

MANEA PIT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

11 APRIL 2013 – 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Archer, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Desborough, Emery and Fielding plus Mr M Bradshaw, Mr C Carson (from 7.40 pm) and Mr H Westgate.

Apologies: Councillor Cole plus Mr I Fost, Mrs L Stevens and Mrs P Smith.

The minutes of the meeting of 7 March 2013 were confirmed and signed.

PMC51/12 Management Committee membership

Some members of the committee questioned whether, in the light of the fact that one member of the committee had not attended a meeting since June 2012, the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders of the Manea Pit Management Committee ought to include a provision whereby failure to attend meetings for a specified period (possibly six months) would result in cessation of committee membership.

The committee decided that Manea Parish Council be requested to consider whether the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders of the Manea Pit Management Committee should be amended to include a provision whereby failure by a member to attend meetings for a specified period (possibly six months) would result in cessation of his/her membership of the committee.

PMC52/12 Field adjoining Manea Pit – use as community orchard/woodland

Further to minute PMC43/12, the committee discussed briefly the current situation in relation to this project.

The Clerk reported to the committee that he had been informed by Mrs P Smith that she would be attending the Community Orchard Conference 2013 (being hosted jointly, on 8 May 2013 at Great Shelford, by the Trumpington Community Orchard Project and the East of England Orchards Project). He outlined to the committee the programme for this conference.

Members are aware that at least one working party had taken place at this site since the last meeting of the management committee.

Councillor Emery reported that, in accordance with minute PMC43/12, he had arranged for the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor to revise the grass cutting undertaken in this area.

Councillor Emery reported also that the Parish Council had discussed (at minute M160/12) the management committee's request for re-consideration of the approach to preventing unauthorised vehicular access to the woodland area - at minute PMC43/12 the management committee expressed the view that the provision of a gate at one of the entrance points to the woodland area and the installation of fencing at the other would be a more effective solution than installation of a gate at both locations. Consequently, the Parish Council decided that a group of members would visit the area to make an assessment as to the most appropriate approach to preventing unauthorised vehicular access to that area. As a result of the visit, Councillor Jolley is arranging the necessary gating and fencing works.

The committee decided that the current situation be noted.

PMC53/12 Management Plan - improvement/development works and projects

Further to minute PMC44/12, Councillor Emery informed the management committee of his belief that Councillor Cole is now in possession of the gravel for maintaining the fishing platforms and the hardcore for undertaking repairs to the access road. He also informed the committee that he is able to obtain a supply of bark chippings to facilitate the necessary footpath maintenance work.

Councillor Emery suggested that, instead of continuing to spend money on undertaking ad-hoc repairs to the car parking area at the pit, it may be appropriate to consider undertaking works to provide a proper surface; he presented the Clerk with a quotation that he had obtained in that regard. The Clerk read the quotation to the committee.

Councillor Emery informed the committee that Councillor Jolley is now in possession of drawings for the design of the two metal bollards to be installed (to prevent unauthorised parking around the pit area) and that he would be arranging the manufacture of these bollards.

The committee decided that the information reported be noted and that

- (1) Councillor Emery would arrange collection of the bark chippings;
- (2) given the perceived low level of usage of this parking area and the cost of the works suggested, no action to provide a proper surface at the car parking area at Manea Pit be taken at this time;
- (3) work parties be arranged for undertaking the necessary maintenance works to the access road, the fishing platforms and the footpaths.

PMC54/12 Manea Pit – Revision of the management plan

Further to minute PMC45/12, the Clerk reported an update that he had received from Mrs P Smith regarding development of the new management plan. Mrs Smith has made some progress since the last meeting on writing-up the comments made by those members of the management committee who had participated in the “walk about” around the pit area on 25 July 2012 but, because of other commitments upon her time, had not been able to conclude that process in time for this meeting; when completed, she proposes to circulate a document to members of the management committee, for consideration at the next meeting.

The committee decided that the current situation be noted and to accept the offer of Councillor Emery that he would contact Mrs Smith to ascertain if input from other committee members into the process at this time would be helpful.

PMC55/12 Manea Pit – Health and Safety

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

Mr H Westgate raised two issues; these related to

- (1) a comment that had been made to him by a dog walker regarding the “No motorcycles or quad bikes beyond this point” signs which had been installed at the access points to the pit area and her concern regarding the use of anti-climb paint in association with such installation. Mr Westgate suggested that, in accordance with advice produced by Thames Valley Police, “Warning: anti-climb paint” types of signs should be clearly posted wherever the paint is in use.
- (2) a recent rat problem around the pit area, as a result of someone spreading bird seed on the ground.

