

A meeting of the **HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP** will be held in **COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE, HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRYSIDE PARK** on **FRIDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2018** at **10:00 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact  
(01480)**

## **APOLOGIES**

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

To elect a Chairman of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

### **2. MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2018.

### **3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary and other interests in relation to any Agenda Item.

### **4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

### **5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP**

To note the Membership of the Group for 2018/19 as follows:

#### **(a) Cambridgeshire County Council (appointment until 2021)**

Councillor Adela Costello

#### **(b) Huntingdonshire District Council**

Councillors J M Palmer, T D Sanderson, R J West and D R Underwood.

### **6. SENIOR RANGER'S REPORT** (Pages 7 - 14)

To receive a report by the Senior Ranger on park activities for the period February – September 2018.

**J Arnold  
388666  
C Moss  
388207**

### **7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group will be held on 15th March 2018 at 10am.

## 8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To resolve –

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information).

## 9. VERBAL UPDATE ON HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK LONG TERM BUSINESS PLAN

To update the Group on progress with the Long Term Business Plan.

**N Sloper  
388635**

Dated this 4 day of October  
2018



Head of Paid Service

### Notes

#### 1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- (1) *Members are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and unless you have obtained dispensation, cannot discuss or vote on the matter at the meeting and must also leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on.*
- (2) *A Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest if it -*
  - (a) *relates to you, or*
  - (b) *is an interest of -*
    - (i) *your spouse or civil partner; or*
    - (ii) *a person with whom you are living as husband and wife; or*
    - (iii) *a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners*

*and you are aware that the other person has the interest.*
- (3) *Disclosable pecuniary interests includes -*
  - (a) *any employment or profession carried out for profit or gain;*
  - (b) *any financial benefit received by the Member in respect of expenses incurred carrying out his or her duties as a Member (except from the Council);*
  - (c) *any current contracts with the Council;*
  - (d) *any beneficial interest in land/property within the Council's area;*
  - (e) *any licence for a month or longer to occupy land in the Council's area;*
  - (f) *any tenancy where the Council is landlord and the Member (or person in (2)(b) above) has a beneficial interest; or*
  - (g) *a beneficial interest (above the specified level) in the shares of any body which has a place of business or land in the Council's area.*

### **Non-Statutory Disclosable Interests**

- (4) *If a Member has a non-statutory disclosable interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote providing you do not breach the overall Nolan principles.*
- (5) *A Member has a non-statutory disclosable interest where -*
- (a) a decision in relation to the business being considered might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of you or a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the council tax payers, rate payers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area, or*
  - (b) it relates to or is likely to affect a disclosable pecuniary interest, but in respect of a member of your family (other than specified in (2)(b) above) or a person with whom you have a close association, or*
  - (c) it relates to or is likely to affect any body –*
    - (i) exercising functions of a public nature; or*
    - (ii) directed to charitable purposes; or*
    - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a Member or in a position of control or management.*

*and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.*

## **2. Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings**

*The District Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in its decision making and permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking and micro-blogging websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) to communicate with people about what is happening at meetings. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Council and available via the following link [filming, photography and recording at council meetings.pdf](#) or on request from the Democratic Services Team. The Council understands that some members of the public attending its meetings may not wish to be filmed. The Chairman of the meeting will facilitate this preference by ensuring that any such request not to be recorded is respected.*

**Please contact Melanie Stimpson, Democratic Services Team, Tel No. 01480 388169/e-mail [Melanie.Stimpson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Melanie.Stimpson@huntingdonshire.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](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 Elections & 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.*

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP held in the Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park on Friday, 16 March 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor R J West – Chairman.

Councillors J E White and D R Underwood.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs A Dickinson and S Tierney.

### **23. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **24. MEMBER'S INTERESTS**

Councillor D Underwood declared a non-statutory disclosable interest by virtue of the fact that he is the Chairman of the Godmanchester Dementia Community who work alongside the Godmanchester Nursery through the supply of volunteers.

