

MANEA PIT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

8 APRIL 2015 – 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Desborough, Chairman; Councillors Emery and Woodard plus Mr P Catling, Mr I Fost, Mr J Short, Mrs P Smith and Miss M Williams.

Apologies: Councillor Cole plus Mr C Carson and Mrs L Stevens.

The minutes of the meeting of 3 March 2015 were confirmed and signed.

PMC50/14 Decisions made by Manea Parish Council

The Clerk reported on the decisions made by Manea Parish Council since 3 March 2015 meeting of the Manea Pit Management Committee in relation to matters affecting the operation and management of Manea Pit.

At its meeting on 16 March 2015, Manea Parish Council had decided (at minute M154/14)

- (1) to approve the recommendation of the Manea Pit Management Committee (minute PMC47/14 refers) that fees for Carp Syndicate membership and fishing tickets for 2015/16 be not increased from the 2014/15 level;
- (2) that a replacement picnic bench be purchased, of the design suggested by Councillor Woodard, at a cost of £250.00 (the same as the cost of the one which had been stolen), for installation at the woodland area.

The committee decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted.

PMC51/14 Field adjoining Manea Pit – use as community orchard/woodland

Further to minute PMC43/14, Miss Williams gave an update on the operational aspects of this project.

Miss Williams informed the committee that

- two further maintenance days had taken place since the last meeting of this committee
- meadow seed mix and wildflower seed had been sown
- pruning of the fruit trees has now been undertaken
- a pack of 100 trees had been obtained, free-of-charge, from the Woodland Trust and these had been planted
- there would be a need to consider, at some future date, undertaking some weed control at the woodland area
- Mr C Carson had examined the use of the Owl box and had concluded that it is being used by birds but not Owls
- she would progress the acquisition of mulch for the fruit trees.

Members of the committee commented that this area is looking very impressive.

Further to minute PMC43/14, Mrs Smith reported that she had now received the quotation for the provision of "lectern" design interpretation boards and, having calculated the spend to date from the grant provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the amount which is still to be accessed from the HLF, it would be possible to meet the cost of purchasing four such boards and producing the necessary interpretation content.

Mrs Smith reminded the committee that it would be necessary to identify what information ought to be included in the interpretation boards and she suggested, again, that certain members of the committee could take on the task, using their respective areas of expertise, to produce information (such as species of birds, types of fish, varieties of trees etc). She also asked the committee to agree the locations for the four boards.

The committee decided that

- (1) the information reported by Miss Williams and Mrs Smith be noted;
- (2) Mrs Smith would make arrangements to acquire the interpretation boards;
- (3) it would consider, at its next meeting, draft versions of the content for the interpretation boards.

PMC52/14 Management Plan - improvement/development works and projects

Further to minute PMC44/14, the committee considered the current situation regarding the maintenance of Manea Pit and its surroundings.

Mr P Catling informed the committee that he would be arranging a working party, to take place within the next few weeks (when the weather should be warmer and the period of daylight is longer), possibly a weekday evening, for the purpose of undertaking the maintenance works mentioned at minute PMC44/14.

The committee decided that the current situation be noted.

PMC53/14 Manea Pit – Revision of the management plan

Further to minute PMC45/14, Mrs P Smith informed the committee that she had ascertained from a conversation with the Clerk that he had received no comments from the public (by the deadline of 31 March 2015) in relation to the final draft version of the Manea Pit Management Plan.

Mrs Smith mentioned that the Clerk's examination of the lease between Manea Parish Council and the Environment Agency had shown that it contains no requirement for Manea Parish Council to preserve the pit's County Wildlife Site (CWS) status. Subsequently, there was a brief discussion as to whether there are any benefits from a management perspective of the pit maintaining its CWS status. Mrs Smith undertook to establish whether Mr Carson had received any response from the Wildlife Trust (WT) in relation to his challenge to the WT's decision that Manea Pit no longer qualifies for this status. If the challenge is not successful, she would make amendments to the wording of the plan where necessary to reflect the pit's loss of its CWS status and then send, by e-mail, an updated version of the plan to all members of this committee.

The committee decided that the situation with regard to the new management plan be noted.

PMC54/14 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.

PMC55/14 Fishing and other pit users' issues

Miss M Williams informed the committee that Mrs L Stevens had obtained and provided health and safety information sheets regarding pond dipping.

Mr P Catling handed to the Clerk the sum of £3,000.00 in respect of (25) Carp Syndicate membership fees for 2015/16. He commented that five memberships are still available. In addition, he informed the committee that last weekend had been very successful for Carp fishing.

Councillor Woodard mentioned that he had received a complaint from a parishioner regarding the level of dog fouling within the pit area. A number of other members of the committee commented that this issue is becoming a problem once again.

The committee decided that the information reported by certain members of the committee be noted and that the situation regarding the level of dog fouling within the pit area be monitored between this meeting and the next, so that the committee could consider, at the next meeting, if necessary, what action could be taken in an effort to address the situation.

PMC56/14 Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership

Further to minute PMC48/14, the committee considered the development of a programme of activities in Manea as part of OuseFest 2015 (which would operate between 20 July and 2 August).

The Clerk reminded the committee that a number of events are being planned as part of OuseFest and that one of the key events would be a Fun Day at the Mepal Outdoor Centre on 25 July.

The committee considers that the programme of events, to take place on 25 July 2015 (between 12 noon and 4.00 pm) in Manea would follow the following lines:

- a presentation on the history of the village
- photographic display of wildlife to be found around the pit area
- photographic competition
- refreshments available at the pavilion
- official launch of the pond dipping area
- guided walks around the pit
- possible activities with the community orchard, including a community picnic
- 'learn how to fish' activity at Manea Pit.

The committee decided that the situation be noted and that arrangements be made to deliver a programme of activities (as indicated above) in Manea, on 25 July 2015, as part of OuseFest 2015 event.

PMC57/14 Next meeting

The committee decided that the next meeting be held on 27 May 2015, commencing at 7.30 pm, at the British Legion Club, East Street, Manea.

Meeting finished at 9.10 pm.

Signature:.....(Committee Chairman)

Date.....