

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

Runnymede Borough Council

Community Services Committee

Thursday, 16 June 2022 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors C Howorth (Chairman), A Balkan, T Burton, M Cressey (In place of C Mann), V Cunningham, S Dennett, S Jenkins, A King, N King (In place of S Walsh) and N Prescott (In place of D Clarke).

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors S Walsh (Vice-Chairman), D Clarke and C Mann.

In attendance: Councillor R King.

92 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

93 Declarations of Interest

Councillors A Balkan and C Howorth declared non-registerable interests in the report concerning the North West Surrey Funding Alliance. Both were employees of Royal Holloway University of London. The University was working in partnership with the Council on comprehensive evaluation of initiatives in the Alliance. Both stayed and participated in the discussion as neither was directly involved in this work.

94 Community Services Key Performance Indicators Quarter 4 2021/2022

The Committee received for information, the key performance indicators for Quarter 4 of 2021/2022, and the year-end figures for Community Services and some of the former Community Development service areas.

Officers were pleased with how the services had coped throughout Covid and were now able to resume other duties, apart from the Community Halls that were still being used as vaccination centres.

Chertsey Museum currently had two vacancies but it was hoped these would be filled shortly so that demand for their education services could be met and visitor numbers would increase as the public started to feel more comfortable about indoor venues.

Regarding use of Council facilities, Officers planned to submit a report to a future meeting on the Eileen Tozer Day Centre. The Committee was assured that the Council was committed to providing a service and how best the community's needs could be met in a linked up way.

Members were impressed with Social Prescribing figures and Homesafe related services and by the number of referrals which had risen by 190% in Runnymede. Capacity was considered sufficient and much depended on the complexity of cases. Resources would be kept under review and any future need would be considered at the appropriate time.

Officers had made some progress with developing a Befriending service and hoped to either bring a report to the next meeting or, if timing did not allow that, to deal with it by way of the provisions for urgent action in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. Members noted how Social Prescribing Service was already linked with and referring to Holme Farm.

Officers agreed to provide figures relating to the number of Handyperson referrals.

The Committee thanked the business centre's staff for their achievements.

95 **Sportability 2022**

The Committee received a report on the 6th annual Sportability event which took place in March 2022, hosted for free by Royal Holloway University of London, working in partnership with the Council and key stakeholders including Enabled Not Disabled.

The Sportability Festival promoted inclusivity and participation by young people with disabilities in a variety of sports. Taster sessions were held over the course of a day, staffed by volunteers from local clubs and other organisations. Once interested in a particular activity it was hoped the young people would go on to take up the sport locally at weekly sessions.

In terms of funding, Members noted a modest budget of £1,000 covered the cost of hiring wheelchairs, providing refreshments, certificates, medals and information booklets listing a range of sports and other physical activities available in the borough. Officers were keen to strengthen the pathways to additional funding for local clubs for greater delivery and access to equipment.

Officers were responsive to feedback and it was agreed that if the festival could be held over two days, resources permitting, more young people could take part (76 registered in 2022) and sessions could be spaced out so it was less tiring for participants and volunteers.

The Committee agreed that the main venue of Royal Holloway was an ideal location. It was also discussed where else could be utilised such as venues with a swimming pool, or maybe a cluster of schools in the south of the borough. Officers welcomed the suggestion to consider workshops in local schools as a way of expanding and increasing accessibility.

The Committee welcomed events such as these which supported the health and wellbeing agenda and which gave social value to the community.

96 **North West Surrey Alliance Funding Report**

The Committee's approval was sought to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to approve recruitment of staff and procurement of matters relating to an extensive list of projects under the North West Surrey Alliance. This was on the basis of no cost to the Council, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Officers set out the background history of the Alliance, initially formed in 2019 as the Integrated Care Partnership. The Council had been an important part of the Alliance since that time, representing the 4 north west Surrey local authorities and working alongside the NHS Surrey Heartlands Clinical Commissioning Group, Ashford and St Peter's Hospital, CSH Surrey, Primary Care, Surrey and Borders NHS Trust, Surrey County Council and Woking and Sam Beare Hospice.

One of the Alliance's key priorities was preventing ill health and taking a pro-active approach to prevention and early intervention. Thereunder sat 6 key themes for service development. These were Discharge support/support after a period of ill health, Prevention and wellbeing, supporting the most vulnerable, utilising new technology, Service accessibility and Comprehensive evaluation, the latter being delivered in partnership with Royal Holloway University of London.

In terms of funding, non recurrent funding of up to £2m was available in 2022/2023.

Partners had produced an agreed list of projects, 5 of which were specific to Runnymede. One of these had been allocated £132k; this was to help delivery of the first year of the action plan attached to the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This was due to be approved by Corporate Management Committee in July 2022.

Another key project being led by Runnymede, for which funding of £80k had been allocated was looking at the value of Borough Services to the health economy in north west Surrey. Runnymede was also receiving funding to employ a HomeSafe Plus Co-ordinator as a two year post.