### **25. MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP**

Following changes to Political Membership of the Council and the leading opposition group, it was resolved by the Council at its meeting on 21st February that Councillor D Underwood be appointed to serve on the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group for the remainder of the Municipal Year as a replacement for Cllr T Sanderson. Also that following the formal appointments made by Cambridgeshire County Council, their nominated representative to the Group has been amended since the last meeting. The Group noted their appreciation of the dedication and commitment given by Cllr Sanderson.

### **26. SENIOR RANGER'S REPORT**

In receiving and noting the content of the Senior Ranger's report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on park activities for the period September 2017 – March 2018, comment was made in relation as follows:

#### **Staffing**

It was reported that the temporary staffing structure had been working well and whilst efficiencies had been found, existing staff had been stretched to the limit. Councillor Underwood advised that he was aware of a timebank scheme launching in Godmanchester who may be able to provide assistance to the Godmanchester Nursery. Mrs Arnold undertook to arrange initial contact for the timebank with Brian

Gardner.

The work currently being undertaken by external consultants was praised as being very reassuring with a great level of engagement. The Group agreed that if possible, they would meet to review the finished report before it goes forward to Cabinet for consideration.

### **Volunteers**

A good number of existing volunteers continued to attend along with funded SEND placements.

### **Community Impact**

The Group noted how an art project through the Rowan Trust had received a grant from the A14 Upgrade Project and would focus upon both Milton and Hinchingsbrooke Country Parks as they linked the ends of the new road. Artwork produced by the Project would be displayed at the Countryside Centre once it was completed.

### **Wider District**

Judging of the Green Flag Award would take place over the Spring and Summer, and was comparable to Blue Flag Awards for beaches. Members praised this positive accreditation and noted that the status for the Park if awarded, would be beneficial. The Park would look to publicise the Award along with other awards and standards received.

### **Countryside Centre**

The Group were advised of the continued success of the Countryside Centre and the diversification of the bookings received. Members praised the initiative and dedication of the Team in promoting and raising the profile of both the Centre and Park in turn.

### **Finance**

Members were appraised with details of how the café had performed exceptionally well over the year and therefore relative staffing and running costs had increased in line. The overall positive position could be attributed to Mrs Arnold and her Team implementing a change of model and running style across the Park thus increasing the return.

## **27. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Group noted that their next meeting would be held on 12th October 2018 at 10.00am.

Chairman

## Senior Ranger's report

February 2018 – September 2018

### **STAFFING**

There have been further (temporary) reductions in staffing at the park. One of the Rangers resigned from both posts in August, leaving Hinchbrooke in September.

There continues to be an Acting Senior Ranger three days a week.

Another Ranger, whose main role is at Godmanchester Nursery, has been on long term sick leave since May. Fortunately, a volunteer, has taken responsibility for the day-to-day running of the site, leaving the Rangers to support bigger jobs such as mowing, log splitting and event preparation.

The staffing structure within Countryside Services is now at an all-time low. The effects of this are starting to show and the extra pressure that the Rangers are under is taking its toll.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Currently each week HCP staff work with the following regular volunteers;

- 6 days' worth of SEND (Special Educational Need and Disability) placements, funded by CCC.
- The Wednesday and Thursday work parties have steadily increased in numbers, now averaging nearly 20 per week. Volunteer motivation and retention is currently very good, helped by increased efficiencies in the Ranger's organisational skills.
- The SEN volunteer who was with us on a two days a week of supervised 1:1 placement finished in early summer to pursue other opportunities. This placement could carry on if someone expresses an interest.

Many of these volunteers have continued to support the Rangers by leading school groups and helping with event organisation, most recently, and notably, the Emergency Services Day.

The Green Team continue to work to a very high standard and are still invaluable to the site.

The YMCA continue to use the park as a site from which to run reparation sessions for young people.

The park had 5 different work experience placements towards the end of last school term. They all worked well with all the staff and volunteers, showing initiative and enthusiasm.

### **WIDER DISTRICT**

Godmanchester Nursery had a very successful open day in June. The day featured the sale of some of the Nursery's products taking over £1000, with local stallholders and charities also on site. The Apple Day is on 20<sup>th</sup> October, and is again going to need additional support from HCP rangers due to Brian's absence.

