

Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust Committee Minutes

Wednesday 9 March 2022

PRESENT

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

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

Advisors to the Trust: Stephen Hollingworth (Trust Manager), Carmen Lomotey, Neil Morrison

Amrita White (Clerk)

External:

Dr Miriam Burke, Shingai Chirimuuta and Simon Donovan (London Development Trust)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Belinda Donovan.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) asked for an update to be provided on the action relating to the rental income to the Pony Centre and single-story parks depot. Steve Hollingworth noted that colleagues from Finance would be backdating all the income from 2016 and crediting the Trust. An update regarding the single-story depot would be brought to a future meeting.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) asked for further clarification to be provided on the status of the lease for the hospital carpark. In response Steve Hollingworth explained that the arrangement with the hospital for the lease was on an ongoing basis, with a 3-month notice period clause by either party. The agreement also included an inflation escalator.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) asked requested a progress update on the Thames Valley Harriers (TVH) Clubhouse. In response Steve Hollingworth noted that TVH were continuing to review their plans and would like to invite Trustees to the Clubhouse to discuss the proposals in further detail.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th December 2021 were approved.

4. MANAGER'S REPORT**HS2 Bill Alternative Mitigation – Master Plan**

Steve Hollingworth, Advisor to the Trust, presented the report. A contract had been awarded to the London Development Trust (LDT) to carry out an in-depth public consultation and engagement on the Biodiversity Masterplan. LDT had considerable experience in community engagement, including projects concerned with the natural environment.

LDT gave a presentation on the consultation strategy and provided a summary of the following key points:

- The community consultation and engagement strategy for Wormwood Scrubs, was built on a previous consultation, which would form the framework for this work.
- An overview of the role of the Commission and LDT was provided.
- Four key areas of focus were identified. These were proactive biodiversity management, removing physical barriers, understanding excluded groups, and including institutions.
- Biodiversity was key to building resilient ecosystems and green spaces. This played a key role in urban areas.
- David Mooney, Director of Development at London Wildlife Trust, had expertise in developing strong public and community partnerships to transform London open spaces for people and wildlife.
- A summary of the methodology for the consultation process and target groups was provided. This outlined LDT's approach to the community engagement strategy around Wormwood Scrubs.
- LDT would continue to involve the community in informing decisions that influenced lives ensuring that different demographics in the area were represented.
- A summary of the next steps, key dates and the monitoring plan was provided.
- LDT would continue with research at the Scrubs and other sites across London.
- LDT would contact key stakeholder and survey users of the Scrubs. Followed by a consultation with David Mooney.

Members thanked LDT for their comprehensive presentation.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) requested a copy of the presentation slides to publicise on the Friends of the Scrubs website and other social media platforms.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) asked for further clarification to be provided on the scope of the consultation questions. In response Miriam Burke (LDT) noted

that the consultation would reference the previous work that had already been carried out.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom enquired what methods were successful in reaching out to different groups of people. In response Shingai Chirimuuta (LDT) provided an overview of the various engagement methods used by LDT to target a range of different groups. For example, it was more challenging to encourage young people to participate in standard questionnaires, therefore LDT found that Vox Pops was a very useful tool in obtaining useful and meaningful information from these types of groups, allowing them to express themselves better.

In response to a question asked by Councillor Helen Rowbottom, Simon Donovan (LDT) explained that advice would be sought from Members regarding which groups to reach in relation to community feedback. It was noted that enhanced effort would be made during the consultation process to reach the more difficult groups if this was necessary.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) highlighted that a significant proportion of the users of the Scrubs lived in the neighbouring boroughs. Therefore, to ensure that the consultation was fully representative, he noted that it was vital to also reach members of the community outside of the borough as well as in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Ground Maintenance Contract update and work programme

Steve Hollingworth provided an update on the Ground Maintenance (GM) contract and work programme. It was noted that a new contract for GM at Wormwood Scrubs commenced on 1st February 2022 offering considerable improvements and increased sensitivity to ecological management.

A new post of Environment and Biodiversity Manager had been appointed. Kate McVay started work in mid-February and had been actively engaging with stakeholders and volunteers on ecological improvements to improve biodiversity at Wormwood Scrubs and act as Ambassador for the GM Contract. A meeting took place with representatives of the Friends of the Scrubs to discuss the work programme with Kate McVay.

A Learning resources hub would be provided as part of the new contract. A new residents satisfaction survey had also been launched and responses would be collected during March 2022.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) welcomed the appointment of an Environment and Biodiversity Manager, noting that this was a good addition to the Team as well as the new apprentice. He requested that a copy of the resident satisfaction survey be circulated to Co-opted Members so it could be publicised on the Friends of the Scrubs website and other social media platforms.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

HS2 Update

Steve Hollingworth provided an update and noted that HS2 had started the construction of the UTX site, the access road and the Stamford Brook Sewer site. He updated Members on the current progress and programme for the following key

areas, Stanford Brook Sewer including the haul route and UTX site. It was noted that HS2 had now served notice of compulsory purchase from 18th March on an area of Wormwood Scrubs open space, comprising an area of 14.04 square metres, adjacent to Old Oak Common Lane (OOCL) to accommodate the realignment of OOCL and footpath.

