

AT A MEETING of the
SIR GEORGE STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
held at Sir George Staunton Country Park, Havant on 17 October 2014

PRESENT

Hampshire County Council

p Councillor Mrs. L Fairhurst (Chairman)
p Councillor Mrs A Briggs (Vice-chairman)
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
Adam Owen, Countryside Team Leader (Business Development)
Jo Heath, Head of Countryside
p Tim Speller, Visitor Services Manager (SGSCP/QECP)

East Hampshire District Council

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

Havant Borough Council

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

66. BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes

67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Denston

68. 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
69.	DEPUTATIONS	
	There were no deputations.	
70.	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING	
	<p>The minutes of the meetings held on 23 June 2014 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>62: The Honorary Treasurer clarified that the Park has paid off its deficit and does have reserves.</p> <p>63: It was noted that the Small Bodies Annual Return had been approved.</p> <p>64: The Committee were informed that the Executive member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside had approved the retention of the JMC and that a report on the remit and responsibilities of the JMC was in the process of being written.</p>	
71.	BUDGET MONITORING AND FORECAST OUTTURN 2014/15	
	<p>The Honorary Treasurer presented a report providing and update on the current budget monitoring position and details of the revised budget for 2014/15 (see item 5 in the Minute Book). The Honorary Treasurer answered questions raised by Members about the report.</p> <p>The Honorary Treasurer indicated this was a good news report; the predicted £40,000 shortfall was now predicted to be an £8,000 surplus. This was mainly due to a reduction in staffing costs as vacant posts were being held.</p> <p>It was brought to the Committee's attention that the payment of some bills twice had meant a large increase in sewerage and transport hire costs, but this was being remedied. It was noted</p>	

	<p>that a 1% pay award had been allowed for in the projection. It was also noted that premises were exceeding the budget due the cost of contract cleaners and work on the Chinese, Walled and Rose Gardens, which it had been anticipated would be funded from the reserve account, but income to date has allowed for it to be funded from the current budget.</p> <p>Attention was drawn to the fact that income was exceeding the budget due to an increase in membership and admission fees and income from catering. It was explained that in the future the Park would have more control than previously over the catering. It was noted that following a period of vacancy in the catering manage role, a new one had started and had settled well.</p> <p>Members agreed that the Park was in a very positive position.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Outturn Forecast for 2014/15 contained in Appendices A and B was approved. 	
72.	PARK MANAGER'S REPORT	
	<p>The Committee received the report of the Park Manager on the performance and activities at the Park since the meeting on the 23 June 2014 (see Item 6 in the Minute Book). Members' questions were answered and the Committee were appreciative of the informative nature of the report.</p> <p>2:2The Park Manager mentioned the new National Curriculum which included a Science topic on the seasons, which could lead to multiple visits of schools in order to provide the comparisons.</p> <p>She highlighted that Highbury College Animal Care Course were now completely relocated to the Park, although their exotics and small animals were not on show yet. This Partnership provides a variety of benefits and should be useful for accessing different types of funding and grants.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Park still receives funding for Short Breaks to provide activities for children with disabilities and their families. The next funding application will focus on all-access equipment for the Park. The current activity days will still be provided as part of the regular programme.</p> <p>2:4 It was stressed that visitor figures have not decreased overall, but there was a slight dip in some months, possibly due to a change in advertising, which is being addressed. Social media is very popular, especially when there is news of baby</p>	

