

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP held in Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Brampton Road, Huntingdon, PE29 6DB on Friday, 25 April 2025.

PRESENT: Councillor M L Beuttell – Chair.

Councillors C Lowe and D J Shaw.

APOLOGIES: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor S L Taylor.

IN ATTENDANCE: N/A.

17. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 15th November 2024 and 2nd April 2025 were approved as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chair.

18. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

19. HEAD RANGER'S REPORT

The Group received and noted the contents of the Head Ranger's report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and a PowerPoint presentation on park activities for the period January to April 2025. In doing so, comment was made as follows:

Staffing

The Group were advised that there were now two full time Rangers on site who worked alongside Assistant Rangers and weekend Wardens to manage the Park, it was noted that the Head Ranger oversaw this structure. It was also noted that a steady stream of volunteers and work parties had assisted the team with work onsite.

Friends of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park

It was noted that the Friends had supported work at both the Paxton Pitts and Holt Island sites and that £4,000 had been received in donations in 2024 but that they hoped to grow their membership online in 2025.

Winter Works

Work had been undertaken to create spaces within the Park to allow light which would support biodiversity. The Mill continued to process wood from works on site and had supplied Hinchingsbrooke House

with planks which had been utilised in repairing doors in the property.

Events

The new Commercial Manager was now in post. It was advised that events in the reporting period had continued to be successful with the different approach to Santas Grotto being noted. A strong attendance for the Easter events due to the favourable weather was observed.

Development Project

It was advised that forward bookings for the Countryside Centre would be paused from September 2025 to allow for the development work to be carried out. The Group heard that weekly project meetings would be held to manage the project.

20. FINANCE REPORT

The Group received and noted the contents of the Finance report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) for the period January to April 2025. In doing so, comment was made as follows:

The provisional outturn for the 2024/25 year was discussed with the underspent being attributed due to the realigning of the business case and delayed development project however the Park remained in a good position financially.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Group is due to be held on 18th July 2025 at 10:00am.

Chair