

## **COUNTRYSIDE JOINT GROUP**

A meeting of the **COUNTRYSIDE JOINT GROUP** will be held at **HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK, HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE** on **FRIDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2006** at **10:00 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

### **A G E N D A**

#### **APOLOGIES**

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

To elect the Chairman of the Group for the ensuing Municipal Year.

**2. MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Liaison Group held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006.

**3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Group for the ensuing Municipal Year.

**4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP**

To note the Membership of the Group for 2006/07 as follows:-

(a) Cambridgeshire County Council

Councillor Mrs E Kadic

(b) Huntingdonshire District Council

Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, Mrs J Chandler and J D Fell.

**5. 2005/06 FINAL ACCOUNTS** (Pages 5 - 8)

To consider a report by the Treasurer regarding the final accounts for the Park for 2005/06.

**6. SENIOR RANGER'S REPORT** (Pages 9 - 12)

To receive a report by the Senior Ranger on Park Activities for the period March to September 2006.

**7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

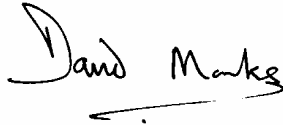
To note the next meeting of the Group will be held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

## 8. SHORT WALK AROUND THE PARK

To be led by the Senior Ranger to visit the llamas in the Park.

NB – Please bring along appropriate footwear to the meeting.

Dated this 5th day of October 2006



Chief Executive

### Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
  - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, a partner, relatives or close friends;*
  - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
  - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000; or*
  - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

**Please contact Miss H Ali, Democratic Services, Tel: (01480) 387049 / email: [Habbiba.Ali@huntsdc.gov.uk](mailto:Habbiba.Ali@huntsdc.gov.uk) if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Group.**

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) (under Councils and Democracy).

If you would like a translation of Agenda/Minutes/Reports or would like a large text version or an audio version please contact the Democratic Services Manager and we will try to accommodate your needs.

### ***Emergency Procedure***

*In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit and to make their way to the base of the flagpole in the car park at the front of Pathfinder House.*

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 2

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT LIAISON GROUP held at Hinchingsbrooke Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Huntingdon on Friday, 31 March 2006

PRESENT: Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, Mrs J Chandler, J D Fell and County Councillors Mrs E Kadic

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss H Ali, Mrs J Arnold, Mrs C Bulman and Mrs S Martin.

### 10. MINUTES

Subject to the inclusion of the word "Anti" in the heading of Minute No.7 (b) to read "Anti Littering Campaign", the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Liaison Group held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 11. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

### 12. SENIOR RANGER'S REPORT

In receiving and noting the contents of the Senior Ranger's report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) comment was made as follows:-

#### (a) Volunteers and Staffing

Members were pleased to note the contribution that continued to be made by volunteers, a number of whom had registered disabilities.

#### (b) Countryside Centre

Details of the number of users of the Countryside Centre for the period October 2005 – March 2006, together with the income generated were presented. Members were pleased to note that the number of users were of a similar level to those of the previous year and that bookings for the Centre over the summer period were currently being made by a number of local schools.

#### (c) Cafe

Members were pleased to note the continued success of the café over the winter period.

Further to Minute No.7(c), Members were informed that the

initial architectural plans for the extension of the café had not been appropriate. Subsequently, members of paid staff and volunteers had been invited to submit their own ideas which would be presented to the District Council Architect in due course. Having noted that the cost of the extension was likely to be in the region of £150,000 and would need to be funded from an MTP bid, Members supported the conclusions that an extension to the rear of the premises with a slight extension at the front would be the more suitable option.

The Senior Ranger reported on the potential to generate additional income through the sale of ice cream from an automated machine. Members noted that the purchase of an ice cream machine would offer a number of benefits and having been acquainted with the advantages of purchasing a machine outright as opposed to entering into a leasing arrangement, it was

#### RESOLVED

that the Senior Ranger be authorised to secure the purchase of an ice cream machine for the café at a estimated cost of £5,000.

#### **(d) Events and Activities**

The Senior Ranger presented the Group with details of the events and activities at the Centre over the autumn/winter period. Members were pleased to note the success of the Boxing Day walk and noted that due to popular demand, two Bentwood Furniture courses had been arranged for the forthcoming year.

#### **(e) Wider District**

Members noted the range of work being undertaken in other parts of the District and in particular, mention was made of the involvement of staff and volunteers in planting trees and shrubs in Coneygear Park with local school children. Furthermore, the Group were informed of the role played by Hinchingsbrooke Country Park staff in the emergency repairs at the Houghton Mill Bridge over the Christmas period.

