

AT A MEETING of the
SIR GEORGE STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
held at Sir George Staunton Country Park, Havant on 27 February 2012

PRESENT

Hampshire County Council

p Councillor Mrs. L. Fairhurst (Chairman)
p Councillor I.F.E. Beagley
p Councillor Mrs. A. Buckley
a Councillor R.C. McIntosh
p Councillor F. Pearce (Vice-chairman)

p Colin Hudman
p Phil Halliwell
p Gordon Gardner

East Hampshire District Council

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

Havant Borough Council

p Councillor Mrs. Y. Weeks
p Mr. Jeff Crate

83. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor McIntosh.

84. 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
85.	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2011 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.	

	<p>Matters arising:-</p> <p>Item 78: Park Manager's Report</p> <p>Members were informed that Petersfield School had approached the Park to provide them with an education course.</p> <p>The Park Manager informed members that the Park was hoping to begin bike hire in April, giving the franchise to a company called Quench, which currently does work for the Forestry Commission.</p>	
86.	DEPUTATIONS	
	<p>There were no deputations at this meeting</p>	
87.	PARK MANAGER'S REPORT	
	<p>The Committee received the report of the Park Manager giving an update on developments at the Park. (Item 5 in the Minute Book).</p> <p>The Park Manager answered questions from Members about his report.</p> <p>It was explained to Members that to prevent abuse of the direct debit system new membership was now paid for by credit card for the first year and subsequently by direct debit (2.4).</p> <p>The Park Manager explained the rationale behind the proposed new pricing structure for the Park, indicating that there had been no price increases for two years. Angling memberships were not being increased because they were not being taken up and it had been decided to wait until the dedicated angling car park was installed. Members were reassured that Staunton was cheaper than comparable venues and represented good value for money, especially with the up-coming additional attractions. Only day tickets were being increased as the benefits of full membership were being actively promoted at the entrance and with lapsed members. Members congratulated the Park Manager and his team for the increases in membership (2.7).</p> <p>Members were informed that catering at the Park was currently in the hands of HC3S, Hampshire's internal caterers, as Lime Caterers had gone into receivership; this was a change in management, not staff. The aim was for the Park to bring catering back in-house eventually. The advantage of HC3S was that would market Hampshire's country parks through the school meals leaflet. The arrangement with HC3S was that 70% of the</p>	

profits from catering would come to the Park; HC3S had given an assurance that they would keep costs down and maximise profits. It was noted that the Park did have some flexibility with catering outside the tea room and that it was envisaged that the new play barn would be supplied with self-service units (2.8).

Members congratulated the Park Manager on the press coverage that had been given to the baby animals at the Park (4.1).

The Park Manager was asked whether, with the Christmas season being so successful, there was anything more that could be done to increase income. It was noted that previously a small ice rink had not been particularly successful and that tractor rides had not been tried yet; a better promotion of catering was suggested (5.3).

The Park Manager indicated that the agreement with Havant Borough Council Parking Services for enforcing car parking charges was that there would be no charge to the Park and Parking Services would keep any fines (6.4).

Members were informed that the barbecues for the pay zone should be operational for the summer. It was clarified that for evening hires the gates would be locked to prevent unauthorised access and to reduce staffing costs for these events there would be staggered working times for staff. The Park Manager was asked about the figures that had been used as the basis for the estimates. He explained that groups would be charged £120 for a large barbecue, which, in the first year, would equate to 18 hires; it was felt that this was an achievable estimate. Suggestions were made that the barbecues should be promoted to local businesses and that the Park could sell charcoal and meat packs. The Area Manager informed Members that there was an online barbecue booking page on Hantsweb for all Hampshire's Country Parks (6.5).

Members were advised that a updated events leaflet would be published when the new marketing strategy was launched. The first issue of the PO9 newspaper had been published with a good amount of publicity for the Park; it was anticipated that the paper would expand to other areas (7).

