

Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust Committee Minutes

Wednesday 23 June 2021

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Alexandra Sanderson (Chair) Helen Rowbottom and Belinda Donovan

Co-opted Members: Stephen Waley-Cohen and Miriam Shea

Advisors to the Trust: Stephen Hollingworth, Richard Gill, Carmen Lomotey, Heather Marsh

Amrita White (Clerk)

This meeting was held remotely. A recording of the meeting can be found at:
<https://youtu.be/YzirtBlkUN>

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Alexandra Sanderson was unanimously agreed as Chair of the Committee for the municipal year 2021-22.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

RESOLVED:

Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen and Miriam Shea, representatives of the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs, were unanimously agreed as co-opted members of the Committee for the municipal year 2021-22.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Matt Rumble

4. ROLL CALL AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair carried out a roll call to confirm attendance. There were no declarations of interest.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2021 were approved.

Members asked for the following amendments to be made to the minutes:

Grounds Maintenance and site management update

Members discussed the pricing difference between 2 and 5 years for the recovery of the roadway providing vehicle access from Scrubs Lane to the Linford Christie Stadium, the Pony Centre, Council depot and to the temporary site for Kensington Aldridge Academy.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted member) requested that a sub-group be set up for the ground's maintenance contract and Emma Ranson *and Miriam Shea (Co-opted member)* be invited to join.

Treatment of rental income for the pony centre

In response to a question asked by Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted member), Officers noted that a formal report relating to the treatment of the rental income for the pony centre would be brought to the next meeting.

Action: Chris Harris

6. MANAGER'S REPORT

Steve Hollingworth, Advisor to the Trust, presented the report.

Update on Kensington Dragons Lease, Grant Agreement and Service Level Agreement

Steve noted that the lease, grant agreement and service level agreement were now all agreed and ready to be executed. Although the Trust delegated authority to officers to complete the terms of the lease and the service level agreement, it did not delegate authority to officers to complete the terms of the grant agreement. Therefore, to execute all documents, the Trust were further asked to delegate authority to officers to: -

Complete the funding agreement between the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust and Kensington Dragons Football Club Limited, to award grant funding of £250,000 to the Club to contribute to the delivery of upgrading and providing new sports pitches and circulation areas on the Trust's property at the Linford Christie Stadium.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation.

HS2 Bill Alternative Ecological Mitigation -Master Plan

Steve noted since the consultation began in the autumn of 2019, there had been a noticeable increase in residents using the Scrubs during lockdown and continuing to enjoy the area as lock down was released. There had been greater interest and engagement from schools with the natural world and therefore the Council was keen to capitalise on this increased interest and engage much more with the wider community and the educational sector. Steve noted that a suggested way forward would be to develop a more inclusive community engagement strategy and work in co-production with residents on the Master Plan. To ensure that wider community engagement was achieved before signing it off.

To achieve this, it was proposed to appoint specialist community engagement consults to develop the vision with residents, the educational sector, and key stakeholders before moving forward further.

The Chair explained that given the interest at the Scrubs over the last few months, it would be useful to broaden the consultation to the community to develop a more inclusive community engagement strategy and feed that input into the Master Plan.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted member) explained that whilst he understood the need for a wider consultation, it was equally as important to proceed with the implementation of the project without any major delays. He asked for further clarification to be provided on the timeline for implementation. In response Steve noted that the latest timeline would be circulated to Committee members when this was available.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Councillor Helen Rowbottom noted that she was in favour of extending the consultation period. She requested that additional signage be added so that the public were able to register their interest and provide feedback.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation.

HS2 Update

Steve noted that HS2 were now working to secure access to the Stamford Brook Sewer compound from Old Oak Common (OOC) Lane. The access had been delayed due to the need to carry out investigate works, to identify the location of utilities under OOC Lane. An update was provided on the current timetable for works and to complete works on the UTX site.

Protesters

Steve noted that the HS2 protesters remained on the Scrubs within Chats Paddock to the east of the Stamford Brook sewer compound. Meetings between the Police, HS2 security and Council officers were continuing on a fortnightly basis to monitor the situation. Steve explained that he last visited the protestors on site with the fire brigade on the 17th June 2021 and no major concerns came to light.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted member) noted that there were ongoing concerns amongst the Friends of the Scrubs regarding the vegetation clearance works. She queried if Council officers were still monitoring the works carried out by HS2 for the vegetation clearance and if they were complying with the agreed method statements within their compounds and around the edges. In response Steve noted that officers had been on site on a weekly basis to check that the agreed method of working was being followed. In addition, HS2 were maintaining the vegetation that was growing back.