The Chair requested that going forward separate maps be provided by HS2 to show the areas which were part of the Trust land.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) noted that HS2 would need to be closely monitored for noise pollution, during the period when the UTX tunnelling works commenced. In response the Chair explained that Officers recognised the importance of monitoring the works and had requested additional vibration monitors to be put in place during this period.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) endorsed the need to monitor HS2 closely during the tunnelling works. He noted that it was essential for the Trust to have a written guarantee in place to ensure that the land would be returned by HS2 upon the completion of the works.

Play equipment Braybrook Street

Steve Hollingworth noted that an application for funding for the supply and installation of play equipment at the Braybrook Street play area had been successful. The total cost of the original project was £92,231, consisting of the grant funding of £69,173, with match funding of £18,604 (originally thought to be provided as officer time) and administration costs of £4,454. The total contribution by the Trust towards the project was a total of £28,058.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation.

Hedge Laying

Steve Hollingworth provided an update and noted that funding was secured from HS2, to contract Groundwork to lead hedge laying by volunteers on the Scrubs. The Friends of the Scrubs organised volunteers for 6 sessions with approximately 12 volunteers at each and have done an excellent job.

Due to the bird nesting season this work had now stopped and can recommence in the Autumn. A further quote would be obtained from Groundwork to complete the remainder of the hedge. HS2 had been approached but were unable to continue to fund this work and therefore the Trust would need to consider if it wished to fund this work to completion. A quote would be presented at the next meeting.

The Chair enquired whether the signage had been put in place and if the hedges had been trimmed. Steve Hollingworth confirmed that signage and ropes for bird nesting had been implemented. He confirmed that the width of the hedges would be reduced by 1 metre in the Autumn.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) suggested that it might be useful for Kate McVay.

(Environment and Biodiversity Manager) and the new apprentice study a course in hedge laying to enhance their skills set. In response Steve Hollingworth noted that this was a good suggestion and would take this forward in the near future.

Grounds Maintenance and Site Management Update

Footpath surfacing

Steve Hollingworth noted that sandy loam continued to be spread along several well-trodden routes as a trial to mitigate for the wet conditions on the Scrubs. A two-metre path was also being maintained along the SBS hoarding as an alternative route.

Meadow signage

It was noted that the signs requesting people to restrict their access to the meadow areas had been asked to be reinstated before the birds start to nest. In addition, ropes and pegs had also been requested to be installed to encourage people to only use the west of the meadow.

Tree Planting

It was noted that 250 small trees (whips) were planted in the eastern and north-eastern woodland during December 2021 and 53 standard trees would be planted around in February, and early March to diversify the canopy.

Bulb Planting

It was noted that 2,000 bulbs were planted in November and December 2021 along the eastern woodland path by two groups of volunteers. One was the Dementia Group; the other was Friends of the Scrubs volunteers led by Emma Ranson.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) noted that it would be useful to include some additional signage to explain the hedge laying section.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

Traffic management

Steve Hollingworth provided an update and noted that several attempts had been made to repair or replace the current defunct traffic management system and a budget of £63,131 was agreed by the Trust on 8th December 2021 based on an estimate from a security firm for a system of rising bollards to replace this.

Two Quotes had been received for the traffic management system via the Councils E-procurement system. However, both prices were in excess of the agreed budget of £63,131. Evaluation of the quotes was 60% quality based on the method statement provided by the supplier and 40% price. Both method statements had been assessed as good. The Council was confident that the suppliers understood the proposal and had assurance that the work would be delivered to a good standard.

Officers recommended that quote 2 was accepted. It was within 10% of the budget and included additional bollards not foreseen within that budget.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation.

Weekend Parking Charges

Steve Hollingworth noted that the introduction of weekend parking charges had now been implemented. The implementation trial would be monitored to ensure there was not significant displacement into residential areas.

Events

Steve Hollingworth commented that an 'Adult Sports Day' was planned for 11th September, with around 2,000 attendees, involving in team sports. The focus would be on the sport with some food concessions also present. The organisers successfully held a similar, event in Fulham in 2021, which was well received and organised.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) asked for further clarification to be provided on the rate for the event. In response Steve Hollingworth noted that the rate charged for the event was £1500 and this was based on the sports pitches.

The Chair requested that the cost for the event be reviewed, and a breakdown be provided to include food concessions. She felt that the cost was low, considering the increased number of footfall this would generate in the area.