The committee decided that

- (1) a notice be placed in the notice board at Manea Pit, informing the public of the use of anti-climb paint in association with certain signs installed around the pit;
- (2) the feeding of birds at the pit area would not be a general practice undertaken by or on behalf of the committee or the Parish Council; if this approach were to change in the future, any feeding would not be by the spreading of seed on the ground but through the use of bird feeders.

PMC56/12 Fishing and other pit users' issues

Mr Westgate handed to the Clerk income from Carp Syndicate membership fees, in the total sum of £2,760. This income relates to payment of fees by the current 23 syndicate members. The 23 members comprise 17 persons who were members in 2012/13 and 6 new members. Mr Westgate explained that the majority of those who had not renewed membership for 2013/14 had not done so because of certain actions/works undertaken at Manea Pit by a particular individual.

Mr Westgate mentioned a complaint that he had received from a member of the Carp Syndicate concerning a recent incident of the Fire and Rescue Service using the pit area for training purposes, which, he suggested, had caused disturbance to both fishermen and wildlife; he questioned whether such use should have been subject to formal approval by the Manea Pit Management Committee or Manea Parish Council. In response, Councillor Emery stated that he, in his capacity of Chairman of Manea Parish Council, had given consent for this use and that, given the short notice of the request (for use of the pit area on the same day), there had been insufficient time to obtain consent from other members of the Parish Council prior to the activity taking place. There was discussion around this issue, with Mr Westgate questioning Councillor Emery's authority to make decisions on behalf of Manea Parish Council.

Councillor Emery reported that Mr Fost had obtained estimated costings for all necessary fixings for the pond dipping platform (which is proposed to have a total length of 18 metres and a width of 3 metres) and had requested from the company which manufactures the platforms the contact details of contractors which it had utilised to install these platforms at other locations. Given the need for quotations to be obtained relatively quickly, because of the time scale for submitting an application under the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme (minute PMC57/12 refers), the committee feels that quotations for the installation of the pond dipping platform should be obtained from suitable local contractors.

Councillor Emery informed the committee that he had investigated the cost of purchasing a security camera of the type suggested (as a means of deterring acts of anti-social behaviour in an area around the pit) but concluded that it would be of limited effect and, consequently, he recommends that no such purchase be made. The committee agreed with Councillor Emery's assessment.

The committee decided that

- (1) in future, all requests for use of the pit area would, depending upon the time scale available, be referred to either the Manea Pit Management Committee or to Manea Parish Council;
- (2) Councillor Emery would seek to obtain quotations from three suitable local contractors for installation of the proposed pond dipping platform.

PMC57/12 Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership

Further to minute PMC42/12, the Clerk reported that Manea Parish Council had decided, at minute M155/12 (6), to delegate authority to the Manea Pit Management Committee to develop a project, along the lines suggested at minute PMC42/12, and to submit a project application form, on behalf of the Parish Council, for such a project.

The Clerk reminded members that the budget allocation within the scheme for a project at Manea is £10,000 (made up of £9,750 cash and an assumption of voluntary labour with a value of £250) and that, in terms of developing a project, it had been concluded that the following elements should feature:

1. use of the area by the primary school as an outdoor classroom
2. formalising the route from the school to Manea Pit, via part of the woodland area, as a walking path and possibly including interpretation information along that route
3. the creation of a pond dipping area at Manea Pit
4. use of the current pavilion, following construction of the new facility, as an outdoor classroom and information/interpretation centre, possible working with the RSPB to promote Manea as a place to visit. If it is felt that the information/interpretation potentially has a wider audience than Manea only and eventually could focus upon the Ouse Washes as a whole.

The committee was also reminded by the Clerk of the timeline for delivery of the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme.

The committee decided that the information provided be noted and that

- (1) the Clerk would endeavour to complete the application form for the project, with input from the Manea Pit Management Committee as necessary;
- (2) Councillor Emery would obtain from Mr Fost and Mrs Smith any information they possess which may be useful in completion of the application form.

PMC58/12 Monitoring of actions

The Chairman circulated an updated schedule of actions document.

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.

PMC59/12 Next meeting

The committee decided that the next meeting be held on 15 May 2013, commencing at 7.30 pm, at the British Legion Club, East Street, Manea. It was acknowledged that it may be necessary to hold an additional meeting at an earlier date to facilitate the submission of an application under the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme (minute PMC 57/12 refers).

Meeting finished at 8.50 pm.

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

Date.....