

AT A MEETING of the SIR GEORGE STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held at Sir George Staunton Country Park, Havant on 28 FEBRUARY 2011.

PRESENT

p Phil Halliwell
p Gordon Gardner
p Kerry Bailey

Hampshire County Council

a Councillor Mrs L. Fairhurst
p Councillor I.F.E. Beagley
p Councillor Mrs A. Buckley
p Councillor R.C. McIntosh
p Councillor F. Pearce

p Mike Walls

East Hampshire District Council

p Councillor Mrs. D.K. Denston
a Mr S. d'Este Hoare

Havant Borough Council

a Councillor M Fairhurst
a Jeff Crate
p David Harris

Vice-Chairman Councillor Frank Pearce was in the Chair.

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs L. Fairhurst, Councillor M Fairhurst and Mr S. d'Este Hoare.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that, where they believed that they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally, at the time of the debate, declare their interest, and having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code .

		Action
44.	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2010 were approved and signed by the Vice-Chairman.</p> <p>The Treasurer informed members that reports on the Gift Shop and Education Service had been prepared for this meeting as requested.</p> <p>The Park Manager informed the Committee that he had purchased a second hand mower, therefore joint working with Havant Borough Council did not need to be sought at this time.</p> <p>With regard to parking the Area Manager confirmed that the machines would hopefully be installed at the end of March. He would confirm with the suppliers that the machines would take the new 5p and 10p coins that were being introduced shortly. Members were made aware that charging for Blue Badge holders had been put on hold until a legal query had been resolved. He informed members that, at a whole service level, a new Car Parking Strategy Group had been set up to look at various issues, such as paying by mobile phone.</p>	Phil Halliwell
45.	DEPUTATIONS	
	There were no deputations at this meeting	
46.	TREASURER'S REPORT	
	<p>The Committee received the report of the County Treasurer on the financial performance of the Park as at the end of January 2011. (Item 5 in the Minute Book)</p> <p>The Treasurer summarised his report, stressing that expenditure had been reduced to essential items only in an effort to offset the reduced income figures.</p> <p>He indicated that his major concern was the unknown quantity of the utility bills, which had yet to be received and could be higher than expected due to the extreme cold weather at the end of 2010. Members raised concerns about the high waste water and gas bills. The Treasurer explained that the water company had not claimed the money for four years and the Park had been unaware of this since the money was paid out centrally by Hampshire County Council. Replying to a question on whether money had been set aside, the Treasurer stated that money</p>	

	<p>would have been in the reserves, but the reserves were in deficit. Members were informed that smart meters had been installed and were now read monthly, which meant that bills should not be as unexpected. It was also brought to the attention of the Committee that the Park had been paying for dead phone lines, but this had now been sorted.</p> <p>Members asked whether the increase in entrance fees had resulted in increased revenue. In answer, the Park Manager said that this had not happened, partly due to the poor weather in the last three months of 2010, but the increased charges had allowed him to discount heavily, which was a marketing draw. Members requested that visitor figures should be drawn up monthly to monitor how the Park is doing and that they should be presented as a graph rather than a table to make it easier to visualise the trends.</p> <p>The Treasurer stated that by the end of the current financial year his aim was not to have increased the deficit and that he was reasonably confident that the Park would end the year close to budget and may even make a small surplus.</p> <p>Looking to the future the Treasurer emphasised that income generation and tight budgets were the challenges. It was stressed that there would be no more money from the County Council and that the new treasury regime may not be as sympathetic to the Park's deficit as previously. He indicated that there would be new income streams next year from car parking and additional attractions, such as the soft play area and wallaby walk. A suggestion was made that taking animals out to schools and other venues might be a source of income generation and should be investigated. Members were informed that the use of the Park facilities was being proactively developed, with a half price offer to local businesses for conferences, although there had been no take up yet, and they were working with the caterers (Lime) to push private functions. It was felt that the county and local councils should be encouraged to make more use of the Park's facilities, rather than going elsewhere; it was confirmed that the Park's conference rooms are listed on the County's conference website.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	<p>Gordon Gardner /Mike Walls</p>
<p>47.</p>	<p>STAUNTON PARK SHOP REPORT</p>	
	<p>The Committee received the report of the County Treasurer on the budget for the shop at Staunton Country Park as requested by Members at the last meeting. (Item 6 in the Minute Book)</p>	

