

MANEA PIT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

7 MARCH 2013 – 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Archer, Chairman; Councillors Mrs Desborough and Emery plus Mr M Bradshaw, I Fost and Mrs P Smith.

Apologies: Councillors Cole and Fielding plus Mr C Carson, Mr R K Miller, Mrs L Stevens and Mr H Westgate.

The minutes of the meeting of 30 January 2013 were confirmed and signed.

The Clerk informed the management committee that its recommendations at minute PMC36/12 (in relation to fishing fees for 2013/14) and PMC37/12 (relating to revisions to the Standing Orders and Terms of Reference of the Manea Pit Management Committee) had been approved at the Manea Parish Council meeting of 18 February 2013 (minute M144/12 refers). The Parish Council had appointed Councillor Emery as the vice-chairman of this committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2012/13.

PMC41/12 Management Committee membership

The committee welcomed Mr M Bradshaw, in his capacity as the representative of the community, to his first meeting.

PMC42/12 Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership

Further to minutes PMC28/12 and M145/12, the management committee received a presentation from Mr M Nokkert, Cambridgeshire ACRE's Programme Manager for this scheme.

Mr Nokkert explained that the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme, which is funded by The National Lottery (through the Heritage Lottery Fund), consists of 27 projects, one of which is linked to the development of Manea Pit and the surrounding area. The funding available is as a result of a successful bid made by Cambridgeshire ACRE in July 2012. The funding enables spending on projects relating to heritage, landscape, communities and any linkages that can be achieved between these elements. It is also desirable to be able to provide linkages between the 27 projects.

Mr Nokkert showed the management committee a map of the area to which the scheme applies; this area includes Manea.

Mr Nokkert explained the vision for scheme, as well as its themes (Understanding the role of the washlands; Promoting the area as a visitor destination; Involving communities in maintaining the landscape; Providing training in conservation and heritage) and aims (Conservation; Participation; Access and learning; Training). He explained also the manner in which the scheme would be managed/overseen; this includes a board comprising representatives of twelve partner agencies (including Cambridgeshire County Council, RSPB, Natural England and the Wildlife Trust) and a forum of around eighty groups etc.

In terms of delivering the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme, Cambridgeshire ACRE is currently working on the following timeline:

- Project development (working out in detail, including all costings): February to May 2013

- Delivery of project proposal (maximum of 5 minutes presentation) by all 27 project delivery partners, for the HLF on 9 May 2013
- Projects agreed by Project Board: June/July 2013
- Delivery phase: April 2014 for 3 years.

In addition, there would be a conference at Ely on 5 September 2013 to present the outcome of research and to explain the projects which were being developed.

Mr Nokkert informed the management committee that he had met with Councillors Mrs Desborough, Emery and Fielding and the Parish Council Clerk at Manea Pit on 1 March 2013, so that he could view the site and discuss the development of the Manea project.

In terms of the Manea project, Mr Nokkert commented that this scheme provides the opportunity to build upon the works already undertaken at the pit and the adjoining woodland site. 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). Payment of the funding is claimed in arrears.

In terms of developing a project, it was concluded, as a result of both the discussions at the site meeting on 1 March and the management committee, 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.

In terms of the timescale for delivery of the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership project, it is suggested that the pond dipping area be developed in year 1 (April 2014 to March 2015), with interpretation (outside and /or inside in years 2 and/or 3 (April 2015 to March 2017).

Mr Nokkert suggested to the management committee that the next steps for the Parish Council would be to

- establish a small working group to finalise the details of the project (being mindful of the priorities that the Parish Council wishes to achieve and the level of funding available)
- begin completion of the project application form, which should further help in decisions as to how to shape the project.

Cambridgeshire ACRE has created a blog to keep people informed about the development of the project:

<http://ousewasheslps.wordpress.com/>

The committee decided that the information provided be noted and that Manea Parish Council be requested to consider and agree the development of a project for delivery under the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme.

PMC43/12 Field adjoining Manea Pit – use as community orchard/woodland

Further to minute PMC32/12, Mrs P Smith reported that as a result of her making application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an extension of time for use of the grant funding awarded for this project, a revised deadline for spending the grant monies has been approved by the HLF; it is now 31 October 2014 (instead of 31 March 2013).

Mrs Smith mentioned the recent damage caused, by the driving of vehicles on the land, to the grassed area within the woodland area; fortunately, it appears that no damage had been caused to the trees and hedging. She informed the management committee that she had attended 18 February 2013 meeting of the Parish Council to urge it to take action, through the installation of a security camera or gates, to prevent further occurrences of this nature.

Councillor Emery informed the committee that, having taken on board the comments made by Mrs Smith at its 18 February 2013 meeting, the Parish Council decided that it would obtain a quotation for the cost of manufacturing and installing metal gates at the two entrance points to the woodland area. The management committee discussed briefly the Parish Council's proposed approach and 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.

