

Runnymede Borough Council

CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 2 September 2021 at 2.30pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors C Howorth and J Hulley
Mr Peter McKenzie (Honorary Treasurer) and Mr Chris Hunt (Honorary Secretary)

The meeting was also attended by 2 members of the public, Honorary Wardens Mrs Lane and Mr Grobien and Peter Winfield (Green Space)

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18 July 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Coen, Honorary Wardens Mr Ashby and Mr Beesley. Volunteer Pam Thomas.

3. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Due to Councillor Sohi not standing for re-election in May this year, there was currently no elected chairman, therefore Councillor Hulley as Vice-Chair chaired the meeting. A new chairman would be elected at the Cabrera Trust Management Committee meeting which immediately followed the AGM.

The Committee wished to record thanks to Councillor Sohi for all his hard work and commitment to the Cabrera Trust Management Committee during his time as Councillor and Mayor.

Councillor Hulley welcomed members of the public to the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Cabrera Trust. The Cabrera Trust land was considered an important part of the Virginia Water community. Despite the pandemic the land had continued to be managed effectively and Officers were thanked for this.

The purpose of the Annual General Meeting was to inform local residents of how the Trust had managed the land and how its funds had been spent over the past year, together with a formal report on the current state of the Trust's accounts. The meeting would include a discussion forum, during which residents could ask questions of the Trust Members.

The Cabrera Trust was constituted by Deed of Trust, as amended by a Scheme made by the Secretary of State for Education and Science, dated 24 March 1972, and was a registered charity. Runnymede Borough Council was the Trustee.

The Trust was responsible for the management of the open space playing area on Cabrera Avenue and approximately 52 acres of land alongside the River Bourne, known as the Riverside Walk. It was also responsible for the administration and use of the Trust funds.

The Trust Deed required that the Riverside Walk was maintained for the exercise, recreation and benefit of the inhabitants of Virginia Water and the neighbourhood, and the open space on Cabrera Avenue was to be used as a public recreation ground for the benefit of the same area.

The Management Committee had been set up by the Trustee to provide a clear local focus for the management of the Trust land. The Management Committee comprised of the three Virginia Water Ward Councillors, together with two Council Officers, acting in the capacity of Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary.

In addition to this, the Committee had five co-opted members, Mr Ashby, Mr Beesley, Mr Grobien, Mrs Lane and Mr Saunders.

4. ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

a) Honorary Secretary's report

The Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on activity on both sites, but the usual cutting of grass and general maintenance had continued. There had also been a need for some tree works to be carried out in the woodlands on several occasions.

Thanks were given to the co-opted members –Mr Ashby, Mr Beesley, Mr Gobien, Mrs Lane and Mr Saunders for their continued support in managing the Trust's land.

Thanks were also given to Mr Midwinter who stood down as co-opted member after many years of service.

This was the Honorary Secretary's last meeting as he was leaving the Council. The Committee thanked Mr Hunt for all his work and support. Mr Hunt thanked the Committee and commended Peter Winfield and his team for their continued work in relation to the Trust land.

b) Honorary Treasurer's Annual Report

The Honorary Treasurer presented the Trust's Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The balance sheet at the end of 31 March 2021 showed an overall fund balance of £147,771, an increase of £18,160. This increase related to income received from the disposal of some COIF shares.

Fundraising activities had previously been discussed but due to Covid 19 these had been unable to go ahead as planned. It was hoped that these could be progressed soon. The Trust would need to apply for grants for any future major projects to ensure the balance sheet stayed healthy. The Committee was advised that the Council were looking to employ a 'Bid Writer' and the Trust would be able to access their assistance in writing any bids for grants.

The Honorary Treasurer advised the Committee that this would be his last meeting as he was retiring at the end of the year. He was thanked for all his work and support over the last 10 years. Mr McKenzie's successor would take over as Honorary Treasurer.

5. ANNUAL INSPECTION OF THE TRUST LAND

This year the Annual Inspection of the Trust land took place on 27 July and was attended by Mrs H Lane, Mr P Grobien and Councillor C Howorth together with three Council Officers. Apologies were received from Councillor J Hulley and Mr P Beesley.

Riverside Walk

During the inspection the group received a very insightful explanation of the history of the trust land, the work that had been undertaken and information on the biodiversity of the site.

Cabrera Open Space

The Cabrera Open Space was noted to be in good order

Peter Winfield was thanked for his very informative precis of the history of the Trust land and previous work undertaken during the walk.

6. DISCUSSION FORUM

It was reported that a tree house had been erected in one of the trees on the Trust land. Officers confirmed they were unaware of this, Mr Grobien would contact the Green Space team to arrange to meet with Officers on site so this could be dealt with.

Some concern was raised regarding some of the streams being clogged. The Committee advised that the land was a wet wood, which in turn gave it its Local Nature Reserve status. However, if residents had any particular issues relating to their own gardens, they could report these via the Council's Open Space email address: openspace@runnymede.gov.uk

Officers advised that the volunteer group were looking to establish a 'Friend's Group' which would look at fundraising activities.

It was noted that some residents assisted with litter picking on the Trust land and Officers appreciated help from the local community in this regard. A resident reported that she had recently removed some glass and disposable BBQ's left on the site.

It was reported that some paint pots had been dumped on the Trust land (towards Wentworth Gates) by a neighbouring property after they painted their fence adjacent to the Trust land. Officers would arrange to remove these. Some sweet wrappers and cans had also been sighted under the swing rope. Residents were asked to report any future issues to openspace@runnymede.gov.uk

The possibility of a bin in the car park by the Community Centre was raised, along with the possibility of revisiting the installation of a bin at the entrance to the woods by the station. Officers advised that bins did not always reduce litter and, in some cases, encouraged fly tipping. Additionally, any bins installed on the Trust land would have an ongoing cost to the Trust as they would be responsible for paying for the bin to be emptied. Officers were asked to monitor the situation with regards to litter on the site and bring a report to the next meeting.

It was reported that some brambles and nettles from the Trust land were coming through the wire fencing into the Preschool. Unfortunately, that area of Trust land was inaccessible. The resident present was asked to forward relevant contact details to Councillor Hulley who would pass to Officers to enable them to arrange to meet and discuss with the Preschool available options.

Officers had received a complaint regarding the lateness of advertising of the AGM. Officers advised that the submission of the advert had been placed as soon as feasibly possible after waiting for the latest central government guidance in July confirming the AGM would be able to go ahead. When placing the advertisement Officers were advised that the Connection parish magazine no longer existed. However, the former editor of the Connection magazine was now running 'The Virginia Water Magazine' a free, monthly community magazine funded by advertisers. He did, however, offer to put the AGM advertisement in for free on a one-off free notice. Other advertising platforms would be pursued for future advertising.

It was reported that the volunteer group now had 40 members. 2 working parties had taken place and more dates were to be arranged. Unfortunately, one of the lead volunteers had moved away so a replacement was needed. The volunteer group were keen to set up a meeting to facilitate the setting up of a friend's group. It was hoped to get this organised early next year.

Mr Beesley who was unable to attend today's meeting had sent in the following to update the Committee on his recent activities as Honorary Warden: -

Mr Beesley had taken part in both volunteer working parties this Summer and continued to visit the woods and Riverside Walk regularly. He had engaged with Council Officers over issues affecting the walk and with the neighbourhood planning group to advise them on the Cabrera Trust land and its importance to the green infrastructure in Virginia Water. He had approached a wildflower expert who had agreed to lead a wildflower walk for volunteers and local residents next Spring provided the situation with Covid allowed.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 3.17pm)