

MANEA PIT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

23 OCTOBER 2013 – 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Desborough, Chairman; Councillors Cole, Emery and Fielding plus Mrs P Smith.

Apologies: Mr M Bradshaw, Mr C Carson, Mr I Fost, Mr R K Miller, Mrs L Stevens and Mr H Westgate.

The minutes of the meeting of 14 August 2013 were confirmed and signed.

PMC18/13 Field adjoining Manea Pit – use as community orchard/woodland

Further to minute PMC11/13, Mrs Smith updated the committee in relation to this project.

Mrs Smith made the point that it would not be appropriate to undertake grass killing works at this time of the year, suggesting that these works should now wait until February or March of next year. She informed the committee that she had, in accordance with minute PMC11/13, made application to the Woodland Trust for one pack of tree saplings (containing 420 trees); the application had been successful; in addition to the pack of saplings, the Woodland Trust would be providing stakes and covers for the saplings. Other members of the committee supported Mrs Smith's suggestion that if there were any "surplus" saplings following planting at the orchard/woodland, they be planted at other suitable locations within the village.

The committee discussed issues in relation to planting of the saplings, including the laying of matting (to be covered by bark chippings) around each sapling.

The Clerk reported an e-mail from Mrs Stevens, in which she confirms that the Headteacher at Manea Community Primary School is happy for pupils at the school to participate in the planting of trees. Mrs Stevens had also made contact with the Brownies with regard to participation in this activity.

Councillor Cole expressed concern regarding the cost of cutting the grass (and clearing the cuttings) at the community orchard/woodland area when it is allowed to grow long before being cut. He commented that members of the public like to see the length of the grass kept shorter; because of these concerns, it had been agreed by the Manea Pit Management Committee (at minute PMC3/13) that the long grass should be cut at that time; he made the point that, because of the work involved when cutting and clearing longer grass, the cost of such works is approximately £500 per occasion; if this cutting were to take place three times a year, the annual cost to the Parish Council would be of the order of £1,500, Councillor Cole, therefore, suggested that the grassed areas should be cut on a regular basis (to keep it short), to both respond to the wishes of the community and to minimise the cost to the Parish Council.

In response to Councillor Cole's concerns, Mrs Smith suggested that it would be appropriate to have some mown paths (of four to six feet in width) but let the remaining grass grow and to plant wildflowers within the grassed area; she commented that the woodland area is meant to have a natural look and not to be given the appearance of a playing field. She commented also that it is general practice to cut meadow areas twice annually; the grass and flowers are not usually allowed to grow continuously.

Further to minute PMC11/13, Councillor Emery reported that the Parish Council had considered the committee's recommendation that it should adopt a suitable approach to the locking and unlocking of the new gate at the woodland area and had decided (at minute M53/13) that the gate should be locked (to prevent unauthorised

vehicular access). Consequently, a combination lock had been purchased and would be fitted imminently by Councillor Emery.

The committee decided that

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) the new trees be planted in circular groups of five, the grassed being allowed to grow within each of those circles; there would be mown pathways around the outside of the tree-bounded circles.

PMC19/13 Management Plan - improvement/development works and projects

Further to minute PMC12/13, the committee considered the current situation regarding the maintenance of Manea Pit and its surroundings.

The committee concluded, from discussing the outcomes of the most recent work parties, that almost all of the routine maintenance works are up-to-date; the only outstanding issue is the need to undertake improvement works to one of the fishing platforms.

With regard to the possible provision of a proper surface to the car parking area at Manea Pit (as recommended to Manea Parish Council at minute PMC12/13), the Parish Council had decided, at minute M53/13, that it would consider the matter when setting its budget for the financial year 2014/15.

The committee decided that the information reported be noted and a work party be arranged for the purpose of undertaking improvement works to one particular fishing platform.

PMC20/13 Manea Pit – Revision of the management plan

Further to minute PMC13/13, Mrs P Smith informed the committee that she had obtained from the Wildlife Trust a website link to a good example of a management plan – the example included a map of the geographical area covered by plan (the map identified the various species and uses of particular areas within the site). She suggested that the management plan for Manea Pit and its surroundings could include a number of maps (say 4).

Mrs Smith circulated a first draft version of a Manea Pit Management Plan (which would an initial “life” of five years); it includes an Introduction, Description of Manea Pit, Management Plan Objectives (Access, Amenity and Recreation; Environment; Information and Learning) and an Action Plan plus a number of appendices of supporting information. She stated that, subject to the committee’s approval of the structure of the draft version as the basis for a new Manea Pit Management Plan, she would continue development of the document.

The committee decided that

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) the structure of the draft version be approved as the basis for a new Manea Pit Management Plan;
- (3) Mrs Smith would circulate an updated version of the draft plan in advance of the next meeting, for the committee members’ consideration at that meeting.

PMC21/13 Manea Pit – Health and Safety

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

The committee decided that there are no new health and safety issues at this time.

PMC22/13 Fishing and other pit users' issues

The Clerk reported, on behalf of Mr H Westgate, that

- there had been a lot of talk and web-page posts about a fight involving one member of the Carp Syndicate. Mr Westgate states he is satisfied that this syndicate member did not start the fight and the rumours that the member he threw a girl into the pit is not accurate.
- Mr Westgate had received an anonymous complaint regarding excessive drinking and people falling in the water at the pit and asked to confirm the legal position with the Council allowing alcohol consumption for those who are fishing. Mr Westgate now understands that the person who fell into the pit did so because of an unstable chair and he does not believe there to be an issue with drinking around the water.

The committee decided that the information reported by the Clerk, on behalf of Mr Westgate, be noted.

PMC23/13 Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership

Further to minute PMC16/13, the Clerk reported on the current position in this matter; he informed the committee that Cambridgeshire ACRE is currently finalising all of the documentation required by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The committee discussed briefly the arrangements for constructing and installing a pond dipping area at Manea Pit, which is the principal element of the Parish Council's bid for funding under the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership.

The Clerk reminded the committee that, under the terms of the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme, no works could be undertaken regarding constructing and installing a pond dipping area earlier than 1 April 2014; he there is, however, no reason why the necessary preparatory works (such as "lining up" the contractor and volunteer labour) for this project could not be undertaken early in 2014.

The committee decided that the current position be noted.

PMC24/13 Committee membership

Mrs P Smith expressed the view that the membership of the Manea Pit Management Committee should include, where possible, members who are able to contribute relevant expertise and knowledge to the committee. She made the point that the committee would benefit from the input of a botanist and she would, consequently, like to recommend that Mrs M Williams becomes a member of the Manea Pit Management Committee.

Further to minute PMC1/13, there was a brief discussion regarding representation of the Carp Syndicate on the committee and the fact that Mr P Catling, a member of the Carp Syndicate had attended recent meetings of the committee. The committee is of the opinion that it not appropriate for the Carp Syndicate to be have both an official (Mr Westgate) and an unofficial representative (Mr Catling) and that if there is a feeling among members of the Carp Syndicate that their views are not being represented effectively by the current representative, the syndicate should seek to appoint a different person to perform that role.

The committee decided that Mrs M Williams be appointed to the Manea Pit Management Committee.

PMC25/13 Next meeting

The committee decided that the next meeting be held on 3 December 2013, commencing at 7.30 pm, at the British Legion Club, East Street, Manea.

Meeting finished at 9.30 pm.

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

Date.....