Elsewhere, Woking would be leading on a pilot to introduce Hoarding Officers to create a multi-agency approach to supporting residents, a trial of new technology within extra care Sheltered Housing facilities and the employment of an additional two Borough Discharge Support Officers. Other collective pilots included a wrap around discharge service of support to residents at home and across Surrey supporting the most vulnerable.

It was important to note that Englefield Green came under East Berkshire. Officers were exploring opportunities to work with them and Frimley Integrated Care Service, noting that Englefield Green was among the most deprived areas in the South East.

Members were fully in support of the projects and their delivery through public sector partners, health bodies and other organisations including charities and the voluntary sector.

The Committee agreed that to have the flexibility needed to deliver projects with opportunities arising at short notice and identifying suitable bodies to take those projects forward it was sensible to delegate authority to the Chief Executive

RESOLVED that –

authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to approve the recruitment of staff and procurement of matters relating to projects under the North West Surrey Funding Alliance, on the basis there is no cost to the Council, following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee

97 **Disabled Facilities Grant Update**

The Committee received a report providing an update on the Home Improvement Agency and the work it undertook to utilise the annual Disabled Facilities Grant received by the Council via the Better Care Fund.

The HIA operated, as required, in line with the Council's Assistance Policy which was reviewed and approved in 2019 and included the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 and which involved the adoption of a Private Sector renewal Strategy.

Members noted that the Home Improvement Agency (HIA), awarded grants to eligible residents to enable them to live independently at home, whether in privately rented or Housing Association accommodation. The HIA also co-ordinated the Handyperson Service, provided assistance and advice to residents from a budget of £874,000 in 2022/2023. Officers agreed to confirm the funding from central Government for 2023/2024, when received.

Officers reported that the capacity of the team had increased from 20 to 30 hours of administration, and 9 hours of casual case worker resource to 83 hours of a permanent resource. As a result good progress was being made to clear the backlog of enquiries and applications that had built up in the pandemic. This would be improved with the recruitment of a Manager for the team and a full time Surveyor, which hitherto was difficult to recruit. This would create a team of five who would be in a stronger position to meet demand. Officers advised that since January 2022, 54 applications from 2019 to 2021 had been

reviewed and progressed. The team was now focussing on the 111 open cases from April 2021 onwards and had managed to cut the waiting time for applications from 6 to 9 months to 4 to 6 months.

The Committee was informed that the team faced challenges. These included access to surveyor resources, the cost increases for materials and labour, access to contractors to undertake works and the availability of equipment from suppliers. In order to address the shortage of contractors Officers had been granted a time-limited waiver in July 2021 which was in the process of being re-applied for.

Members agreed that if an in-house Surveyor could not be recruited, noting the current level of support received which was much appreciated by the team, it would be sensible to engage a consultancy agency specialising in this area of work.

With regard to increased costs, Officers had found that the current non means- tested pot of £2,500 was insufficient to complete a number of minor works. Members were content therefore to approve that the non means-tested threshold for small grant applications should increase to £5,000 and the Dementia funding pot should also increase to £5,000. The funding to support timely hospital discharge would remain at £7,500. Officers would continue to monitor resources and how best they could be allocated, reporting back to the Committee if it became necessary to increase them.

Members were impressed with the HIA and asked Officers to consider whether expansion of the Handyperson Service (currently 2 days per week) was feasible. For example, increasing the service to 5 days and to other areas such as Gardening and other paid for services and how that could be delivered. This would be a subject for discussion with Housing Officers including the possibility of making the service available to Council tenants.

Officers were also asked to consider a promotion plan and explore links with Runnymede Access Liaison Group (RALG), and Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne. In respect of the award scheme hosted by RALG, it was suggested the Council could nominate contractors undertaking work for the HIA for the 'RALG Shield', to recognise the achievement by a Group or Service in serving the needs of Disabled People.

Officers agreed to consider a revision to the policy in respect of Council Tax Support as suggested at the meeting and bring any proposed amendments to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that –

- i) in the event of recruitment for an HIA Surveyor post being unsuccessful, the Council procures and engages a specialist consultant, to support with the procurement of works, funded by the Disabled Facilities Grant be approved; and**
- ii) the increase of the non means-tested threshold for small grant applications, from £2,500 to £5,000, be approved, in response to increased costs experienced.**

98 Appointments to Community Services related bodies

The Committee determined the following annual appointments to Leisure related bodies.

In doing so it was noted that the Corporate Head of Community Services could, in theory, attend meetings of the Cabrera Trust Management Committee until the vacancy for the new post of Open Spaces and Community Development Manager could be filled. However, Members were advised that it was more relevant that the Interim Open Spaces Manager attended these meetings.

RESOLVED that –

- i) The Corporate Head of Financial Services and Open Spaces and Community Development Manager (when appointed) serve on the Cabrera Trust Management Committee for 2022/2023;**
- ii) Councillors D Cotty and M Nuti be re-appointed to serve on the Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group for 2022/2023;**
- iii) Councillor M Harnden be re-appointed to serve as the Council's Older Persons Champion for 2022/2023; and**
- iv) Councillors T Gracey, C Howorth and S Walsh be appointed to serve on the Community Services Partnership Board with Surrey Heath for 2022/2023**

99 Community Services Sub-Group Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of Cabrera Trust Management Committee held on 6 January 2022, as attached at Appendix 'A', and those of the Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group held on 1 March 2022, as attached at Appendix 'B' were received and noted.

