

**Minutes of a meeting of the Monks Wall Nature Reserve Management Committee,  
19<sup>th</sup> January 2015, in the Mayor's Parlour, Guildhall, Sandwich at 6:00pm.**

**Present:**       **The Mayor (in the Chair)**  
                  **Cllr RA Daw**  
                  **Cllr Mrs P Russell**  
                  **Mr J Gibbs**  
                  **Dr M Griffiths**  
                  **Dr A Lipczynski**  
                  **Dr M Walkey**

**Officer:**       **Miss T Weir**

**13.01.15        APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mrs Laslett (ill health) and Cllr Watts (ill health).

**14.01.15        DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS  
AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS**

A Disclosable Pecuniary Interest was declared by Dr Martin Griffiths in agenda item 6 (iv), minuted below as 18.01.15 (iv).

**15.01.15        MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014 were considered. The Assistant Town Clerk & Mayor's Secretary updated the Committee that Council had approved the principle that co-opted Committee members should be able to claim for mileage / travel at Inland Revenue rates beyond attendance at Committee meetings and for miscellaneous expenses incurred in work on the Committee's behalf, such as telephone calls, printing costs and other office expenses, and that these claims should all be documented and may be backdated to the beginning of the 2014/15 financial year. The Town Clerk had emailed co-opted Committee members earlier that day to inform them that although the East Kent Joint Parish Independent Remuneration Panel had not yet issued the minutes of the meeting at which it considered this matter, the Council could be informed that the Panel did not see any legal problem with the proposal and so co-opted Committee members were asked to start compiling their expenses claims for the current financial year so that they could be taken to Council as soon as possible and before the end of March 2015.

**16.01.15        PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received a progress report from the Warden, Dr Martin Griffiths, as well as a copy of a letter from Julian Sampson (GW Finn & Sons) to Richard Saville (Environment Agency) listing the outcomes of the meeting with the Agency, Halcrow and Jackson's at the Reserve on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014. Dr Griffiths reiterated that the fields in the reserve were

very overgrown due to the lack of grazing and that there had been considerable damage to the first field by heavy plant operations associated with the flood defence works, which may mean that in the end this field would be effectively lost to the Reserve. Dr Lipczynski stated that Julian Sampson had made two recommendations: firstly, that a photographic record should be kept of flood defence works operations at the Reserve (the Mayor offered Dr Griffiths a camera to facilitate this) and secondly, that the previous grazier should be kept apprised of the situation. Dr Griffiths stated that he had spoken to the previous grazier and that he understood it would be unlikely he would be able to use the Reserve for grazing in the current year.

Mr Gibbs reminded the Committee that a year ago, it had already delayed for one year a safety inspection of the Reserve under section 4 of the Management Plan, due to the flood defence works. The Committee felt that since the works were still ongoing, it would be most appropriate to undertake the next safety inspection upon the departure of the Environment Agency's contractors from the site.

**RECOMMENDATION: (i) That the Council continue to allow Julian Sampson (GW Finn & Sons) to handle the ongoing relationship & negotiations with the Environment Agency and its contractors.**

**(ii) That the next safety inspection of the Reserve under section 4 of the Management Plan be undertaken upon the departure of the Environment Agency's contractors from the site.**

#### **17.01.15**

#### **SINGLE FARM PAYMENT / BASIC PAYMENT SCHEME 2015 & GRAZIER TENANCY ISSUES**

Dr Lipczynski informed the Committee that the online registration process for payments in 2015 had been completed to ensure that the Reserve remained on the system. Julian Sampson was continuing to push for compensation from the Environment Agency for possible disqualification from the Single Farm Payment Scheme since there would not be active farming on site in 2015, and for loss of grazing. Cllr Daw suggested that should the grazier be unable to use the site in 2015, the Reserve would not be in active farming but entitlements would have been purchased. Loss of derived income from such a purchase should be claimed from the Environment Agency. The Committee felt that it was too early to consider whether in the long term grazing should be undertaken on the Reserve or whether vegetation should be controlled through an annual / biannual mowing regime, and if a cost/benefit analysis of grazing would still be required (this issue had been deferred for consideration from successive Committee meetings since 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014).

**RECOMMENDATIONS: (i) That the Council continue to allow Julian Sampson (GW Finn & Sons) to advise on, and deal with, Single Farm Payment / Basic Payment Scheme 2015 as it applied to the Reserve and associated grazier tenancy issues.**

**(ii) That the issue of long term grazing / mowing be deferred until the Environment Agency had left the site and long term issues, costs &**

**benefits would be clearer.**

**18.01.15**

**FINANCE**

(i) The statement of accounts for Monks Wall Nature Reserve as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 was received and noted.

(ii) The Committee had been asked to consider likely expenditure requirements and income streams relating to the Reserve and to offer recommendations for incorporation in next year's Reserve budget (this issue was deferred from the Committee meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014). It was felt that given the ongoing flood defence works at the Reserve, this issue should be deferred again to the next Committee meeting, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

**RECOMMENDATION: That this matter be deferred until the next Committee meeting (13<sup>th</sup> April 2015) and that in the meantime, Mr Gibbs, Dr Griffiths, Dr Lipczynski and Dr Walkey should work together to prepare a draft document listing likely expenditure requirements and income streams and offering recommendations for incorporation in the Reserve budget, also to be brought back to the Committee meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> April.**

(iii) It was RESOLVED by the Committee members present, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), that the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

*Dr Griffiths left the room at this point.*

(iv) The Committee considered the Warden's honorarium for the coming financial year.

**RECOMMENDATION: (i) That the Warden's honorarium continue at the current level for 2015/16, i.e. £3,000 per annum.**

**(ii) That the Town Clerk raise with the current Warden several issues that were highlighted by the Committee.**

*Dr Griffiths returned to the room at this point.*

**19.01.15**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 6:00pm in the Council Chamber, Guildhall.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_