

# MANEA PARISH COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF MEETING

12 MARCH 2012 – 7.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Archer, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Desborough and Emery plus Mr C Carson (from 7.45 pm), Mr P Catling, Mr I Fost, Mr R K Miller and Mrs P Smith.

**Apologies:** Councillor Cole.

**In attendance:** Councillor Woodard.

The minutes of the meeting of 8 February 2012 were confirmed and signed.

### SC86/11 Field adjoining Manea Pit – use as community orchard/woodland

Further to minute SC77/11, Mrs Smith informed the Sub-Committee that the next stage in the project is to undertake planting of additional (approximately 100 to 150) hedgerow whips; she undertook to recruit a small group of volunteers to carry out this work.

The Sub-Committee supported Mrs Smith's suggestion that bluebells be planted at the appropriate time next year and that the remaining element of the grant received so far be used for the purchase of wildflowers.

Mrs Smith reported that she will soon be purchasing seed for re-sowing the meadow area.

The Sub-Committee decided that the current progress situation be noted and that arrangements be made by Councillor Emery for cutting the grass (except for the meadow area) at this site.

### SC87/11 Management Plan - improvement/development works and projects

The Sub-Committee discussed briefly the works still necessary to deliver the current management plan.

Councillor Emery informed the Sub-Committee that he had ordered the necessary sleepers and scaffolding poles and that Councillor Cole had ordered hardcore; when these materials are delivered, it will be possible to undertake the outstanding improvement and maintenance works at Manea Pit.

The Sub-Committee decided that

- (1) the current situation regarding maintenance of the pit area be noted;
- (2) a work party be arranged for 18 March 2012, for the purpose of laying wood chippings on the footpaths and re-instating the benches (which were removed to facilitate the tree works) at the picnic area; further work parties be arranged for 31 March and 1 April 2012, for the purpose of undertaking maintenance works to the fishing platforms.

### SC88/11 Manea Pit – Revision of the management plan

Further to minute SC79/11, Councillor Archer reported to the Sub-Committee on an e-mail received from an officer of the Wildlife Trust, in response to consultation on the draft Manea Pit Management Plan.

The officer of the Wildlife Trust makes the comment that the document is not currently a management plan, more an aspirational plan of overarching aims. She acknowledges the work that has been carried out at the pit area over the past year or two but stresses the need for considered, agreed upon and planned management.

The officer makes the point that the Parish Council needs to produce a management plan which promotes a better balance between management for nature, the fishery and access for people and that the Wildlife Trust is happy to provide advice to the Parish Council and this Sub-Committee regarding the development of such a plan.

The officer of the Wildlife Trust states that evidence of co-ordinated management and a long-term plan for the site was a pre-requisite for deferral of the County Wildlife Sites Panel's decision whether to de-select Manea Pit as a County Wildlife Site. With assurances of the Parish Council's efforts, it was decided to postpone the decision to January 2014. She adds that if there is no progress towards a comprehensive management plan, based upon sound ecological evidence and realistic acknowledgement of conflicts of interests between stakeholders, this postponement would be re-considered.

The Wildlife Trust suggests that the different stakeholders, recreational fishery, community/education and nature conservation interests submit formally their individual goals and aspirations for the site, along with a breakdown of the associated actions/operations over the year.

The Wildlife Trust states its appreciation of commitment of the Parish Council and the Sub-Committee to the site and recognition of the work involved in protecting and developing this valuable natural space for the residents of Manea.

The Sub-Committee decided that

- (1) the current position regarding the development of a new management plan, including the comments of the Wildlife Trust, be noted;
- (2) Mrs P Smith would undertake discussions with the relevant officer at the Wildlife Trust as to the most appropriate way to progress this matter.

### **SC89/11 Manea Pit – Health and Safety**

The Sub-Committee considered whether there are currently any health and safety issues relating to Manea Pit.

Further to minute SC80/11, Councillor Archer reported that the Health and Safety Manager at the Wildlife Trust had visited the pit area on 9 March 2012; a number of members of Manea Parish Council had been present.

Councillor Archer reported briefly on the comments made by this officer during her visit, which he felt had been a very positive experience, and informed the Sub-Committee that she would be producing a written report as a result of this inspection.

Councillor Woodard raised concern regarding the installation of barbed wire at a certain location in the pit area, expressing the view that it could cause harm to bird life. Councillor Woodard's concern was not shared by the members of the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee decided that

- (1) the situation regarding the visit by the Health and Safety Manager at the Wildlife Trust be noted;
- (2) there are no new health and safety issues at this time.

## SC90/11 Fishing and other pit users' issues

Further to minute SC81/11, Mrs Smith reported to the Sub-Committee that an application for an Abstraction Licence (to enable the temporary abstraction of water from another local source to increase the level of water at Manea Pit) had now been submitted to the Environment Agency and the formal consent of the occupier of the land over which the piping would cross (giving permission for the installation of the pump and laying of piping across the land) is currently being sought. The Abstraction Licence will have a "life" of 27 days from the date of issue.

It is estimated that 18,000 cubic metres of water would be pumped into the pit to achieve the desired water level. This water will need to be pumped at a steady amount daily. It will be a condition of the licence that each day during the pumping exercise, it will be necessary for someone to both obtain confirmation from the Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners that sufficient water exists in the drain and to take readings from the water meter. If there is insufficient water, pumping would need to be reduced or cease.

Mrs Smith queried who (the Parish Council or FPS pumps) had the liability if the pump or any of the equipment was stolen, damaged or broken. Councillor Emery volunteered to look into this.

Mrs Smith suggested that a measuring point be set up on one of the swims so that the pit water level could be monitored before, during and after pumping.

