

# MANEA PARISH COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF MEETING

8 FEBRUARY 2012 – 7.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Archer, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Desborough and Emery plus Mr C Carson (from 7.40 pm), Mr P Catling, Mr R K Miller and Mrs P Smith.

**Apologies:** Councillor Cole plus Mrs B Carson.

The minutes of the meeting of 4 January 2012 were confirmed and signed.

### SC77/11 Field adjoining Manea Pit – use as community orchard/woodland

Further to minute SC66/11, Mrs Smith informed the Sub-Committee that, because of the recent adverse weather conditions, no further planting had been undertaken; there is, however, no necessity for this work to be undertaken before the end of March 2012.

Mrs Smith reminded the Sub-Committee that one requirements of the grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund is to have an educational aspect of the project; to that end, Mrs Smith met recently with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher of the Community Primary School.

Mrs Smith informed the Sub-Committee that school's Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher are enthusiastic about using the pit area for educational purposes and that they are proposing to have a Manea Week during the summer term (possibly the last week of term), which could include holding classes at the pit area.

The Sub-Committee is supportive of the potential for the school's use of the pit area. It is mindful of the fact that such use could cause an element of disruption for other users but consider that it should be possible to manage the situation through effective communication and awareness raising in advance of the use taking place.

The Sub-Committee decided

- (1) that the current progress situation be noted;
- (2) to RECOMMEND to the Parish Council that a letter be sent by the Clerk to the Headteacher at Manea Community Primary School, formally inviting the school to use the pit area for educational purposes.

### SC78/11 Management Plan - improvement/development works and projects

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

The Chairman read to the Sub-Committee a copy of notes made by Mr Lockett during an inspection of the pit area (carried out with the aim of identifying and addressing outstanding works) undertaken in September 2011. The notes listed sixteen issues, including such matters as: weed control within the pit, works necessary to certain fishing platforms to make them more suitable for use by disabled anglers, various repair and maintenance works.

Although most of the items have been addressed since the notes were written, they helped to highlight certain works which are still required.

Further to minute SC58/11, Mrs Smith informed the Sub-Committee of the outcome of her discussions with the Environment Agency (EA) concerning the possibility of the EA undertaking mechanical dredging works at Manea Pit. She reported that the Environment Agency no longer undertakes external works but it has provided the details of two local contractors which it uses to carry out such work. It is likely that using contractors to undertake dredging works at Manea Pit would be very expensive.

Mention was made of the poor condition of the roadway adjacent to Manea Pit, which runs from Park Road to Bishops Land, and the detrimental impact that this has upon access to the pit area.

The Sub-Committee decided that

- (1) the current situation regarding maintenance of the pit area be noted;
- (2) the necessary materials (including sleepers, telegraph poles and hardcore) be procured and work parties organised to undertake the outstanding improvement and maintenance works at Manea Pit; a priority issue within the schedule of works would be making certain that fishing platforms are more suitable for use by disabled anglers;
- (3) Mrs Smith would ascertain from one of the local dredging contractors suggested by the Environment Agency the likely cost of the dredging works required at Manea Pit;
- (4) the Clerk would contact the owner of the roadway adjacent to Manea Pit – which is the County Farms Department at the County Council – with a request that its condition be improved; Mrs Smith undertook to provide the Clerk with the grid references for this road.

#### **SC79/11 Manea Pit – Revision of the management plan**

Further to minute SC68/11, Mrs Smith reported that she had updated the document to reflect the changes agreed by the Sub-Committee and had subsequently forwarded the updated version to the Clerk.

The Clerk reported that the updated document had been reported to the meeting of Manea Parish Council on 16 January 2012; the Parish Council approved the document without amendment and agreed that it be forwarded to the Wildlife Trust for comment. The document was forwarded to the relevant officer at the Wildlife Trust on 25 January 2012 but no response had been received by the Clerk to date.

