

MANEA PIT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

15 AUGUST 2012 – 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Archer, Chairman; Councillors Cole, Mrs Desborough and Emery plus Mr C Carson, Mr I Fost and Mr H Westgate.

Apologies: Mr R K Miller and Mrs P Smith.

The minutes of the meeting of 14 June 2012 were confirmed and signed.

PMC 1/12 Open Forum

The Management Committee heard from a member of the Carp Syndicate that he considers he is not receiving what he should from his membership of that syndicate. He stated his understanding that the Management Committee and the Parish Council had decided that no further fish stocking of the pit or ponds would be undertaken and that there would be no excessive tree works carried out around the pit; he alleged that both of these activities are being allowed to take place. He commented that the Environment Agency would be happy to remove "alien" fish from the pit and ponds.

The Chairman responded to the comments made by this Carp Syndicate member.

The Management Committee noted the comments of the Carp Syndicate member, which it undertook to take into account when discussing the issues raised, and supported the suggestion of the Chairman that, if this person is not satisfied with membership of the Carp Syndicate, he could terminate such membership and receive a pro-rate refund of the membership fee.

PMC 2/12 Conduct of members of the Management Committee

The Chairman raised his concerns regarding the recent actions of one particular member of the Manea Pit Management Committee and expressed the opinion that these actions may have caused difficulties for the Parish Council in retaining the County Wildlife Site status of Manea Pit.

The Chairman expressed the opinion that this member's contact with an officer at the Wildlife Trust had undermined both Manea Parish Council and the Manea Pit Management Committee.

Most of the committee members expressed their opinions regarding not only the appropriateness of the actions of this particular member but also his attitude at committee meetings; some members felt that this member should resign his membership of the Manea Pit Management Committee.

The committee member in question defended his actions, commenting that he felt he had been acting in the best interests of Manea Pit and was unaware that only certain members of the committee were authorised to speak to officers of the Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency on behalf of the management committee. He stated that, now being aware of the "approved points of contact" approach, he would not act in the same way in future.

Councillor Emery informed the committee that the Environment Agency (EA) would not provide further fish for Manea Pit whilst it contains some "alien" fish. He added that the EA is happy to remove the "alien" fish from Manea Pit, on a free-of-charge basis, later in the year.

The committee decided that, given the assurances given by the committee member in question in relation to conduct at meetings and performing appropriately the role of a management committee member, this person be permitted to remain a member of Manea Pit Management Committee.

PMC3/12 Field adjoining Manea Pit – use as community orchard/woodland

Further to minute PMC1/11, the Chairman reported that the area around all the fruit trees has been weeded and the area adjacent to the road at the entrance to the site has been planted recently with wildflowers grown from seed by the Guides.

The Chairman reported that Mrs Smith has not had the opportunity, over the last couple of months, to plant new grass seed on the small area which had been treated with weed killer (to clear it of grass) and, consequently, it now needs to be cleared of weeds. Mrs Smith has, therefore, asked that the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor be engaged to remove the weeds; the new grass seed would then be sown in early September 2012.

The committee decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Chairman, on behalf of Mrs Smith, be noted;
- (2) Councillor Emery would arrange for the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor to remove the weeds from the area specified.

PMC4/12 Management Plan - improvement/development works and projects

Further to minute PMC2/11, Mr Westgate reported that the work party which took place on 29 July 2012 had been very successful.

Mr Fost circulated a list of general maintenance works which he had identified as being required around the pit area.

The Chairman circulated, for members' information, copies of a Manea Pit Annual Maintenance Budget 2012/13 (in the total sum of £1,500) had been prepared by the Parish Council members of the management committee and had been approved subsequently by the Parish Council at its last meeting (minute M39/12 refers).

The committee decided that the information reported be noted and that the works identified by Mr Fost would help inform the programme of activities for future work parties.

