

A meeting of the **HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP** will be held in the **COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE, HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRYSIDE PARK** on **FRIDAY, 26 MARCH 2010** at **10:00 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 9th October 2009.

**Mrs J Walker
387049**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to personal and/or prejudicial interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any Agenda item. Please see notes 1 and 2 overleaf.

3. SENIOR RANGER'S REPORT (Pages 5 - 6)

To receive a report by the Senior Ranger on park activities for the period October 2009 to March 2010.

**Mrs J Arnold
451568**

4. SHORT WALK AROUND THE PARK

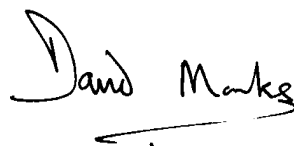
To be led by the Senior Ranger.

NB – Please bring along appropriate footwear to the meeting.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Group will be held on Friday 8th October 2010.

Dated this 18 day of March 2010



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, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*
 - (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 £25,000; 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 Mrs Jessica Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer, Tel No 01480 387049/e-mail: Jessica.Walker@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 Committee/Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – 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.

Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP held in the Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Countryside Park on Friday, 9 October 2009.

PRESENT: District Councillors M G Baker, C R Hyams and Mrs M J Thomas.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of District Councillor Mrs M Banerjee and County Councillor Mrs L Kadic.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs J Arnold, P Knight, Mrs S Martin, A Roberts and Mrs J Walker.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that District Councillor M G Baker be elected Chairman of the Group for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor M G Baker in the Chair.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that District Councillor Mrs M J Thomas be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Group for the ensuing Municipal Year.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP

The membership of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group for 2009/2010 was noted as follows:-

(a) **Cambridgeshire County Council**

County Councillor Mrs L Kadic.

(b) **Huntingdonshire District Council**

District Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, C R Hyams

and Mrs M J Thomas.

6. 2008/09 FINAL ACCOUNTS

The Group received and noted a report by the Treasurer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reflecting the final accounts for the Country Park for the 2008/09 financial year.

In noting that net expenditure for the Country Park was below the budgeted figure, Members were advised that employee costs had increased as extra staff had been employed in the cafe, however these costs had been mostly offset by additional income from the cafe.

Having regard to income, Members noted that the variation of £51k above the budgeted figure was the result of higher than anticipated Section 106 receipts being utilised at the site. Furthermore, the cafe had generated more income than expected, though other income was slightly lower than the amount in the budget.

Councillor Hyams reported that he had been liaising with District Councillor T D Sanderson and the Service Development Manager on the possibility of investing Section 106 money further to improve play areas. He also expressed the view that possible changes to car parking and the café could have an effect on the Park's trading performance in the future.

7. SENIOR RANGER'S REPORT

In receiving and noting the contents of the Senior Ranger's report, comment was made as follows:-

(a) Volunteers and Staffing

Members were informed of recent staffing changes and noted that the number of volunteers currently stood at 491.

(b) Countryside Centre

Details of the number of users of the Countryside Centre for the period April to September 2009 inclusive were presented. Members noted that the number of school bookings was significantly lower than in the previous year, which was attributed to schools cutting back on school trips to ease the financial pressure on parents during the economic downturn.

(c) Cafe

Members were encouraged to note that the cafe was performing well and that local suppliers were being used wherever possible.

(d) Events and Activities

The Senior Ranger presented the Group with details of the events and activities over the Spring/Summer period.

Members were pleased to note that local organisations appeared to be choosing to hold events at the Country Park. Particular attention was drawn to the Multiple-Sclerosis Society Walk in which 150 people had taken part.

(e) **Wider District**

Members noted that a range of work had been undertaken in other parts of the District. The Senior Ranger informed the Group that with contributions from Park Rangers, Coneygear Park had been awarded Bronze and Silver Awards in the National and Anglia in Bloom Competitions respectively, and that Huntingdon Park had received a Gold Award from Anglia in Bloom.

(f) **Park Management**

The Senior Ranger informed the Group of the various work being undertaken at the Country Park. Particular mention was made of the new footpath to the Park from the parking area. As visitors seemed reluctant to change their previous habits, play equipment would be installed to encourage families to use the new route.

(g) **Friends of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park**

Members were pleased to note that membership of the Friends of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park currently stood at 80 members. The Senior Ranger reported that a Christmas event would be held on Sunday 15th November.

(h) **Miscellaneous**

Members were encouraged to note that the amount of damage, litter and drunken behaviour over the summer had been low. This was attributed to joint working between the Police, CCTV, PCSOs and the Rangers.

Members discussed the possibility of repositioning or adding a further bird hide to the site. The Group was informed that the hide was purposely sited in a wild area but was presently not well used. The Countryside Services Manager added that bird watchers tended to go to Paxton Pits. Furthermore, hides were costly to install and run as they attracted anti-social behaviour.

8. BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT

The Countryside Services Manager updated the Group on progress with the installation of fencing at various locations around the boundary of the Park. It was proposed that the boundary then would be inspected every three months.

Members were reminded of the consultation that had previously taken place with a number of owners of land abutting the Country Park. In addition, it was reported that all those who contacted the Park on this matter received a formal response from the Park's Management. It

was agreed that the situation would be reviewed at the next meeting of the Group.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Group noted that their next meeting would be held on Friday 26th March 2010.

Chairman

STAFFING

- No staff changes

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers: October to February inclusive: 335

COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE

Number of Groups/people from beginning October 2008 to end of February 2009 was as follows:

	Groups	Number of People	Income
01/10/06-28/02/07	132	2544	£12,000
01/10/07-28/02/08	139	3218	£17,000
01/10/08 – 28/02/09	172	3845	£20,300
01/10/09 – 28/02/10	173	3786	£25,000

These included such groups as:, Cambs Advisory Service, NHS, HDC, Hunts Fauna and Flora

CAFÉ

- Continues to be busy and income is slightly up on that predicted for the first year, however wages have been much higher than estimated.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

*Boxing Day walk - approximately 80 people. Lower number due to extremely icy conditions

*Tree shredding - increase in publicity gained more interest this year.

*Junior rangers - full with 10 young people working in the plantation and undertaking daily site checks

WIDER DISTRICT

- Holt Island – major work replacing the boardwalk with rangers, countryside volunteers, Friends of Holt Island and Rotary Club volunteers
- Spring head on Spring Common has been replaced
- Hedgelaying at Coneygear Park (again nominated as an entry into Britain in Bloom)

PARK MANAGEMENT

- Tree surveys & associated work
- Some repairs to new rabbit fencing along the school have been necessary as the fence was cut in 3 places and pushed down.
- Coppice work of hazel area, just beyond the countryside centre
- Lakeside scrub bashing
- Tree work has been undertaken as a training project by Shuttleworth College
- Dog walk path, edging has been replaced

FRIENDS OF HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK

- The new committee are organising some different events this year, including an Easter trail, AGM May 12th, and Puppet work shop June and grandparents day in August
- The Christmas Shopping day made a profit of £250
- They are currently organising the purchase of a camera to focus on bird feeders and a monitor screen for the café and fund raising for some new interpretation signs

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