

MANEA PIT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

NOTES OF INFORMAL MEETING

26 FEBRUARY 2014 – 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Desborough, Chairman; Councillor Emery plus Mr C Carson, Mr P Catling, Mrs P Smith and Miss M Williams.

Apologies: Mr I Fost, Mr R K Miller and Mrs L Stevens.

Given the inquorate nature of the management committee meeting (because of an insufficient number of Parish Council members being present), it was not possible to agree confirmation and signing of the minutes of 27 January 2014 meeting.

IMC9/13 Committee membership

Mr P Catling was welcomed to his first meeting of the committee, as the representative of the Carp Syndicate (in place of Mr H Westgate).

IMC10/13 Field adjoining Manea Pit – use as community orchard/woodland

Further to minute PMC26/13, Mrs Smith gave an update on this project.

Mrs Smith informed those present that no further tree planting had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee; it is currently proposed that further planting would take place (between 10.00 am and 12 noon) on 9 March 2014.

Mrs Smith reminded those present of the need to kill areas of grass around each tree and suggested that an area of approximately 60 centimetres around each tree (as opposed to a diameter of approximately 2 metres, as discussed at minute PMC26/13) should be sufficient. She informed those present that she had ordered wildflower seed, for planting during the summer months.

Those present at the meeting agreed with the suggestion of Mrs Smith that it would be appropriate for some areas of grass to be cut.

It was agreed that

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) Councillor Emery would provide to Mrs Smith the contact details of the Parish Council's grounds maintenance contractor, so that she could arrange with him the necessary grass killing and cutting works.

IMC11/13 Management Plan - improvement/development works and projects

Further to minute PMC27/13, the committee members present considered the current situation regarding the maintenance of Manea Pit and its surroundings.

Those present concluded that a small number of routine maintenance works are required; these are:

- maintenance and improvement works to a small number of the fishing platforms
- re-surfacing works to certain sections of footpath
- stabilising works to the front of certain steps

With regard to the re-surfacing of footpaths, Councillor Emery mentioned the existence of a large amount of hardwood chippings on land at Purls Bridge Road (resulting from the felling of trees in association with the recent carriageway repairs at Purls Bridge Road).

Those present also discussed the planting of low-level cover to provide a wind-break at a particular area around the pit where clearance of vegetation had been undertaken.

It was agreed that

- (1) the information reported be noted;
- (2) Councillor Emery would enquire of the Local Highway Authority as to the possibility of the Parish Council acquiring the hardwood chippings on land at Purls Bridge Road (for the purpose of footpath repairs at Manea pit)
- (3) Councillor Emery would enquire of Councillor Cole whether any of the railway sleepers purchased by the Parish Council for works at Manea Pit are still available (for the stabilising works to certain steps); if all of the sleepers have been used, Councillor Emery would arrange the procurement of 4 sleepers (each of which would be cut into 3 pieces of equal length);
- (4) the works to the steps would be undertaken before the end of March 2014.

IMC12/13 Manea Pit – Revision of the management plan

Mrs P Smith reported that she had, in accordance with minute PMC28/13, circulated an updated version of the plan with a request for added information and comments to be sent to her by 10 February (so that she could produce the next draft for the meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee scheduled for 26 February).

Mrs Smith expressed her disappointment that so few members of the management committee had responded to the consultation exercise. Of particular concern to her is that not all of the Parish Council members on the committee had responded. Mrs Smith commented that she does not feel entirely comfortable in developing this plan further unless she receives input from a greater number of members of the management committee. She made the point that maps/plans (showing location of the fishing platforms, the layout of the community orchard/woodland etc) and photographs of the site which will accompany the final version of the document are still to be produced.

It was agreed that

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) Mrs Smith would
 - include in the management plan the comments that she had received as a result of the most recent consultation exercise;
 - pursue a response from those members of the management committee who had not responded to the consultation exercises to date;
 - produce an updated version of the management plan and circulate the document to the members of the management committee.

IMC13/13 Manea Pit – Health and Safety

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

It was agreed that there are no new health and safety issues at this time.

IMC14/13 Fishing and other pit users' issues

The Clerk informed those present of the decisions reached by Manea Parish Council (at minute M130/13) in relation to the recommendations made by the management committee at minute PMC30/13; those being that

- a. fees for Carp Syndicate membership and fishing tickets for the 2014/15 be not increased from the 2013/14 level;
- b. having regard for the comments made at the Parish Council meeting by Mr P Catling (minute M121/13 (1) refers), that the Carp Syndicate be allowed to continue for 2014/15, provided that Mr Catling takes on the role of Secretary of the Carp Syndicate and acts as the syndicate's representative on the Manea Pit Management Committee; the council also expects every effort to be made to have a full membership of the syndicate and it would review the situation again in 12 months time.

With regard to a) above, Mr Catling explained the actions being taken to sustain the Carp Syndicate, following the recent change of Secretary; these include establishing a new Facebook page for the Carp Syndicate and (given the fact that the former Secretary had not provided a list of current syndicate members) trying various methods to identify and contact current members (so far, it had proved possible to identify 16 members).

Further to minute PMC30/13, Mr Catling enquired again as to whether the Parish Council would, given its agreement to continuation of the Carp Syndicate, now consider introducing a rolling programme of purchasing, say, two or three new Carp each year to maintain stock levels in the pit.

As a consequence of this matter being raised by Mr Catling, there was a general discussion around the perceived advantages and disadvantages of fishing activities at the pit and the impact of such upon the use of the area as a wider community and conservation site. Some of those present questioned whether any evidence exists for the need to add further fish (of any species) to the pit and it was concluded that it would be beneficial for a survey of the pit to be undertaken to ascertain levels of fish stocks and identify matters of environmental/ecological importance.

Comments were made regarding the fact that the income received from the sale of Carp Syndicate memberships and fishing tickets provides a valuable source of income to the Parish Council; the loss of such income would result in the need for the Parish Council to increase its annual Precept.

Further to minute PMC30/13, the Chairman reported that she had met with the Leader of the Manea Guides group to agree a suitable area for camp fires and to identify what works would be necessary to facilitate such use. She informed those present that the Manea Guides group has its own fire pit (which it would remove from site between times of usage); the group would like to install logs to use as seating and to clear the area of nettles and weeds and then surface the area with bark chippings. The proposal is that the work would be undertaken by a working party comprising Guides and parents in time for use of the area in July.

Members decided that

- (1) Councillor Emery and Mr Catling would obtain quotations for the purchase of Carp;

- (2) Mrs P Smith would, in liaison with Mr Carson and Miss Williams, investigate the cost of a survey of Manea Pit and a suitable company or individual to undertake that work and report the information to the next meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee;
- (3) the proposal by the Manea Guides group, to undertake works to provide an area for camp fires at Manea Pit, be approved; the Chairman would inform the group of the decision.

IMC15/13 Next meeting

It was agreed that the date for the next meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee be set by the Clerk, following consultation with members of the committee as to their availability.

Meeting finished at 9.20 pm.

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

Date.....