A member of staff from HCP spends part of their week managing other sites in Huntingdon, including Stukeley Meadows, Spring Common and Views Common. They are now spending some

of that time working with a supervised SEND group from HRC, completing management tasks on Spring Common. Spring Common has recently received a grant from the Co-Op Funeral in Huntingdon for £1000. This money has been spent on 2 new benches which will be installed within the next month.

## **PARK MANAGEMENT**

- Grass cutting throughout the summer was minimised by the hot weather. This was a huge relief to staff and volunteers on site!
- Maintained the general appearance of the park which contributed towards the award of a Green Flag award in July 2018. Hinchingsbrooke also now has a Tripadvisor Certificate of Excellence (for the consistent achievement of high ratings from visitors). The park also hosted the judging day for the 'In Bloom' competition, for which Huntingdon was awarded gold.
- Continued processing timber for wood products such as charcoal and log sales. Charcoal sales over the summer have been steady. The Rangers hope to increase revenue from sales of these products in the next year.
- Continued to improve the infrastructure of the park including the replacement of fencing in several locations.
- Two regular volunteers have spent some time making items such as picture frames and shelves for the café.

## **FRIENDS OF HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK**

- The Friends funded 6 new sunshade umbrellas for the benches around the café and the fencing around the newt pond near the café.
- Several committee members resigned at the AGM, so a new committee has been formed with a new chairman and 2 new members. They have identified some projects and continue to seek funding.
- The Friends have agreed to act as receiver of money donated by other groups. Parkrun has successfully received £1200 to replace some bins and the canoe club has applied for money to make repairs to their porta cabin. These groups continue to help with practical tasks too

## **CAFÉ**

The café income is currently about £5,000 down over the 2 quarters. This is entirely due to the weather differences in April and May. This year was very wet compared to 2017/2018. (Note these are figures over the counter and do not account for staff time or food costs etc).

The Café Supervisor resigned in May and despite external advertisements neither round of applications lead to a new one being appointed. This meant over the summer months the Countryside Coordinator was again covering weekends, staff management and financial aspect of the role. An existing staff member has now formally accepted the post and started on 10<sup>th</sup> September.



## **COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE**

### **Occupancy and users**

Comparing occupancy rates between 2017 and 2018 over the same period of March and September, in 2017 there were 171 bookings and 2018, 257. This is a 50% increase in the number of bookings made. In a similar way, numbers of users have also increased with 6842 users recorded in 2018, compared to 5037 for the same period last year. The number of users of the building has increased by 36%.

The last two weeks of September 2018 have been particularly busy. We have had 20 different groups, 7 of which have been over 60 attendees, visit over the 14 days with only Sundays remaining unused. The total number of people visiting over this timeframe is 1180. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays it is now a regular occurrence for the building to be occupied from 8.30am to 10.00pm.

From October to December, we have 82 confirmed bookings over 54 days.

### **Income for Mar to Sept**

	Room hire
Mar – Sept 2017	11928.33
Mar – Sept 2018	14928.50

### **Bookings**

This financial year, our revenue for confirmed bookings currently stands at £20,696.00. This is 90% of the target of £23,000. For the 2019-2020 financial year, revenue for confirmed bookings is currently £3657.50.

These figures have been achieved by a number of factors: quick response to enquiries; friendly customer interaction; building up relationships with repeat users; free onsite parking and positively managing customer requests.

Parking Services have implemented significant changes to car parking so all users will have to pay and display from October 2018. This may have an impact on bookings and it is to be expected that the revenue for the Countryside Centre and the number of users will decrease, while the parking revenue, will increase.

### **User demographic**

The corporate bookings are still mostly public sector, with the NHS and Cambridgeshire County Council being our biggest users. The key here has been the variety of departments within these agencies that use us for block bookings every year. Recommendations from staff internally for hiring the Countryside Centre have also been instrumental in increasing bookings.

