

Mousehold Heath Conservators

MINUTES

14:00 – 15:15

18 March 2016

Present: Councillors Maxwell (chair), Price (vice chair), Bradford, Brociek-Coulton, Jones, Sands (M); John Trevelyan (Norwich Society)

Also present: Bob Cronk (Interim Executive head of neighbourhoods), Vicki Reynolds (Service accountant), Kieran Yates (Transport planner), Ian Whittaker (Planning Development Manager)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Margaret Bush (Mousehold Heath defenders), councillors Lubbock, Raby and Thomas (Vi).

2. Public questions / petitions

One public question was received from Mr Paul Scruton:

“With regard to the car park on the Britannia Road and its use by boy racers at night can we have the barrier that was removed, that ran across the car park splitting it in two. The Conservators had the barrier erected for the very purpose of preventing the boy racers from using the car park.

The barrier across the car park proved is very useful in deterring boy racers to the benefit of the local inhabitants. When it was removed without consultation of the Conservators it allowed the problem to return. The reason for its removal was to allow the tourist buses to turn around more easily, if this is still a problem the barrier could be placed a little further down the car park instead of in the middle to allow the buses to turn more easily but still prevent the boy racers having the full length of the car park. This could be beneficial to all the parties concerned.”

A response was given by the Interim executive head of neighbourhoods:

“The miss-use of Britannia Road car park has been an issue from time to time for some years, much of it being seasonal in nature.

Concerns raised by residents about the speed of cars using Britannia Road and misuse of the car park by “boy racers” resulted in a number of discussion and meetings involving local residents and partners to find a solution to the problems. This has culminated in works proposed by the Council on Britannia Road, the details of which were reported to Norwich

Joint Highways Committee on 17 March 2016 and are covered under item 6 of the Conservators agenda today. It is thought that these will mitigate the speed of traffic on Britannia Road and may result in achieving a long term solution to the miss-use of the car park.

The objectives of the work proposed are:

- Improved compliance with the existing 20mph speed limit
- Deter anti-social driving, in particular driving by 'boy racers' at night
- Better management of on-street parking on the part of Britannia Road adjacent to Mousehold Heath so that there is space for the tourist bus to stop and turn around, and to deter verge parking in front of the Britannia Café.
- Improve pedestrian safety and access along the part of Britannia Road that does not have a footway and to provide a safer pedestrian crossing from the Heath towards Britannia Café gate where the footpath ends.
- Promote cycling on Britannia Road as a consequence of this package of measures.

Any further changes to the car park by the Conservators should be deferred until after the consultation is completed on these works and if they proceed, to understand what benefits they bring to the issues highlighted in the car park.

Adjustments to manage car access better have been made to the car park previously including the addition of bollards at the then access point next to the disabled parking area. This resulted in some positive benefits as well as increasing the number of disabled parking bays.

In addition, the informal surfacing of the car park does lend itself to slower driving speeds at times."

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes

Subject to noting that item 13, paragraph 1, sentence 2 should read: "A rent increase to £15,000 per annum had been agreed...", it was:

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2016.

5. BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT APRIL 2015 – JANUARY 2016

The service accountant presented the report. Discussion then ensued regarding the income from and use of the football pitch, during which the following points were made:

- A member of the sports development team and the events team should be invited to a sub group meeting to discuss the issue further.
- The published annual report of the conservators should include a section regarding pitch hire.
- Liaise with the communications team to place an article in citizen magazine, highlighting the availability of the pitch.
- Army Fitness may be worth approaching as possible users of the space.

RESOLVED to:

- a) Note the report; and,
- b) invite a member of the sports development team and the events team to a sub group meeting.

6. BRITANNIA ROAD AREA TRAFFIC AND PARKING MANAGEMENT SCHEME (CIL NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND)

The transport planner presented the report which had been taken to the Norwich Highways Agency Committee the previous day. With regard to the car park, a number of options had been discussed, including introducing charges and / or time limits.

Discussion ensued, during which the following points were made:

- Members expressed concerns regarding the introduction of charges at the Britannia Road car park as this could discourage the use of the heath – particularly for regular patrons.
- The possibility of asking Britannia Café to contribute to the cost of resurfacing the car park was raised – with another adding that the tourist bus company could also be approached.
- A time limit of four hours for the car park was suggested, as well as giving it to the city council to manage as a part of the highway – although the executive head of service for strategy, people and neighbourhoods explained that the conservators are not permitted to give away land.
- It was felt that work should initially focus on the changes to the road layout and consider the car park once that was complete

- Concern was expressed regarding the enforcement of the proposed double yellow lines, with one member suggesting that it may simply 'move the problem on', and could result in greater wear and tear on the car park.
- It was noted that the later opening times of Britannia Café – until 22:00 – had helped in reducing anti-social behaviour in the car park.
- Another measure to tackle anti-social behaviour could be speed humps in the car park and CCTV – although at a cost of approximately £20,000-£25,000 for CCTV cameras, the Interim executive head of neighbourhoods said this made the measure both disproportionate and prohibitively expensive.

RESOLVED to note the report.

7. MOUSEHOLD HEATH UPDATE

The Interim executive head of neighbourhoods explained that following the departure of Lenny Stamp (communities and neighbourhoods manager), the Mousehold Wardens would now report to Simon Meek (parks and open spaces manager).

It was explained that if the new lease on the pavilion goes through, the conservators would need to reach a decision on what to do with the toilets. It was agreed that the issue would be raised with the sub group. A member suggested that it was plainly emphasised to Blue Sky Leisure that the car park and toilets by the pavilion were both public and not for the exclusive use of Zaks customers.

There had been an increase in volunteer hours in both traditional and group volunteering. The wardens had organised thank you refreshments at the Britannia Café.

Councillor Brociek-Coulton explained that volunteer hours on the heath would be excellent evidence for the Norwich in Bloom portfolio. She requested that anything like this be emailed directly to her.

A member raised the possibility of the Wardens having an apprentice and asked if the sub group could explore this idea.

RESOLVED to note the update.

8. ST WILLIAMS CHAPEL INTERPRETATION PANEL UPDATE

The Interim executive head of neighbourhoods explained that he would check the current status of the interpretation panel and email the conservators an update.

CHAIR