Councillor Helen Rowbottom noted that it would be useful for the breakdown to also include the costs for litter clearance post event. In response Steve Hollingworth noted that further discussions could be held with the event company to negotiate a higher fee and review future scheme charges.

The Committee unanimously delegated authority to the Assistant Director Leisure, Sport & Culture in consultation with the Chair to approve the event planned for 2022, subject to receiving further information in relation to associated costs for the event.

Kensington Academy Licence Extension

Steve noted that Kensington Academy requested a further extension to their licence to occupy land on Wormwood Scrubs. A copy of the agreed form of the licence for a further 1-year extension from 13/7/2021 at £26,523 (exclusive of VAT) per calendar month was included as part of Appendix 1. Due to the value of the licence, this required formal approval of the Trust.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation.

Recruitment

Trust Manager

Steve noted that a second advert had now been prepared to go out for a Trust Manager following changes to the job description and person to make the position more outward focussed, with the successful candidates having a real interest in the ecology of the Scrubs.

Wormwood Scrubs Development Manager (responsible for the Master Plan)

It was noted that applications had been received for this position following the retirement of Heather Marsh, with interviews planned later this month.

Community Safety

Neil Morrison, Advisor to the Trust provided an update and noted that from 16th December 2021 to 26th February 2022, Officers had reported 308 various interactions. The Law Enforcement Team (LET) Officers had engaged with residents, visitors, dog walkers, hospital workers, event organisers, public gym users, stakeholders and facility users.

LET Officers also responded to a report of a tent in the western copse. After several visits, it was determined that the tent was unoccupied, so removal was arranged by Idverde.

Walkabout with the Friends of the Scrubs was arranged for 10th January. 3 x LET Officers attended to discuss the ongoing issues and the upkeep of the Scrubs. Unfortunately, Stephen Waley-Cohen was the only Friend of Scrubs member available on the day.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted Member) asked for further clarification to be provided in relation to the enforcement powers to fine professional dog walkers who were in breach of their licence conditions or did not hold a valid licence. In response Neil Morrison explained that details of the person would be passed on to the Parks Team for further investigation and action.

Neil Morrison noted that a phone line number as well as a contact email was now available for the LET. This would also be updated on the local signage.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) thanked the LET for the considerable progress that had been made since the last meeting. He commented that he had noticed large groups of people with more than four dogs on the Scrubs and enquired if the licence for dog walkers could be amended, to further restrict how many dogs could be walked at one time. In response, Steve Hollingworth explained that if this remained an issue, Officers could investigate this further and request a change to the terms of the licence. A proposal would be brought to the next meeting.

Action: Steve Hollingworth

The Chair asked for further clarification to be provided on a request to consider a dog show. In response Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) noted that this would be organised by the Friends of the Scrubs in conjunction with an animal welfare charity called Mayhew to inform and educate both individual and professional dog walkers around dog management. Any profits would be shared between the two charities and the show would be free to attend. Ben Novak (Friends of The Scrubs) was keen to discuss this further with Officers and the Chair.

Action: Steve Hollingworth/Chair/ Ben Novak

It was noted that, should a decision be required, the Chair as an appointed Agent of the Trust was authorised to make decisions between Committee meetings between £20,000 and £100,000. Any decisions taken outside of the Committee meetings would be circulated to members and reported to the next meeting.

Financial Forecast 2021/22

Carmen Lomotey, Advisor to the Trust noted that the current forecast (as at 28th February 2022) was a surplus of £44,428, which was £158,104 better than budget. The main reasons for this were increased income; reduced grounds maintenance costs; and delayed project manager recruitment. The 2021/22 income budget was set at £991,433. The current forecast, at £1,019,186, contributed £27,753 to the overall favourable budget variance.

Financial Budget 2022/2023

Carmen Lomotey provided an overview and noted that the proposal was for a 2022/23 net income budget of £250,697. This was significantly higher than recent years mainly due to contractual changes. The proposed 2022/23 income budget was £1,053,026. This was £61,593 more than the 2021/22 revised budget and £33,840 more than the current 2021/22 forecast. The proposed 2022/23 expenditure budget was £802,329. Expenditure was planned as far as possible, with priority being given to essential works.

The Committee unanimously agreed this recommendation.

Trust Funds

It was noted that subject to 2021/22 audit, general unrestricted income funds at the end of 2021/22 were now projected at £982,806. Assuming the proposed budget was approved these funds would increase to £1,233,503 and £1,545,352 at the end of 2023/23 and 2023/24, respectively.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- Approved match funding for the play area grant
- Approved the acceptance of quote 2 for traffic management
- Delegated authority to the Assistant Director Leisure, Sport & Culture in consultation with the Chair to approve the event planned for 2022, subject to receiving further information in relation to associated costs for the event.
- Approved the licence extension for The Kensington Academy
- Approve the 2022/23 Budget
- Noted all other matters in the report.

Meeting started: 19:06pm

Meeting ended: 21:07pm

Chair

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