Moreover, we have a consistent number of groups who rebook every year: Probation Service; Alzheimer's Society; Parkinson's Society; HBKA; BRJ Run & Tri; Carer's Trust to name a few. The Dog's Trust hold dog training sessions every Wednesday evening throughout the year which brings in a revenue of £300.00 per month. Similarly Huntingdonshire Youth Theatre also use the building every Tuesday evening in term time and generates a yearly revenue of £2000.00.

## **EVENTS, ACTIVITIES and PROMOTIONS**

### **Emergency Services Day**

On Sunday 17 August 2018 we held a large event at the park. With around 3000-4000 visitors, it was a great success. Police, police dogs, Fire services and fire dogs and about 20 other emergency services charities were in attendance. We also had fairground activities for children, Zorb balls, food stands and gift stalls. The Countryside Centre was multifunctional, with half the building as a café and the other half serving afternoon tea. Revenue from stalls etc was around £750.00, with café sales of about £2300.00



HDC hosting an emergency services event helped maintain HDC's reputation with the public and the positive feedback only improves the park's standing within the community.

The Countryside Support Worker and Café Assistant organised the event with the Rangers and 15 volunteers helping out on the day. It was a really good example of effective collaboration to deliver a high quality event with minimal resources. Holding events that create large revenue is something to be explored in the future, however, there is not the capacity with regard to staffing to manage more than one large event per year. The event was also important in establishing to the public that HCP can put on large events and manage parking. Building up its reputation is vital to ensuring that stallholders will pay a premium for a stall because they know that footfall will be significant.



It was also worthwhile as we have now built up partnerships with our neighbour school and hospital. [Comments on Facebook about the day:](#)

“Was a brilliant day, my son loved it! Thanks for organising.”

“Great turn out and the parking control worked”

“Great day! Very well organised!”

“It was a great event...the whole family enjoyed it. Thank you to all that gave up their time to make such a fun afternoon out for us all.”

### **Food events**

New initiatives of Breakfast Buffets on the last Saturday of the month, Mother's Day Roast (sold out) and Father's Day Barbecue (68 tickets sold) have been very successful. Being able to hold events managed by the café but run in the Countryside Centre has meant we are able to increase café revenue.

## **Children's activities**

Pond dipping and Mini beast hunting days were run over the holidays. Usually very popular, the extreme heat, meant that numbers overall were slightly down. However, six summer craft sessions held indoors were arranged. 'Make your own' workshops proved popular with two Fairy Garden workshops selling out, as well as Dragon and Medieval Castle workshop. A Pirates Treasure Hunt saw 125 children taking part with volunteers enjoying the day dressed as very convincing pirates!

An external supplier organised multi-sport sessions and Zorb sessions for children held.

## **Facebook**

Our Facebook page continues to be a great resource for promoting the park, as well as all the events and activities that take place. We currently over 5000 followers.

<https://www.facebook.com/hinchingbrookecountrypark>

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<b>HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK 2017/18 OUTTURN AND 2018/19 BUDGET AND FORECAST</b>
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	2017/18 Outturn			2018/19 Forecast		
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Hinchingbrooke Country Park and Management</b>						
Staff	102	87	-15	102	90	-12
Running Costs	21	34	13	23	34	11
Income	-53	-28	25	-47	-18	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Countryside Centre</b>						
Staff	43	29	-14	45	40	-5
Running Costs	17	10	-7	18	13	-5
Income	-41	-39	2	-41	-38	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>-7</b>
<b>Café</b>						
Staff	57	69	12	58	55	-3
Running Costs	60	63	3	65	60	-5
Income	-143	-152	-9	-155	-156	-1
<b>Total</b>	<b>-26</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-41</b>	<b>-9</b>
<b>Total Hinchingbrooke Country Park</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>12</b>

### Comments on Variances

The 2017/18 actual variation is mainly due to Commuted Sums income. There was an expectation of £32,000, however, the calculation released only £4,000. Due to Commuted Sums coming to the end of their life.

For the current year 2018/19, the budgeted commuted sums income is down as expected, we currently expect only £4,000 and not £32,000 to be drawn from reserves, this will reduce the overspend to £8,000. Although the reduced commuted sums figure was predicted last year, the bid to remove this from the budget was rejected.

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