Havant Borough Members informed the Committee that additional funding had been received for the Water Festival which would be used on the Sunday for a finale to the planned Olympic-themed sports events, music and fireworks. It was confirmed that car parking would be charged for the Water Festival and entrance to the pay zone would be half price as usual. In the 'Hampshire Welcomes the World' event Staunton had been allocated 'Oceania' (7.6).

	<p>Updating Members on projects, the Park Manager drew their attention to the new Wildlife Zone, which would have a official opening in May 2012 when the interpretation boards were completed, and the indoor play area which was due to be completed in time for the Easter holidays, following delays in off-site construction works (8). The delayed opening of the play area had affected the projected increase in income; however, the mild winter weather had meant a significant increase visitor numbers over the same period in 2010/11, which had mitigated this to some extent.</p> <p>The Committee was given reassurance that following the outbreak of a new disease, the Schmallenberg Virus, in sheep and cattle, which had affected some of the animals in the Park, there would be no need to close the Park as it did not affect humans.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the JMC noted the content of the report. • That the JMC approved the new pricing structure for 2012/13 	
<p>88.</p>	<p>TREASURER’S REPORT: BUDGET PROJECTED OUTTURN POSITION 2011/12</p>	
	<p>The Committee received the report of the County Treasurer on the financial performance of Sir George Staunton Country Park as at 16 January 2012 and the projected forecast outturn to 31 March 2012. (Item 6 in the Minute Book)</p> <p>The Treasurer answered questions raised by Members about his report.</p> <p>It was explained that the increase in grants and sponsorship income had come mainly from the Wildlife Zone funding (2:9).</p> <p>The Park Manager indicated that although the sales of Culture All passes had dropped, there had been an increase in Staunton memberships and there was going to be a countywide promotion of the Culture All pass (2:10).</p> <p>It was confirmed that the catering outlet at the Park would not bring in additional income for 2011/12, and that it was usual for winter trading to be at a loss or break-even; however, the mild weather over the winter had seen better than normal income (3.3).</p>	

	<p>Members' attention was drawn to the continued need to keep a rein on expenditure and to maximise income generation with the expected reduction in partnership contributions in 2012/13. Partner Members indicated that contribution figures were not available yet for 2012/13. Members were informed that Horndean Parish Council was considering withdrawing from the partnership. It was suggested that the income from car parking charges, the move to drive up membership and the introduction of new attractions during 2012/13 would help offset the expected reductions in partnership contributions.</p> <p>The Treasurer explained the analysis of the gift shop figures (Appendix B) and it was confirmed that income from meat sales was included in the farm figures and from wood in the rangers' figures. Concerns were raised that people wishing just to shop had only 15 minutes free parking, which might not be enough, and that 30 minutes would be better. The Area Manager and Park Manager would look into a system to ensure that shoppers would not get a parking ticket from Havant's Parking Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the JMC noted the report.</p>	<p>Gordon Gardner /Phil Halliwell</p>
<p>89.</p>	<p>KEY OFFICERS' GROUP</p>	
	<p>The Committee received the notes of the Key Officers' meeting held on 10 February 2012. (Item 7 in the Minute Book)</p> <p>The Park Manager informed Members that he had access to the Culture All Pass data which meant that he would be able to contact members who had not renewed their pass with a 20% discount offer; this would bring in additional revenue.</p> <p>He explained that the idea of horse riding in Leigh Park Gardens was unlikely, but that a franchise for bike hire was being investigated.</p> <p>Members were informed that no decisions had been made about a Diamond Jubilee event, although the Park had been asked to consider doing something with the maze.</p> <p>It was noted that Portsmouth Water were unlikely to put in a new reservoir as no funding would be available. An application for motorbikes to use Deadman's Field on the Leigh Park site had not gone any further.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p>	

	That the report be noted.	
90.	AOB	
	With the agreement of the Members it was agreed to change the timing of the Joint Management Committee meetings from the afternoon to the morning.	Sue Butler
	The Park Manager was asked to convene a Stakeholder Meeting.	Gordon Gardner
91.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Monday 14 May 2012 at 10.00 am at the Park.	