

AT A MEETING of the  
SIR GEORGE STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
held at Sir George Staunton Country Park, Havant on 23 June 2014

**PRESENT**

**Hampshire County Council**

p Councillor Mrs. L Fairhurst  
p Councillor Mrs A Briggs  
p Councillor R Finch  
p Councillor D Keast  
p Councillor R.C. McIntosh

p Kerry Bailey, Country Parks Business Manager (SGSCP/QECP)  
p Jane Lovett, Honorary Treasurer  
a Adam Owen, Countryside Team Leader (Business Development)  
p Andrew Smith, Head of Countryside  
p Tim Speller, Visitor Services Manager (SGSCP/QECP)

**East Hampshire District Council**

p Councillor Mrs. D.K. Denston  
p Mr Martin Healey, Principal Countryside and Biodiversity Officer for EHDC

**Havant Borough Council**

a Councillor Mrs. Y. Weeks  
a Mr Jeff Crate, Senior Economic Development Officer for HBC

**<Cllr Briggs in the Chair>**

**57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Yvonne Weeks, Adam Owen and Jeff Crate.

**58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

		Action
<b>59.</b>	<b>DEPUTATIONS</b>	
	There were no deputations.	
<b>60.</b>	<b>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</b>	
	<p>The minutes of the meetings held on 25 April 2014 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>54: The Park Manager indicated that with regard to the availability of animal food for public purchase, the farm team would continue to monitor this, and are looking at options to increase visitor opportunities to feed or engage with animals.</p>	
<b>61.</b>	<b>PARK MANAGER'S REPORT</b>	
	<p>The Committee received the report of the Park Manager on the performance and activities at the Park since the meeting on the 25 April 2014 (see Item 5 in the Minute Book). Members' questions were answered and the Committee were appreciative of the informative nature of the report.</p> <p>The Park Manager highlighted that the Park had experienced good visitor numbers with weekend figures benefitting from the recent good weather.</p> <p>Members were delighted to hear that the Park had recently been awarded the 2014 Certificate of Excellence from Trip Advisor in recognition of the Park consistently receiving four or five star ratings from Trip Advisor Travellers. The Park Manager indicated that the certificate would be on public display in the Park Visitors centre. Members heard that as well as positive reviews on Trip Advisor, enthusiastic visitor feedback on the Park Facebook page had also been received.</p> <p>The Park Manager drew Members' attention to the recent launch of a marketing campaign on the back of Portsmouth Stagecoach buses to promote the Park as a visitor attraction. This was launched in collaboration with a Stagecoach bus ticket promotion enabling free child entry to the Park with a full paying adult until the end of August 2014. Members were enthusiastic about the publicity campaign, and the Park Manager indicated</p>	

	<p>that other methods of advertising would also be investigated.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Committee approve the content of the report.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>&lt;Cllr Fairhurst in the Chair&gt;</b></p>	
<p><b>62.</b></p>	<p><b>FINAL ACCOUNTS 2013/14</b></p>	
	<p>The Honorary Treasurer presented a report on the Final Accounts for the Park for 2013/14 (see item 6 in the Minute Book). The Treasurer answered questions raised by Members about the report.</p> <p>It was explained that the Park made a contribution to reserves of £189,000 in 2013/14, which was £106,316 higher than the budgeted contribution of £88,000. Overall, expenditure at the Park was well controlled, and whole income was good. There would be a further £40,000 reduction from the County Council to the Park in 2015/16 which may affect future income.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about whether catering generated a profit for the Park, and Members were informed that this currently wasn't the case, partly as a result of the outlay for new furnishings, but that the restaurant continued to ensure a good quality service to all visitors. It was noted that the Park Development Plans would explore further what would generate the best income for the Park in terms of catering.</p> <p>Members queried the lower than targeted sales from the Park shop and were informed that this was an area which had recently been the subject of a mystery shopper review, which Members heard would feed into the overall Park review. It was highlighted to Members that the introduction of the new tea rooms would appeal to a different customer base, and the introduction of seasonal BBQ's and ice cream kiosk would help to generate income for the catering side of the Park.</p> <p>Answering a question on whether the Park had flexibility to purchase from any supplier, it was explained that, except for minor one-off purchases, staff needed to adhere to the recently put in place Corporate County Council framework which governed purchasing, and ensured that in terms of safeguarding, only approved suppliers were used.</p> <p>It was noted that the current shop manager had extensive retail experience, but due to procurement processes recently</p>	

	<p>changing, a number of back-office tasks had been added to their role.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Committee endorse the content of the report.</li> </ul>	
<b>63.</b>	<b>SMALL BODIES ANNUAL RETURN 2013/14</b>	
	<p>The Honorary Treasurer presented the Annual Governance Return and Accounting Statement to the Committee (see item 7 in the Minute Book).</p> <p>The Treasurer explained that it was a legal requirement that an Annual Return, summarising the Park's financial activities during the past year, and a Committee-approved Annual Governance Statement was submitted.</p> <p>Following discussion the recommendations were considered and approved.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Annual Governance Statement for 2013/14 is agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.</li> <li>• That the Accounting Statement for 2013/14 is approved by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.</li> </ul>	
<b>64.</b>	<b>SIR GEORGE STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK – JOINT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS</b>	
	<p>The Head of Countryside presented to the Committee a report on Joint Management Arrangements Beyond 2015 (see item 8 in the Minute Book).</p> <p>It was highlighted to Members that it was timely to consider the future management arrangements for the Park as the current Joint Management Agreement for Sir George Staunton Country Park was agreed by the partners in 2003 and ends 31 March 2015.</p> <p>One proposal presented to Members was to replace the JMC with an informal Advisory Body from April 2015. The report suggested that this may result in decision making being more efficient and timely, but that these decisions would be made with the benefit of advice and information provided by current JMC partners as an Advisory Group.</p>	

The Head of Countryside emphasised that the introduction of an Advisory Body would enable savings in terms of Finance and Democratic officer support. Members heard that the operating costs for the Park are currently twice that of any of the other HCC Country Parks. It was explained that an Advisory Body could potentially meet quarterly, and the membership to include local Members. Accountability of the Advisory Body would be to the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside through an annual report. It was clarified that the proposals were designed to facilitate streamlined operational decision making and to move Staunton in line with the other Country Parks as the Country Park Transformation programme gets underway.

Members raised concerns around the formation of an Advisory Body and subsequent Member inclusion in decision making for the Park. The Committee felt that Staunton Country Park differed from others and therefore its requirements were unique.

The recommendations in the report were considered and, following a vote, were rejected.

**IT WAS RESOLVED:**

- That a report be presented to the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside with a recommendation from JMC Members that the JMC should be retained with explanation of the reason why.
- That the report be brought to a future JMC meeting setting out the remit and responsibilities of the JMC and proposals for improving reporting mechanisms in order to establish greater accountability and feedback against JMC resolutions.

<b>65.</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	
	The next meeting was scheduled for <b>Friday 17 October 2014</b> at 2.00 pm at the Park.	