the need, or otherwise, to provide surfacing in relation to the fishing platforms that had been designed for use by disabled anglers. A number of methods of surfacing were suggested.

The Sub-Committee decided to note the current situation and to accept the offer of Mr Carson to investigate possible surfacing materials/methods for those fishing platforms designed for use by disabled anglers.

- (2) Weed control – Mr M Hawes informed the Sub-Committee that he had recently discovered a chemical, called Dyofix, which controls the growth of blanket weed and algae by dyeing the water (which prevents ultra violet light entering the water). He stated that the cost of this treatment would be approximately £20 per acre - therefore, around £250 to £300 for the Pit – and that the most effective time to undertake such work is early spring.

Mr Carson expressed concern that such a method of weed control could also result in the loss of other plant life in the Pit.

The Sub-Committee decided that this matter be discussed further at the next meeting.

- (3) Fish stocks – concern was expressed regarding the apparently low fish stocks in the Pit and all agree that it is necessary to maintain a sufficient level of stock if Manea Pit is to be an effective fishing facility and, consequently, is able to attract income in that regard.

Mr Hawes gave his opinion on the appropriate balance of fish species to have within Manea Pit and of the importance of ensuring that any new fish purchased are of a sufficient size to ensure their survival and for them to have been immunised against KHV. He suggested that the Parish Council purchases 50 Carp, each one being no less than 6 pounds in weight (at a total cost of approximately £4,000), and for them to be placed in the Pit during the winter months. He explained the benefits of purchasing only immunised fish and the potential implications of fish stocks suffering from KHV.

All members of the Sub-Committee agreed that there is a need to increase the fish stocks at the Pit and various views were expressed regarding the level of funding that should be applied to that purpose. In particular, Councillor Archer made the point that he would resist any proposal to use Council Taxpayers' money to fund such a purchase.

The Sub-Committee RECOMMENDED to Manea Parish Council that a sum of £4,000, to be met from the income generated by the sale of fishing tickets and Carp Syndicate membership fees in 2008/09 and 2009/10, be allocated for the purchase of Carp.

- (4) Plant life – Mr Carson reported generally on the survey undertaken recently by Ruth Hawksley of the Wildlife Trust in respect of the plant life within Manea Pit. He stated that nothing of significance had been discovered; in fact, there appears to be very little variety in the species of plants. The Sub-Committee wondered whether the Environment Agency may be holding survey data from water samples, which may assist in identifying the existence of rare plants in the Pit.

The Sub-Committee decided that

- (1) C Carson would obtain a copy of the report produced by Ruth Hawksley;
- (2) Mrs Soames would establish whether or not the Environment Agency possesses any records regarding the results of water samples from Manea Pit, which might help provide knowledge as to the plant life that may exist.

- (5) Open spaces

- a) Picnic area – site has been cleared of nettles etc by the Street Pride group and there is a need to treat the surface of the area which has been cleared. Picnic tables/benches, ordered from FACET by the Street Pride service, will be delivered on 30 September. Councillor Buckton reported that the Parish Council had decided, at its meeting on 21 September, to submit an application to Fenland District Council, under its Community Grants Scheme, for more benches for the proposed picnic area.

The Sub-Committee decided that Councillors Archer and Buckton would develop, for consideration at the next meeting, a plan for the layout/design of this area.

- b) Car park area – the area needs tidying and would benefit from the removal of some of the lower branches of certain trees to enable additional car parking spaces to be provided. The provision of surfacing is considered

to be desirable, as is the need to implement a means of preventing vehicular access to the pedestrian areas; some form of bollard should achieve this.

The Sub-Committee decided that Councillor Barnes would arrange a site meeting, to help inform a development plan for the area, and obtain prices for suitable bollards.

- c) Potential play area – Councillor Buckton reminded the Sub-Committee of the information that he had reported at minute M14/09 in relation to the fact that it had not been feasible for the Parish Council to submit an application for grant funding for such an initiative at this time. It may still, however, be beneficial to establish a community-based steering group to develop a play area proposal in the hope that similar funding opportunities were to become available in the next financial year.

The Sub-Committee decided that the situation be noted.

- d) Field adjoining Pit – Councillor Buckton mentioned the possible Community Orchard initiative, suggested at the Open Forum element of the last meeting of Manea Parish Council, as one possible use of this land. It is also possible that other wildlife uses, plus using some of the land as additional car parking, could be considered.

The Sub-Committee indicated its support in principle for a community orchard and wildlife area use of this site and acknowledges that other suggestions may well result from the community engagement meeting that the Parish Council has arranged for 20 October 2009.

SC19/09 Carp Syndicate – fees income and rules

Further to minute SC15/09, members discussed whether or not there is a need to revise the Carp Syndicate rules in the light of discussion at that minute.

Mr Catling, who was not present at the last meeting, sought clarification from the Chairman as to the issues raised at the last meeting in this regard. On being informed of the issues raised, in relation to the use of bait boats and the number of rods permitted per swim, Mr Catling made the point that those matters are already included within the current rules and that the issue in this matter is not to revise the rules but to take action in relation to any breaches of the rules; he added that the current rules had been approved by Manea Parish Council. Members of the Sub-Committee shared the view of Mr Catling.

As a result of personal comments made at the meeting by one member of the Carp Syndicate, Mr Catling resigned his position of Secretary/Treasurer of the Carp Syndicate.

The point was made that, although rules exist in relation to members of the Carp Syndicate, there are currently no rules governing use of the Pit by other anglers. It was considered by the Sub-Committee that this situation should be addressed and that many of the “general” elements of the Carp Syndicate rules, such as acting with courtesy towards other users, could be used to inform such a set of rules.

Mr P Catling reported that the Carp Syndicate currently has 16 members for the 2009/10 season, all of whom have paid the membership fee of £80 (for the period to 16 June 2010). He handed to the Clerk payments totalling £1,280.00. The Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that a note regarding vacancies for membership of the Carp Syndicate had been placed on the Pit notice board.

The Sub-Committee decided

- (1) that the rules of the Carp Syndicate be unchanged at this time;

- (2) to note the level of Carp Syndicate membership and the resultant income;
- (3) that Councillor Barnes would produce a set of draft rules for all users of the fishing facilities at Manea Pit, for consideration at the next meeting;
- (4) to express its appreciation of the work undertaken by Mr Catling in relation to operation of the Carp Syndicate.

SC20/09 Next meeting

Members decided that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee be held on 10 November 2009, commencing at 7.00 pm, at the British Legion Club.

Meeting finished at 9.15 pm.

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

Date:.....