

Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust Committee Minutes

Wednesday 8 September 2021

PRESENT

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

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

Advisors to the Trust: Stephen Hollingworth (Trust Manager), Neil Thurlow, Carmen Lomotey and Ahmad Rafique

Amrita White (Clerk)

This meeting was held remotely. A recording of the meeting can be found at:
<https://youtu.be/VLziBh7pVPA>

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received Matt Rumble, Heather Marsh and Councillor Helen Rowbottom

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd August 2021 were approved.

4. MANAGER'S REPORT

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

Update on Kensington Dragons Grant Agreement

Steve noted that the funding agreement between the Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust and Kensington Dragons Football Club Limited had now been completed. This was to award grant funding of £250,000 for 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.

HS2 Bill Alternative Ecological Mitigation -Master Plan

Steve noted that a brief for a specialist in community engagement had been drafted and a revised programme for the Biodiversity Masterplan had also been

drawn up. This showed the consultation taking place over several months, to enable a full and in-depth consultation with residents. A revised Masterplan was proposed to be presented for final approval at the June 2022 Committee. There was a risk that HS2 would not fund further consultation and engagement. The funding agreement for the Alternative Ecological Mitigation did not mention community consultation or any other works apart from ecological enhancements. Nevertheless, HS2 had funded a limited programme of consultation with residents and agreed that interpretation signage could form part of the project.

HS2 had indicated that if a rationale or business case was presented to them, setting out the need for further consultation, they may be prepared to fund engagement to develop a vision for Wormwood Scrubs which reflected the needs of local people.

The Chair felt that the original consultation exercise lacked sufficient engagement with local people. A large number of residents had submitted their feedback on their vision for the Scrubs. Therefore, she felt that it was vital to reopen the consultation process to gather further feedback and capture the views of the residents, noting that the execution of a robust engagement plan would play a key part of this exercise. This could then feed into the revised Masterplan,

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) expressed his concerns on the delay of the project timetable and asked the Trust advisors to explore options on how this could be brought forward by Spring 2020 if possible.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) enquired what the total cost of the consultation would be to the Trust if HS2 were unable to fund it. In response Steve explained that the full costs were unknown until the tender exercise had been completed. However, these costs were expected to be around £10k or less.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation.

HS2 Update

Steve provided an update and noted that HS2 had now secured access from Old Oak Common Lane and had started the construction of the UTX site. However, there had been a delay to their programme. He updated members on the current timetable and provided an overview on the following key areas, future access point for utilities, easements, temporary trackway from Braybrook Street, BT Manhole, and clarification on the compulsory purchase order. It was noted that a letter had gone back to HS2 seeking written assurances that the land would be returned to the Trust and to clarify further through detailed drawings, the area of small land they were referring to for the layby and footpath.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) suggested that any vehicular access points that were occupied by HS2 should have retractable bollards to ensure that unauthorised vehicles were unable to access the Scrubs via these points.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) commented that the Friends of the Scrubs were concerned about the winter foot traffic on the route between the northern side of the meadow and the embankment, having lost the secondary route closer to the embankment to the HS2 enclosure. Therefore, he enquired if

the current track adjacent to the fence line of HS2 could be created as an additional useable route during the winter months by clearing out the bramble. In response Steve commented that he would discuss this matter with HS2.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Members discussed the matting arrangements on the temporary trackway from Braybrook Street. The Chair noted that further discussions were required with residents and The Friends of the Scrubs before a decision on whether to remove or retain the matting along the trackway could be made.

Protestors

Steve noted that following the fire at the second camp on Monday 23rd August, letters were delivered to the protesters asking them to vacate the land and a court order for possession of the land had been applied for.

Community Safety

Neil Thurlow, Advisor to the Trust gave a presentation on the role of the Law Enforcement Team (LET) and provided a summary of the key points. It was noted that the Council approved the creation of the LET on the 7th December 2020. The objectives and core duties of the Team were summarised. The Team was uniformed and carried out high visibility patrols and provided 24-hour coverage.