#### **(f) Park Management**

The Senior Ranger informed the Group of the various work being undertaken at the Country Park which included the annual maintenance programme. Particular mention was made to the "Trolls Bridge" which had been replaced by the Rangers and volunteers, and the repairs to otter holt.

#### **(g) Miscellaneous**

Members were informed that the recent publication of an article in the "National Birding" magazine concerning woodpeckers within the Park had generated visits by a number of interested birdwatchers.

**13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

In response to a question concerning the Friends of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Members were informed that the organisation was still in existence and would be donating £2,500 towards the forthcoming Literacy Week in May. The Youth Offending Team were continuing to do useful work within the Park as part of their rehabilitation programme.

**14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Group noted that the next meeting of the Joint Liaison Group would be held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Ranger, the Countryside Services Manager and all staff and volunteers for their contributions to the management of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.

**15. SHORT WALK AROUND THE PARK**

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Group were acquainted with proposals to encourage pedestrians to access the Park by the footpath through the woodlands as opposed to the access drive. Having acknowledged that this would form a long term project, and that there would be a number of changes within the next 12 months, Members noted that the plans would provide benefits from a health and safety perspective, whilst also serving an educational purpose.

Following on from the discussion, the Senior Ranger led Members on a short walk around the Park to visit the café and to view the proposals for the new woodlands entrance route.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank



## HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT LIAISON GROUP

13th OCTOBER 2005

### 2005/2006 FINAL ACCOUNTS (Report of the Treasurer)

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The 2005/2006 accounts have been finalised, and have been audited. This report contains details of actual expenditure and income levels at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.

#### 2. COMPARISON OF ACTUAL AND BUDGETED NET EXPENDITURE

- 2.1 The financial position for last year can be summarised as follows:-

Details	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variation £'000
Expenditure	281	340	+59
Income	69	108	+39
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>+20</b>

Attached at Annex A is a more detailed breakdown of the variations from the budget.

- 2.2 The £20k variation on expenditure was due to the following:-

- **Employees Costs** – increased by £30k in total. The staff working in the café were not included in the original budget, however, the additional £23k was more than off-set by additional income (see paragraph 2.3). The remaining variation was due to the pay award being higher than allowed for in the budget, an amount was allocated from HDC's general contingency to cover part of this.
- **Premises Costs** – An unbudgeted National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) charge was levied on the country park for the first time in 2005/06. This charge was £14k and covered two financial years, 2003/04 and 2005/06. Savings on other items helped to off-set this additional cost and some of the higher supplies and services costs.
- **Supplies & Services Costs** – the operating costs of the café, e.g. catering supplies and equipment (£13k), were not included in the budget. However, this expenditure is offset by additional income (see paragraph 2.3). Promotion and advertising costs were £4k higher than budgeted for.

- **Irrecoverable VAT** – previously, VAT has had no impact on the costs of running the country park because any irrecoverable VAT on “exempt” services e.g. room hire and courses, has been met by HDC. In order to comply with the Accounting Code of Practice £5k of irrecoverable VAT was charged to the country park last year.
- **Central Department recharges** – increased by £7k due to the impact of Financial Reporting Standard 17 which requires the accounts to reflect the cost of future pension commitments arising from current staffing levels. Recharges also increased by a further £3k due to changes in staff time allocations or changes in the method of allocating the costs of support services.

**2.3** Income was £40k higher than the budget. The café, which opened in October 2005, generated £38k income which wasn't in the original budget. Commuted sums received from developers to support recreational facilities, drawn on to support the maintenance costs at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park increased by £2k.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

**3.1** Overall, expenditure and income is managed very well by staff at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park. The additional costs that arose (NNDR, Irrecoverable VAT and Central Department Recharges) were outside the direct control of the Senior Ranger.

### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

**4.1** It is recommended that members note the contents of this report.

#### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985**

##### **Source Documents:**

- 1. FMS Summary**
- 2. 2005/06 Closedown File – Accountancy Section**

##### **Contact Officer:**

**Sue Martin - Principal Accountant**

**☎ (01480 388107)**

**HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK  
FINAL ACCOUNTS 2005/2006**

Actual 2004/05 £	Details	Budget 2005/06 £	Actual 2005/06 £	Variation £
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
167,136	Employees	170,100	199,709	29,609
25,093	Premises	37,920	35,003	-2,917
30,804	Supplies & Services	16,810	34,295	17,485
0	Irrecoverable VAT	0	5,436	5,436
26,844	Central Department Charges	28,100	38,130	10,030
29,218	Capital Charges	27,510	27,633	123
<b>279,095</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>280,440</b>	<b>340,206</b>	<b>59,766</b>
<b>INCOME</b>				
-2,258	Donations/Contributions Sales,	-1,130	-636	494
-841	Publications/Plants etc	-900	-778	122
-504	Fishing	-450	-838	-388
-8,373	Catering (Café)	0	-37,653	-37,653
-1,730	Commuted Sum	-1,770	-3,478	-1,708
-14,305	Social Services	-14,520	-14,686	-166
-51,832	Room Hire etc	-49,750	-50,410	-660
<b>-79,843</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-68,520</b>	<b>-108,479</b>	<b>-39,959</b>
<b>199,252</b>	<b>HDC NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>211,920</b>	<b>231,727</b>	<b>19,807</b>

**Note:-**

Staff based at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park also oversee the following sites as part of their day to day duties:-

Holt Island  
St Ives Sites – The Thicket and Wilhorn Meadow  
Spring Common  
Stukeley Meadows  
Ouse Valley Way

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTRYSIDE JOINT GROUP

13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2006

**RANGER'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD  
MARCH 2006 – SEPTEMBER 2006  
(Report by Senior Ranger, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park)**

**1. VOLUNTEERS AND STAFFING**

Countryside Centre Admin. Officer, Isobel left in July to join RAF husband in Suffolk. Angela Nixon, has moved from the former parks team to take up this role.

Hanna Stevenson is currently off due to home pressures, but the situation is gradually improving and we are hoping she will return. Social Services are now providing much greater care for her disabled son, hopefully this will make it easier for her and husband Jim - Senior Ranger at Paxton Pits

Youth Offending Team continues to send at least 1 work party each Sunday.

Volunteers continue to average 3 per day (total volunteer days 435); this includes D of E volunteers, a group from the Environment Agency and the Amber Centre and work experience pupils from local schools. This year the calibre of students was generally much higher than previously.

Matthew who had been working here on a placement from Shuttleworth College for 2 years has now secured a 12 month contract at Milton Country Park and Pam who helps one day a week has got a weekend job at Wandlebury. Both however continue to help us here to gain even further practical experience.

Wheelchair users 367.

**2. COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE:**

	Groups	No. of People
March 05 to Sept 05	305	6,880
March 06 to Sept 06	To Be Confirmed	To Be Confirmed

August has been particularly quiet this year.

**3. CAFÉ**

A great success over the summer, people are definitely relying on the fact it is open. The soft ice cream has proved very popular.

#### 4. EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Some of the notable events included:

- Early morning bird walk and bacon roll to follow, interesting and well attended
- Literacy week a huge success and something we will repeat in the future. Very well received by the teaching staff and pupils
- Young Anglers- some 95 participants and this year supported by The Environment Agency, National Fishing week and Anglian Water and the Town Council
- Special needs messy play
- Orienteering with some of the participants of CamJam based at the racecourse
- Rotary club fun day was attended by 300 people

#### 5 WIDER DISTRICT

Many work parties have been held around the district including:

- Coneygear tree mulching and spraying.
- Holt Island – vegetation clearance and boardwalk repairs, a different management plan is going to be trialled over the next 12 months.
- The Thicket- footpath clearance and woodland work, a major water main burst and has eroded part of the footpath through the woods. We are working with the Cambridge water company to re-instate the surface, though it remains passable.
- Installation of new dog bins, as provided by Wood Green Animal Shelter as the start of a “responsible dog ownership project”.

#### 6. PARK MANAGEMENT

- Lakeside – vegetation cutting
- Tree surveys and work to overcome fallen trees caused we think by weather conditions,.
- Footpath construction around the south side of the lake has now reached Nun Bridge
- Usual summer mowing and nettle control
- Toilets in the visitors’ centre were painted in May
- Countryside Centre exterior was painted in April

#### 7 MISCELLANEOUS

**Litter** - This summer we have suffered greatly from young people having evening parties and leaving behind large amounts of litter and in particular broken glass. Rangers have worked until midnight on a number of occasions to try to minimise the impact and together with police and CCTV. Damage has however occurred on a number of occasions, most recently needing two new toilet doors.

**Friends Group Several** - new (younger) members have joined the committee and already membership numbers have increased and the range of fundraising activities has grown. Hopefully this will continue so that the Friends can become a very active part of the country park as well as continuing to attract grants.

**Contact Officer: Mrs Judith Arnold**  
**Senior Ranger**  
**☎ (01480) 451568**

This page is intentionally left blank