	<p>The Treasurer apologised that the presentation of the figures had been a mix of budget and forecast outturn and provided a new set. The Treasurer explained the three possible presentation options – the current one, one that included 40% staff time as part of the shop budget, and a third one that removed all non-retail income and costs out of the shop budget. Members felt that all three versions were valid and useful.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>(i) That the report be noted (ii) That all three presentations of the shop figures were to be continued.</p>	Mike Walls
48.	EDUCATION BUDGET REPORT	
	<p>The Committee received the report of the County Treasurer on the 2010/11 Education budget at the Park as requested by Members at the last meeting. (Item 7 in the Minute Book)</p>	
	<p>The Treasurer drew Members' attention to paragraph 2 in his report and stressed that the aim of the Education and Community Service was not to generate a profit.</p> <p>He explained that there would be a surplus this year as the Education and Community Manager had attracted funding for a number of projects, such as the Wildlife Education Area, and Portsmouth Water had renewed their partnership grant for a further three years. The Wildlife Education project also has money carried forward into next year.</p> <p>Members of the Committee acknowledged the work done by the Education and Community Manager to attract funding.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
49.	EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY UPDATE PRESENTATION	
	<p>The Education and Community Manager, Kerry Bailey, gave a presentation on the work of the Service, informing Members of its background, current situation and future developments.</p> <p>She explained the formal and informal education aspects of the work and mentioned that the service had been awarded the Learning out of the Classroom Quality Badge.</p>	

	<p>She drew Members' attention to the work of the volunteers, partnership working, particularly with Portsmouth Water, the Nursery Site Project, and the programme of events for 2011.</p> <p>The Manager indicated that her key priorities were to get a volunteer co-ordinator, as it was a time consuming job to co-ordinate the large numbers of volunteers that worked in the park; to establish a Friends of Staunton group, on which she would give an update on at the next meeting; to make the Park a 'flagship site' for the Countryside Service; and to continue to fundraise.</p> <p>Members thanked Kerry for her interesting and informative presentation which gave them a clearer understanding of the work of the Service.</p>	Kerry Bailey
50.	PARK MANAGER'S REPORT	
	<p>The Committee received the report of the Park Manager giving an update on developments at the Park. (Item 9 of the Minute Book)</p> <p>The Park Manager drew Member's attention to the efforts to meet the revenue targets with a variety of ticket offers, 25% off membership for early sign-up and the use of social networks and websites to promote offers. He stated that his aim was for the Park to have the message 'we're the best value'.</p> <p>In amplification of his report Members were informed of a number of developments - the HLS: Natural England money was confirmed; work on the new toilets and hand wash area had started; new signs had been put up inside and outside the Park, but Havant Borough Council had refused permission to erect larger signs at the entrance to Middle Park Road; in the garden the poly tunnel was still awaiting the sign-off from the Secretary of State, but a six month extension had been granted to the use of the glass house; the Landscape group was due to meet in April to ensure that the planting in the Park is in context; a giant rabbit warren and goat shelter/climbing frame had been completed. It was suggested that fundraising for a replacement for Jess the shire horse might be a project for the new Friends of Staunton group. In response to whether a farm or brewery might have a horse that they are trying to re-home, the Park Manager stated that one had to be careful if the animal was not used to people.</p> <p>The Park Manager made reference to the internal review of the gift shops and external visits to other gift and farm shops that had been done and stressed the key points that he had raised in his report (paragraph 8.3). He felt that the Park was missing out</p>	

	<p>on the sale of local crafts and farm produce. Following a forthcoming visit from a National Trust retail specialist he would report back to the Committee on their findings.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted</p> <p>The Vice-Chairman, Cllr F.Pearce, left the meeting at 4.10 pm and Cllr I Beagley took over for the remaining items, 10 and 11 and completed the agenda.</p>	Gordon Gardner
51.	KEY OFFICERS GROUP MEETING	
	<p>The meeting notes of the Key Officer's Group meeting held on the 7 October 2010 were noted and approved by the JMC. (Item 10 in the Minute Book)</p> <p>In reply to a question it was confirmed that sensor control taps would not be used as they were unproven and expensive; instead time-controlled push button taps were being installed.</p>	
52.	STAKEHOLDERS MEETING	
	<p>The meeting notes of the meeting held on 29 October 2010 were noted and approved by the JMC. (Item 11 in the Minute Book)</p>	
53.	AOB	
	<p>The Committee was informed that Councillor Mrs Snaith-Tempia was stepping down as Executive Member for Culture and Recreation and Councillor Keith Chapman was taking her place.</p>	
54.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	<p>The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Monday 16 May at 2.00 pm at the Park.</p>	