Steve commented that he would request a statement from HS2 on the works that were currently being carried out and how these were being executed for the vegetation clearance.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Park Lodge

Heather Marsh, Advisor to the Trust introduced the item and noted that at the previous meeting The Trust approved funding to explore options for the future of Park Lodge. A summary of which was included as Appendix 1.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted member) felt that option 3 (redevelopment as two new built maisonettes) did not fit the remit and ethos of the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust and that the costs for option 4 (redevelopment as a new build community facility) were high compared to the other options. It was noted that she was in favour of option 5 (demolish and return to green space). Miriam Shea felt that the Linford Christie Stadium was a more suitable location for community type facilities i.e. cafe, toilets and an ecology centre.

The Chair commented that she had received several emails from local residents proposing the need for a café and a community centre on the Scrubs. She noted that it would be useful to carry out a consultation to engage with the public so that further feedback can be provided on the options for the future of Park Lodge.

Councillor Belinda Donovan commented that she was in favour of exploring options for after school clubs or a community building.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom noted that she was in favour of a community/residential space that would benefit the Scrubs and the users as much as possible.

The Chair requested that revised costs for the options discussed at the meeting be circulated to Committee members.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Catering Concession

Steve noted that the proposal for a mobile van selling refreshment from the Wormwood Scrubs car park is under consideration. However, all concessions in the Council's parks are currently under review until all legal lockdown restrictions were relaxed.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (co-opted member) raised some concerns around the risk of additional litter as a result of the mobile van. He also commented that there was already a catering facility available on the Northern side of the Linford Christie Stadium, very close to where the van would be situated. In response the Chair explained that the mobile van would be operated by a local resident, who was very passionate about running a community focused coffee van. In addition, it was noted that this was a trial and options on how litter would be managed were being reviewed.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom suggested that litter could be mitigated by encouraging the public to bring in their own coffee cups in return for a discount and using eco-friendly material in line with the ethos and vision of the Scrubs.

Implementing Strategic Governance Review recommendations

Steve noted that the Trust Committee approved a budget allocation of £75K a year for two years (£150,000 in total), to fund an appropriate project manager role to support the implementation of the review recommendations and provide wider support to the Trust. Candidates were interviewed on 21st May, but none were successful. Before re- advertising the position, officers were updating the job description to make it more outward facing with more focus on community development and engagement.

The person specification was also being reviewed to ensure candidates had relevant knowledge of ecological issues.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom said that she was keen to support Officers in redrafting the job description and person specification should this be required.

Community Safety Update

Steve noted that in April 2021 the Council commenced employment of its new Law Enforcement Team (LET). The LET comprised of 72 staff creating one of the biggest environmental enforcement teams in the country. The team were responsible for providing high visibility presence in our parks and green spaces, housing estates, commercial areas and residential roads.

Each ward would have an allocated officer who would ensure they know all the key partners in that ward and they too, know them. Neil Thurlow had been requested for the Scrubs. Officers would continue to provide a presence on the Scrubs and engage with everyone using this space. Since coming into post Officers had been on the Scrubs daily undertaking patrols, responding to concerns and issues, undertaking welfare visits, working with the local police and undertaking the daily lock up duties.

The Chair requested that Neil Thurlow be invited to the next meeting to present the community safety statistics and introduce himself to the Committee.

The Chair requested that a breakdown be provided on the difference between the type of incidents that needed to be reported to the LET team and the Metropolitan Police.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Ground Maintenance and site management update

Heather provided an update and noted that the Committee previously approved funding to repair the road providing vehicle access from Scrubs Lane to the Linford Christie Stadium, the Pony Centre, council depot and to the temporary site for Kensington Aldridge Academy (KAA). The main resurfacing work had been carried out. Further works were in hand to remove the defunct traffic management system near the junction of Scrubs Lane. Traffic management to the access road from Scrubs Lane had become more of an issue since the stadium had started to re-open and sports pitches were receiving greater use, with instances of inappropriate parking on the Scrubs and to the access road being reported. Hardware for the inoperative system would be removed as outlined above and proposals for a replacement system would be investigated and put forward for consideration at the next committee meeting.

Signage

The Committee previously approved funding for signage. The three existing large signs had been cleaned and repaired, and robust, temporary signage installed around the meadow area to deter users from disturbing wildlife during the bird nesting season.

In response to a question asked by members Heather Marsh explained that the permanent signage would be put in place alongside the timing of the Master Plan.

Notting Hill Carnival

Steve noted that the carnival had been cancelled therefore this item was no longer required for discussion.

Network Rail Depot

Heather explained that Network Rail had requested the use of part of North Pole open space as a compound for upcoming works to Mitre Bridge embankment. This would potentially represent an extension of the noise and disruption to residents. Officers would obtain further information from Network Rail to aid a decision on the appropriateness of a new compound.

The Chair requested that further information be requested from Network Rail and provided to the Committee before a formal decision was made i.e. what the work would look like and the impact this would have on residents.