Mrs Smith reported that she had obtained information from the Environment Agency in relation to managing levels of fish stock. She explained the nature of the survey work that the Environment Agency could undertake in this regard, which involves assessing samples of fish scales (the assessment can provide details of the age and growth rate of the fish; from this information, conclusions can be reached as to the correct fish stocking levels in Manea Pit). Hopefully, the survey results will enable the new management plan to include an approach to stocking levels of fish in Manea Pit.

Mrs Smith informed the Sub-Committee that she had also obtained guidance in relation to eating of vegetation by fish, which she had forwarded to Mr Carson.

The Sub-Committee decided that

- (1) the current position regarding the development of a new management plan be noted;
- (2) Mrs Smith would pursue with the Environment Agency the undertaking of a fish stock survey.

### **SC80/11 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 SC69/11, no member of the Sub-Committee had received information from Councillor Buckton regarding progress in achieving a visit to the pit area by the Health and Safety Manager at the Wildlife Trust.

The Sub-Committee decided that

- (1) the situation regarding a 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.

### **SC81/11 Fishing and other pit users' issues**

Further to minute SC70/11, Mrs Smith reported on her discussions with the Environment Agency regarding the abstraction of water from another local source to increase the level of water at Manea Pit. She made the point that many thousands of litres of water would be needed.

Mrs Smith explained the process of obtaining a licence (granted by the Environment Agency), which includes obtaining the permission of both the owner of the land which holds the water (in this case, the Manea and Welney Internal Drainage Board) and the owner(s) of the land across which the water would be pumped.

Mr Miller reported that the "dogs on leads" signs around the pita area had all been damaged. The Sub-Committee agreed that these signs should be replaced with ones which would be more durable.

Mr Catling reminded the Sub-Committee of the need for Manea Parish Council to set fees for Carp Syndicate membership and fishing tickets for 2012/13 and the fact that this Sub-Committee usually makes a recommendation in this regard to the March meeting of Manea Parish Council.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported be noted;
- (2) Mrs Smith would make application to the Environment Agency for a temporary licence for the abstraction of water from the Manea and Welney Internal Drainage Board drain;
- (3) Councillor Emery would procure four replacement "dogs on leads" signs (of metal construction);
- (4) the setting of fees for Carp Syndicate membership and fishing tickets for the 2012/13 season be discussed at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee, for recommendation to 19 March 2012 meeting of Manea Parish Council.

### **SC82/11 Management of trees at Manea Pit**

Further to minute SC71/11, Mr Miller reported that the contractor had begun the tree cutting works on 4 February 2012 and had intended to complete them the following day. However, because of the heavy snowfall on 5 February, the contractor plans to complete the works on 11 February 2012.

The contractor will be providing a wood chipping machine on that date, to produce 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.

**SC83/11 Monitoring of actions**

Further to minute SC72/11, 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.

**SC84/11 Website information**

Further to minute SC73/11, Councillor Archer reported that there has still been no progress in relation to this matter.

Councillor Archer made the point that it may not be appropriate to progress this matter from the perspective of the Sub-Committee at this time, as the Parish Council had decided, at its 16 January 2012 meeting (minute M125/11 refers), to consider, at its next meeting (on 20 February 2012), the future of this Sub-Committee. He expressed the view that the background to this decision of the Parish Council was debate relating to the management of Manea Pit at its 19 December 2011 meeting (minute M111/11 refers).

With regard to the Parish Council's decision to consider the future of the Sub-Committee, the members of the Sub-Committee expressed their concern that such consideration could result in its cessation, which they felt would lead to not only the loss of the necessary voluntary "technical" expertise but also community participation in the delivery of projects; such a situation would be detrimental to the development of the pit area as a community facility.

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

**SC85/11 Next meeting**

The Sub-Committee decided that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee be held on 7 March 2012, commencing at 7.30 pm, at the British Legion Club, East Street, Manea.

**Meeting finished at 9.30 pm.**

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

Date.....