Ahmad Rafique commented that he was a Senior Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) at the Council and managed the North Team. It was noted that the LEO's had been patrolling the Wormwood Scrubs on a daily basis engaging with the visitors, walkers, event organisers, public gym users, stakeholders, etc. He provided an overview of the safeguarding work that had been carried to reassure the public.

The Chair said that it would be useful to have breakdown of the LET's roles and responsibilities and how these were separate to the Metropolitan Police, including the response times so that the public would know who to contact when this was necessary.

Action: Neil Thurlow

Councillor Belinda Donovan commented that she was very impressed with the objectives of the service and suggested creating fridge magnets or stickers incorporating the Team's contact details to help publicise its work.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) noted that the Trustees and The Friends of the Scrubs had not yet engaged with the Team or seen the presence of the officers on the Scrubs. Therefore, he felt that further engagement work needed to be carried out by the Team to ensure that they were working closely with the users of the Scrubs. In response Ahmad Rafique noted that he would contact the Co-opted Members to set up a Zoom meeting or a site visit with the Trustees.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) raised an enquiry regarding people cycling across the Scrubs and creating their own cycle routes. She felt that cycling should only be permitted on the existing quiet way tracks. Neil Thurlow asked Miriam

Shea to engage with Ahmad Rafique after the meeting and provide further details regarding this matter.

Action: Ahmad Rafique

Park Lodge

Steve noted that consultants were approached to provide costs for a further option of a single storey building with refreshment kiosk or small café, classroom facility and public toilets. They had requested a fee of £1,950 to progress this to feasibility stage.

Members felt that the projected costs were thought to be high and requested that other options be explored to find a cheaper alternative that was more suitable for the Trust.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Catering Concession

Steve noted that progress was being made on a lease for a catering concession run from a van in the WSCT car park.

Grounds Maintenance and Site Management Update

Footpath surfacing trials

Steve noted that the sandy loam had been spread along several well-trodden routes as a trial to mitigate for the wet conditions on the Scrubs during the winter months. Bark chippings continued to be spread to woodland footpaths.

Meadow signage

Steve noted that the Parks team proposed to remove the signs requesting people not to access the meadow area, as the bird nesting season had ended.

Traffic management

Steve noted that the Traffic management to the access road from Scrubs Lane had been a long-standing problem and this situation had worsened since now the site was receiving increased use. A quote of £63,131 had been obtained from a reputable security specialist for a new traffic management system, consisting of rising bollards. The system would include CCTV and cloud storage of operational data. A maintenance package could also be provided at the cost of £1,630 per annum, and it was advised that this be included in the works.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation.

Depot Wall

Steve noted that a serious health and safety situation had arisen at the Council depot, where a section of the wall adjoining Burlington Danes Academy had developed movement cracks near the base. A structural assessment concluded that the wall was in a dangerous condition and required urgent demolition. A timber hoarding would be erected to secure the site boundary. The cost of demolition and rebuilding is likely to total around £40k.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation subject to officers exploring cheaper alternatives for the cost of rebuilding the depot wall.

Signage

Steve noted that quotes had been obtained for noticeboards, suitable for installation at entrance points to Wormwood Scrubs. The cost for supply and installation for three timber framed, lockable, noticeboards was £5,500. The Committee had previously approved funding for signage and these noticeboards would assist in reducing the incidence of posters and other notices which had not been approved by the Trust.

The Chair requested that the proposed noticeboards be circulated to Committee Members for review and feedback purposes.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Network Rail Depot

Steve noted that further details were obtained on the proposed Network Rail compound on North Pole open space. The site was requested for storage and parking between September 2021 and May 2022, although this timetable seemed likely to slip as Planning consent was also required for a Highway crossover point and this had not been submitted as of the end of August. The compensation offered for the site was not generous and the Chair requested that this request was refused to avoid further disruption to residents, who had already suffered 18 months use of the site by a utility company.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) enquired if the previous utility company had paid rent and whether this income was credited to the Trust. In response Steve noted that he would investigate this matter and circulate a response the Committee in due course.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Procurement of a new Ground Maintenance contract

Steve noted that following a negotiation stage which involved subgroup members, final tenders had been invited to be returned on the 15th September. A final decision had been agreed by the Council to tender externally for Housing and this decision had resulted in a delay to all final stages. The tender results would go to the Contract Assurance Board (CAB), in October where a recommendation would be made on the winning tenderer(s).