Mrs Smith reported that pruning to all of all the trees had been undertaken; a small number of trees are dead and these would be replaced. The work party arranged for 10 March 2013 will focus upon cutting most of the hedging. She suggested that the time had now arrived to leave the grassed area, except to cut the grass as necessary to maintain a pathway, to develop into a meadow. She suggested further that it would be appropriate to kill the small areas of grass around each tree to assist their growth.

The committee decided that the current situation be noted and that

- (1) Councillor Emery would arrange for the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor to revise the grass cutting undertaken in this area and to kill the small areas of grass around each tree;
- (2) The Chairman would inform the Parish Council of the management committee's view regarding the proposal to prevent unauthorised vehicular access to the woodland area by the installation of two gates.

PMC44/12 Management Plan - improvement/development works and projects

Further to minute PMC33/12, the management committee is aware that some repair works to the access road are needed and that many areas of footpath around the pit area require the re-laying of bark chippings. Mention was also made of the need to undertake re-gravelling to a number of the fishing platforms (without a proper assessment of the condition of each platform, it was estimated by committee members that around four tons of gravel would be sufficient).

Councillor Emery reminded the committee that Councillor Fielding is arranging the manufacture and installation of two metal bollards (to prevent unauthorised parking around the pit area). He mentioned that he is now in possession of six "No motorcycles or quad bikes beyond this point" signs and would arrange their installation at all access points to the pit area.

The committee decided that the information reported be noted and that

- (1) Councillor Emery would pursue the acquisition of an appropriate supply of bark chippings (to facilitate the necessary footpath maintenance work);
- (2) Mr Bradshaw and Mr Westgate would assess the amount of re-gravelling works required to the fishing platforms;

(3) once the necessary maintenance materials have been acquired, work parties be arranged.

PMC45/12 Manea Pit – Revision of the management plan

Further to minute PMC34/12, Mrs Smith reported that she would conclude her write-up of 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 (minute PMC5/12 refers) and then circulate to members of the management committee, for consideration at the next meeting.

The Clerk reported an e-mail from Mrs Stevens, the representative of Manea Community Primary School, in which she states that the staff of Manea Community Primary School would be meeting on 15 March 2013 to discuss how the new staff members could use the pit area for educational purposes; the staff would, as part of a future meeting, visit the site to finalise any plans. The school proposes to start using the pit area during the Summer Term.

The committee decided that the current situation be noted.

PMC46/12 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.

PMC47/12 Fishing and other pit users’ issues

Further to minute PMC36/12, Mr Fost reported on the estimated costings that he had produced for the proposed pond dipping area, on the basis of constructing the structure from recycled plastic. He informed the management committee that the cost of the plastic materials only would be in the region of £5,600 to £6,500, to which would need to be added the costs of all necessary fixings and construction on-site.

Mr Fost mentioned that dog fouling around the pit area remains a problem and that some persons unknown are filling the litter bins around the pit area with domestic household rubbish; Mr Fost is of the opinion that this is a deliberate act to cause inconvenience to the volunteer who empties these bins. He added that there have also been incidents of the waste sacks being cut and then put back into the bins; the result is that when the sacks are lifted from the bins by the volunteer, the litter falls to the ground.

In the light of the comments made by Mr Fost, the committee considered what action could be taken to address this anti-social behaviour.

Mr Bradshaw mentioned that, following the Parish Council’s approval of fees for 2013/14, membership renewal information had been sent to Carp Syndicate membership; it is anticipated that a full syndicate membership would be achieved for the 2013/14 season.

The committee decided that

- (1) Mr Fost would obtain estimated costs of the necessary fixings and the construction of the proposed pond dipping structure;
- (2) as part of the process of obtaining the estimated costs mentioned at (1) above, Mr Fost would arrange to meet on-site with persons able to provide the necessary advice/information; the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Manea Pit Management Committee to be invited to the site meeting;

- (3) Councillor Emery would investigate the cost of purchasing a suitable security camera, as a means of deterring acts of anti-social behaviour in an area around the pit.

PMC48/12 Wildlife Trust's survey of Manea Pit

Further to minute PMC38/12, Mrs Smith commented that, having seen the information provided by the Wildlife Trust, it is apparent that the survey does not relate to Manea Pit but to Bedlam Pit. The Clerk explained that this was down to confusion on his part as to the geography of Manea.

Mrs Smith suggested that it would be useful if the Wildlife Trust would undertake a similar survey of Manea Pit and she sought the committee's agreement to her making such a request of the Wildlife Trust.

The management committee decided that the situation be noted and that

- (1) Mrs Smith would invite the Wildlife Trust to undertake a survey of Manea Pit;
- (2) Councillor Emery's offer to seek to obtain an updated birds survey be accepted.

PMC49/12 Monitoring of actions

The Chairman reported that he had not been able, due to commitments upon his time, to produce an updated schedule of actions document.

The committee decided that the situation be noted.

PMC50/12 Next meeting

The committee decided that the next meeting be held on 11 April 2013, commencing at 7.30 pm, at the British Legion Club, East Street, Manea.

Meeting finished at 9.35 pm.

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

Date.....