PMC5/12 Manea Pit – Revision of the management plan

Further to minute PMC3/11, Councillor Archer mentioned that the opportunity had been taken to use the date of the cancelled management committee meeting, 25 July 2012, to undertake a "walk about" around the pit area, to assist in the production of a new management plan for Manea Pit.

All of those who participated in the "walk about" provided their comments to Mrs P Smith, who is still to write-up the comments. Mrs Smith has recently updated the relevant officer at the Wildlife Trust on the progress in producing a new management plan for Manea Pit.

Members decided that the information reported by the Chairman be noted.

PMC6/12 Manea Pit – Health and Safety

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

Councillor Emery expressed the view that it is necessary for strimming works to be undertaken around the water's edge at the pit and at the end of each fishing platform; he commented that it is a requirement, from a health and safety perspective, for users of the pit area to be able to identify the exact location of the water.

The comments made by Councillor Emery prompted a debate as to whether there is a requirement for any person who undertakes strimming works in a public place and on behalf of a public authority to possess any form of licensing to operate a strimmer (as is the case with operating a chainsaw). Mr Carson suggested that the management committee should undertake a risk assessment (covering any health and safety implications for both the person(s) undertaking the works and those members of the public who access the area where works are being carried out) – this should detail the mitigating actions to address any risks thereby identified – in respect of all works carried out at the pit area.

Further to minute PMC5/11, Councillor Emery reported that Manea Parish Council had accepted, at its meeting on 16 July 2012 (minute M39/12 refers) a quotation that he had obtained for the cost of providing an extension to the notice board at Manea Pit and that he had subsequently ordered the necessary manufacturing works. The Chairman commented that he is now in a position to update the content of the notice board.

The committee decided that

- (1) investigations be undertaken by the Chairman as to whether there is a requirement for any person who undertakes strimming works in a public place and on behalf of a public authority to possess any form of licensing to operate a strimmer;
- (2) a process of undertaking risk assessments in respect of maintenance works undertaken at Manea Pit be introduced.

PMC7/12 Fishing and other pit users' issues

Mr Fost presented the Clerk with income from the sale of fishing tickets totalling £456.00.

The committee was made aware of a suggestion that the proposed pond dipping area should be created within the woodland area, instead of within the pit area.

Mr Fost commented that members of the Carp Syndicate are filling the waste bins around the pit, whereas the Carp Syndicate rules state that syndicate members should take their litter home.

The committee decided that

- (1) the suggestion that the proposed pond dipping area be created within the woodland area, opposed to the pit area, be considered at the next meeting;
- (2) the Secretary of the Carp Syndicate would remind syndicate members of the requirement for them to take their litter home.

PMC8/12 Monitoring of actions

The Chairman circulated an updated schedule of actions document, which he had reported to the meeting of Manea Parish Council on 16 July 2012 (minute M39/12 refers).

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

The committee decided that the Chairman would present an up-to-date version (i.e. with completed actions deleted and new actions added) to each meeting of the management committee.

PMC9/12 Website information

Further to minute PMC7/11, the Chairman reported that there has still been no progress in relation to this matter.

The committee decided that the current situation be noted and that this matter would no longer feature as a standing agenda item; it would be considered at a time when it is possible for the Chairman to progress the matter.

PMC10/12 Formal complaint

The Chairman referred to a formal complaint from a member of the public (alleging unauthorised actions being undertaken by a committee member around the pit), which had been forwarded to him by the Clerk.

The committee approved the suggestion of the Chairman that the complaint be considered at the next meeting.

PMC11/12 Committee membership

The Chairman reported the interest of a particular villager in becoming a member of this committee.

The committee decided that Mr Alan Fielding be appointed (as a representative of the community) to membership of the Manea Pit Management Committee, with effect from the next meeting.

PMC12/12 Next meeting

The committee decided that the next meeting be held on 12 September 2012, commencing at 7.30 pm, at the British Legion Club, East Street, Manea.

Meeting finished at 9.40 pm.

Signature:.....(Committee Chairman).

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