Action: Heather Marsh

Procurement of a new GM (Grounds Maintenance) contract

Steve noted that the procurement process was ongoing. Suppliers passing the qualification stage of the tender were invited to submit bids, and these had now been received and evaluated. The next stage involved negotiation with each bidder and members of a subgroup (Cllr Alex Sanderson, Emma Ranson and Miriam Shea) would be involved in this process. Key meetings would take place the e/c 5th July. Approval to appoint the winning tenderer(s) was timetabled for October.

Members requested that any bid submission documents be circulated to the Committee ahead of the meetings.

Play equipment Braybrook Street

Heather noted that the items of play equipment were removed from Braybrook Street in 2020 due to health and safety concerns. HS2 held a fund for community projects and the Council were one of the boroughs invited to bid. It was recommended that the Committee, with the assistance of Parks Officers, submit a bid to HS2 for the supply and installation of new play equipment.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation.

Weekend Parking charges

Steve noted that the introduction of weekend parking charges was in hand but had been slightly delayed. A traffic order had been drafted and was expected to be operational in around 6 weeks.

Events

Steve noted that no events were held at the Scrubs during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Audit and Accounts

Steve noted that it was recommended that the Trust re-appoint MHA Macintyre Hudson as external auditor for the financial year 2020-21. The proposed audit-fee for 2020-21 is £9,950 + VAT.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation.

Financial Outturn 2020/21

Carmen Lomotey, Advisor to the Trust provided an overview of the 2020/21 financial outturn for the Trust. The budget for 2020/21 was set with an anticipated surplus of £103,864 to be added to the Trust's reserves. The actual 2020/21 surplus for the year was £49,439. Although this outturn was £54,425 worse, it was £17,852, better than forecasted at March 2021.

Income 2020/21

Carmen noted that the income budget was set at £975,164. The actual income at £897,590 was £77,574 below budget. Pre-Covid-19 lockdown income from pay and display and parking meters was fairly consistent, particularly since the introduction of cashless parking.

Governance costs 2020/21

Carmen noted that the indirect costs of managing the Wormwood Scrubs (governance costs – i.e. legal charges, audit fees and Central Finance support costs) were apportioned to expenditure based on value.

Expenditure 2020/21

Carmen noted that at £848,151 (£825,671 plus £22,480 governance costs), 2020/21 expenditure was £23,149 below the £871,299 expenditure budget.

Financial Budget 2021/22 (Updated)

Carmen noted that the proposed budget for the Trust for 2021/22, a surplus of £31,595, was approved at the last meeting (held on 24th March 2021). Approval was also given for this budget to be updated with the financial items approved at that meeting. Carmen provided a summary of the changes.

Income Budget 2021/22

Carmen noted that the 2021/22 income budget was unchanged at £991,433. This was £93,843 more than the 2020/21 outturn, and slightly less than the 2019/20 outturn.

Expenditure Budget 2021/22

Carmen noted that the 2021/22 expenditure budget had increased from £959,839 to £1,105,109, due to the approved changes noted above. Reapportioned governance costs (£28,000) was the reason for the budget revisions of Grounds Maintenance and Linford Christie Stadium contribution.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom asked how the shortfall would be factored into the budget going forward and requested that this be noted as an action. In response Carmen explained that this budget was set fairly cautiously, and it didn't factor in any additional costs for weekend parking. In addition, the parking charges received for March 2021 was £27,000, which was £10,000 more than what was originally projected.

Action: Carmen Lomotey

Any other business

Miriam Shea (Co-opted member) noted that the Friends had requested improved communication with the Council officers on matters relating to the Scrubs going forward .

Action: Heather Marsh

The Chair noted that HS2 had indicated that they were considering enforcing a compulsory purchase order which would enable them to acquire certain sites on the Scrubs for their works. HS2 had advised officers that as a result of the delays their works would not be completed before the 23rd February 2020. Once the works were finished the land would be returned to the Trust. Officers were seeking legal advice and the options available on this matter and would update the Committee as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

The Committee:

- Approved that the Trust delegate authority to officers to: - Complete the funding agreement between the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust and Kensington Dragons Football Club Limited, to award grant funding of £250,000 to the Club to contribute to the delivery of upgrading and providing new sports pitches and circulation areas on the Trust `s property at the Linford Christie Stadium.
- Agreed to develop a more inclusive community engagement strategy and work in co-production with residents on the Master Plan to ensure that wider community ownership was achieved before signing it off.
- considered the options report on the future of Park Lodge
- Approved access across WSCT land for the Met police as part of policing arrangements for Notting Hill carnival
- Approved the development and submission of a bid to HS2's community fund for new play equipment
- Approve the re-appointment of MHA Macintyre Hudson as the Trust's external auditor for the financial year 2020-21 as set out in section 16
- noted the 2020/21 Financial Outturn as set out in section 17
- noted the 2021/22 Financial Budget as set out in section 18
- noted all other matters in the report.

Meeting started: 6:30pm
Meeting ended: 8:00pm

Chair

Clerk: Amrita Gill
E-mail: amrita.gill@lbhf.gov.uk