

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