Members discussed the key points and requested that a special meeting be held in early November 2021 to discuss the winning tenderer(s) once this had been considered at CAB.

Action: Amrita White

Play Equipment Braybrook Street

Steve noted that the consultation had been carried out with children from Old Oak Primary School and a quote obtained for new play equipment. A grant application to the HS2 community and environment fund had now been submitted. The timescale for a decision on funding was around two months.

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.

The Chair requested that the Committee be notified when the parking charges were operational.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Thames Valley Harries Clubhouse at Linford Christie Stadium

Steve noted that the club house used by Thames Valley Harriers (TVH) was in need of repair and the club was proposing an internal refurbishment and a small extension. TVH would provide funding for these works and were asking for approval from the Trust to continue to develop the proposals which were supplied as Appendix 2 to this report.

Members discussed the key points and noted that further detail needed to be provided on TVH's proposals relating to the size of the extension and confirmation on Planning matters. Therefore, the Committee approved that TVH continued to explore options for the new clubhouse at this stage and requested that further information be brought to the next Committee meeting for the approval of clubhouse improvements.

Action; Steve Hollingworth

Events

Steve noted that no authorised events had been held at the Scrubs during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Audit and Accounts

Steve noted that at the last meeting the Trust approved, the re-appointment of MHA Macintyre Hudson as external auditor for the financial year 2020-21. The current plan was for Trust Accounts and Annual report to be presented by the December 2021 meeting of the Trust.

Review of Pony Centre Income

Steve noted that the arrangement for the Pony Centre had been reviewed. The rental income is currently credited to the Council accounts (up to the year of account 2019/20). Historically the rental income was for a nominal sum however since October 2016 there had been a series of stepped increases in rent. On the proviso that the Trust recognised and accepted the responsibilities associated with the Pony Centre lease, namely through a recharge of relevant landlord costs from the Council to the Trust (which, ongoing, would be anticipated to be trivial), the associated income could reasonably be credited to the Trust moving forwards (with effect from the 20/21 accounts).

The Chair requested that a breakdown on the previous rental income from 2016 and the anticipated recharge costs to the Trust be circulated to the Committee.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation and that the balance should be credited to the Trust.

Financial Forecast 2021/22

Carmen, Advisor to the Trust summarised the financial forecast for the Trust for 2021/22 and gave a summary of the key points. The current forecast (as at 20th August 2021) is a 44% reduced deficit of £64,026, which is £49,651 better than budget. The main reasons for this were increased parking income and delayed Project Manager recruitment.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) asked for further clarification to be provided on the progress for the recruitment of the Project Manager for the Scrubs. In response the Chair explained that Councillor Helen Rowbottom was currently reviewing the job description and an update would be provided to the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- Approved and considered an approach to HS2 on funding for further consultation on a Master Plan for Wormwood Scrubs.
- Approved funding for a new traffic management system and maintenance package
- Approved funding for the demolition and rebuilding of a section of wall between the depot and Burlington Danes school subject to officers exploring cheaper alternatives for the rebuilding of the depot wall.
- Noted the 2020/21 Financial Outturn as set out in section 16
- Approved the proposed treatment of Pony Centre income and associated responsibilities as set out in Section 17 subject to a breakdown of rental and recharge costs being provided to the Committee.
- Noted the 2021/22 Financial Budget as set out in section 18
- Noted all other matters in the report.

Meeting started: 18:30pm
Meeting ended: 20:30pm

Chair

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