	<p>animals.</p> <p>2:5 A decision had not been taken yet as to whether to sell the Shire horse foal, Belle. The Committee asked the Park Manager to investigate whether Belle could be sent to be broken and then returned to the Park to be used.</p> <p>It was also agreed that the Senior Farm Ranger, should be invited to speak at a future meetings.</p> <p>2:5 Members were informed of a membership review of both the sight specific and Culture –All membership schemes being carried out by the County. A meeting at the end of October 2014 will make a decision on the review and would be brought to the next meeting of the JMC.</p> <p>A check by the Park on the misuse of membership cards over the last few weeks had shown that it was fairly low level, being mainly grannies with daughter’s card or nannies with employer’s. Where people had brought in the wrong card by mistake they were asked to pay and be refunded once the correct membership was presented. It was felt by all that Staunton’s prices are very reasonable.</p> <p>2:7The Committee agreed that the gardens were looking good. It was confirmed that the new fencing near the Maze would be in keeping with the Park’s history.</p> <p>Concern was raised by a number of Members about the state of the paths around the Park, especially those at the entrance which provides the first impression. It was noted that some of these have been patched up annually, but there has been no formal plan. The Park Manager informed the Committee that a path maintenance plan was being drawn up by Chris Bailey, the Head Horticulturalist, and that it was anticipated that it would take 3 – 5 years to reinstate all of the paths to the required standard. Spare aggregate would be used fill in the largest of the puddles. It was stressed that the causes of some of the recurrent puddles needed to be found; for example, the main delivery area had a number of large vehicles using it and it may be that a ‘sympathetic’ tarmac might be the best way forward to alleviate the problem here. The draft path maintenance plan would be brought to the next meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the County Council has a large highways contract with Amey, who have previously been involved with charity work on the County’s properties, and that it would be worth approaching them to help with the paths. The Committee agreed that this was a good idea and Councillor McIntosh agreed to begin investigations.</p> <p>4:3 There was discussion about the small income that was being made from the BBQs. It was explained that the use of the BBQs</p>	<p>Kerry Bailey</p> <p>Kerry Bailey</p> <p>Tim Speller</p> <p>Kerry Bailey</p> <p>Tim</p>
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	<p>was not being strongly promoted and that this was only the first full season of use. It was agreed that there was room for development, but that this was not a priority area for growth at the present time.. The Park would probably aim for increasing the profit in 2014/15. It was noted that people are coming from a distance to use them rather than the local area. It was agreed that Tim Speller, the Visitors Centre Manager, would investigate how they had found out about them.</p> <p>6:1 It was confirmed the Park is mostly receiving a full time marketing input.</p> <p>7:1 The Transforming Parks Plan has not been completed and market research was currently being undertaken. The Committee stressed that they would want to be able to veto any of the proposals. They were informed that the JMC, Stakeholders, users and other interested parties would be consulted and that the final plans would have to be brought to the JMC for approval.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the new constitution for the JMC needs to be in place by the end of March 2015 when the current one ends.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Committee approved the content of the report.</p>	Speller
73.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS – STAUNTON FESTIVAL</p> <p>There was a wide-ranging discussion about the way forward for the Staunton Festival.</p> <p>Members agreed that the strong point of the festival was the music, but that many of the stalls were no longer appropriate. It was agreed that finance was a key issue as the event was quite expensive to hold and it was free to attendees. It was further agreed that the event was well-organised, but questioned whether it was fulfilling the purpose of a family fun day with messages. It was generally felt that the Festival did not bring in more members and it was acknowledged that if the event was not held that the Park would not be adversely affected. It was noted that Havant Borough’s Scrutiny Panel had recently criticised the funding and other elements of the event. The continued funding of the event by Havant, Portsmouth and Portsmouth Water Company was also not guaranteed.</p> <p>There was a consensus that the event should be one day only, mainly devoted to music and should be brought in-house, that outside sponsorship should be sought and that Havant and</p>	

	<p>Portsmouth should be asked to provide their contributions as early as possible.</p> <p>It was suggested and agreed in principle that all County Councillors should give £1000 each from their devolved budgets towards the Festival, if necessary. The Park Manager would look for increased sponsorship using Facebook and would talk with the catering manager about the possibility of catering in-house. Councillor Keast offered to help with sourcing acts.</p> <p>The current Festival Committee would be written to thanking them for their hard work over the last few years and explaining the decision to go in a new direction.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Staunton Festival reduces to one day and concentrates on providing live music to residents with attractions for children to make it a family occasion.</p>	Kerry Bailey
74.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	The next meeting was scheduled for Friday 30 January 2015 at 2.00 pm at the Park.	