Councillor Emery reported that he had procured four "dogs on leads" signs, two of which he had already installed around the pit area; he would install the remaining two signs later this week. This update led to a discussion about the continuing incidents of dog owners not keeping their dogs on leads, which not only causes disturbance to anglers and other users of the pit area but is a contributory factor in the amount of dog fouling which occurs.

Councillor Archer reported on the receipt of e-mails from local residents who have concerns that the use of bait boats by Carp anglers causes injury and suffering to these fish. Following a discussion regarding the perceived advantages and disadvantages of such use, the majority of Sub-Committee members consider that the use of bait boats should no longer be permitted at Manea Pit. Prohibition of this activity would require amendment of the Carp Syndicate rules.

The Sub-Committee is aware that a number of notices have again appeared around the village making allegations that a certain member of the community had been shooting birds around the pit. The Sub-Committee is not aware of any evidence to support this allegation and would suggest that if any members of the public are able to substantiate the allegation, they report the matter to the Police.

Further to minute SC81/11, the Sub-Committee considered the setting of fees for Carp Syndicate membership and fishing tickets for 2012/13. Mr P Catling reported that the Carp Syndicate currently has 20 members and there are an additional 6 persons who wish to take up membership with effect from the new membership year.

The Sub-Committee considers that, given the current economic circumstances and the level of income that is currently generated, the fees for Carp Syndicate membership and fishing tickets for the 2012/13 fishing season be retained at the 2011/12 level

Mr Catling suggested that the annual fishing ticket year becomes 1 April, instead of 16 June, from this year (on this basis, existing syndicate members and season ticket holders would pay an appropriate proportion of the full year fee for the syndicate members and season ticket holders would pay an appropriate proportion of the full year fee for the period 16 June 2012 to 31 March 2013 (based upon the current annual fee, this would be £85) and then the full fee (£110) from 1 April 2013 onwards; the "fishing year" for new syndicate members and syndicate members would commence on 1 April 2012). Mr Catling and Mr Fost explained the rationale behind this suggestion.

Mr Catling read to the Sub-Committee an e-mail, which, in summary, questioned his integrity as Secretary of the Carp Syndicate. On the basis of that e-mail and other issues, he stated that he would be resigning as Secretary of the Carp Syndicate. The Sub-Committee invited him to re-consider this decision.

The Sub-Committee decided that

- (1) the information reported be noted;
- (2) the Parish Council would ensure that no breaches of the Abstraction Licence would occur and that the necessary contact with the Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners and the water readings would take place during the period of water abstraction;
- (3) with the regard to the continuing problem of some dogs not being kept on leads, the situation be kept under review; hopefully, the new signage will have a positive impact upon this situation;
- (4) the use of bait boats be prohibited with immediate effect;
- (5) both the general fishing rules and the Carp Syndicate rules be reviewed at the next meeting;
- (6) it would RECOMMEND to Manea Parish Council that (given the current economic circumstances and the level of income that is currently generated through these fees) the fees for Carp Syndicate membership and fishing tickets for the 2012/13 fishing season be retained at the 2011/12 level and that the annual fishing ticket year becomes 1 April, instead of 16 June, from this year.

#### **SC91/11 Management of trees at Manea Pit**

Further to minute SC82/11, Councillor Emery informed the Sub-Committee that all of the tree works had been completed, including the production of wood chippings from the pollarded trees (for use in maintaining the footpaths around the pit area).

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

#### **SC92/11 Monitoring of actions**

Further to minute SC83/11, Councillor Archer circulated an updated schedule of actions.

The Sub-Committee considered the actions listed in the document and agreed which ones had been completed and which ones needed to remain as outstanding.

The Sub-Committee decided that Councillor Archer would present an up-to-date version (i.e. with completed actions deleted and new actions added) to each meeting of the Sub-Committee.

#### **SC93/11 Website information**

Further to minute SC84/11, Councillor Archer reported that there has still been no progress in relation to this matter.

With regard to the future of the Sub-Committee, Councillor Archer reported that Manea Parish Council had agreed, at its meeting on 20 February 2012 (minute M139/11 refers), that it has no plans to cease the Sub-Committee; its aim is to ensure that the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders of the Sub-Committee (ToR) are fit for purpose. Review of the ToR will take place at the meeting of Manea Parish Council on 19 March 2012.

In reaching its decision as to the way forward, the Parish Council had taken on board the comments made by Mrs Smith at 20 February 2012 meeting (minute M131/11 (2) refers) that, in her opinion, the Terms of Reference of the Sub-Committee should be reviewed by the Parish Council, to both clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Sub-Committee and to delegate it authority to incur expenditure (against an approved plan of works) without prior reference to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council supports the view of Sub-Committee members (expressed at minute SC84/11) that ceasing the Sub-Committee would be very likely to lead to loss of the necessary voluntary "technical" expertise and community participation in the delivery of projects; such a situation would be detrimental to the development of the pit area as a community facility.

Members of the Parish Council concluded at minute M139/11 that, under the strategic direction of the Parish Council, the Sub-Committee needs to work to an annual plan (including the resources, both human and financial, required) for operation and management of Manea Pit. It is also considered to be important to make efforts to increase the level of community participation in the operation of Manea Pit.

The Sub-Committee decided that the current situation be noted and that Councillor Archer would provide an update at the next meeting.

**SC94/11 Next meeting**

The Sub-Committee decided that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee be held on 11 April 2012, commencing at 7.30 pm, at the British Legion Club, East Street, Manea.

**Meeting finished at 10.30 pm.**

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

Date.....