100 Safer Runnymede Resources

By resolution of the Committee the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee's approval was sought to increase the staffing establishment in order to deliver Safer Runnymede's service including contracts with new partners, the revenue from which would fund the additional cost in the sum reported.

Officers reported good progress with finalising the contract with Rushmoor and Hart Borough Councils as approved by the Committee in March 2021. However, in order to strengthen the Council's position and be able to attract new business, Officers stated a need for additional staffing. This would give rise to further opportunities including work towards the goal of being the County lead on a Safer Surrey model for CCTV. Members welcomed the prospect of new partners as identified in the report and discussed at the meeting.

Officers advised they would review staffing resources at the end of the three year period, being the initial period additional staff would be employed for. As a result of the discussion about accommodation for the team this would happen earlier if necessary. Costed options would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

Safer Runnymede was much valued by the Committee, and the public. Members considered that the cost of increasing the establishment was far outweighed by the benefits that could be realised both now and in the future.

Officers were asked to arrange the annual tour of Safer Runnymede for Members of the Committee, who were encouraged to attend to gain an insight into the operation and its links to other services.

Officers to confirm the latest position with regard to the Highways Electrical Registration Scheme in respect of Christmas Lights being installed by the Depot including new units in Egham. It was also noted that the CCTV replacement programme included a particular unit identified at the meeting and this was in hand.

RESOLVED that –

Corporate Management Committee be recommended to approve the recruitment of 1.5 Full-time CCTV operators, at a cost per annum as reported for three years initially, funded from revenues associated with providing CCTV monitoring services to the Councils mentioned in the report.

101 **Kings Lane Bike Track Update**

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee received an update on projects to make improvements at Kings Lane Open Space in Englefield Green, part funded by Section 106 monies which had to be realised by 2025.

A new project team had met to discuss options and it was agreed that it would be prudent to conduct further research and consultation with young people and other stakeholders, including liaison with local Ward Councillors in the development of any future projects. Expertise would be drawn across the Council as and when needed to move the project forward.

Officers confirmed that all options including those already put forward would be discussed as possible projects with full consideration given to any practical, environmental and equalities issues as well as resolving any outstanding issues with regard to the wider use of Kings Lane Open Space and providing diversionary activities to avoid anti-social behaviour.

Officers were requested to consider future management arrangements for Kings Lane Open Space in consultation with colleagues in Legal and Assets and Regeneration. This could reveal additional sources of funding depending on the vision for the site. Members urged Officers to be inventive and take a long term view rather than focussing on the more traditional models of delivery.

The Committee was supportive of the proposed approach and looked forward to receiving an update in due course.

RESOLVED that –

the future approach to looking at development opportunities at Kings Lane, as described in the report, be approved.

Appendix A

Appendix B

(The meeting ended at 9.38 pm.)

Chairman

Runnymede Borough Council

CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

6 January 2022 at 2.30pm via MS Teams

Members of the Committee present: Councillors C Howorth (Chairman), J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), and Mr D Williams (Honorary Secretary)

Mr P French (Corporate Head of Finance) attended on behalf of the Honorary Treasurer Ms A Fahey

The following attended in an advisory capacity;

Mr M Godfrey (Parks and Arboriculture Manager), Mr S Woods (Senior Green Space Officer), Mr B Miller (Green Spaces Officer)

Honorary Wardens: Mrs H Lane, Mr P Beesley and Mr P Grobien

ACTION

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 September 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor D Coen, Ms A Fahey and Mr T Ashby

3. Honorary Wardens

The Committee was advised that Mr Andrew Saunders had resigned from his role as Honorary Warden. The Committee wished to record their thanks to Andrew who had been involved in the Trust land for over 30 years and had provided valuable input. The Committee requested that the Head of Green Spaces write a thank you letter to Andrew to express the Committees thanks and appreciation for all Andrews work.

Chris
Dulley

The Committee discussed the need to find a replacement Honorary Warden. It was hoped that the volunteers group may have someone who would be interested in taking on the role. Mr Beesley would liaise with Chris Dulley in this regard.

Mr P
Beesley/
Chris
Dulley

4. Actions taken since the last meeting

The Committee was informed on various actions taken since the last meeting

Footbridge repair

One of the treads on the eastern footbridge had been replaced as it had been damaged beyond repair.

Treehouse and den removal

Officers had been alerted to the presence of an unauthorised treehouse and den structure by volunteer warden, Mr Grobien. The unauthorised structures were safely dismantled and removed from the site. As the location was fairly inaccessible and off the beaten track Officers were very grateful for the report as it may have been some time before it came to light otherwise.

Boardwalks

Boardwalks and bridges had been regularly swept during the leaf fall season to try and minimise slippage on the surfaces

Ditches

At the last meeting Officers were asked to confirm that ditch clearance works had taken place next to the town path leading down from the station towards the small bridge over the Bourne. The purpose of the work was to try and prevent overspilling from the ditch on to the town path during periods of heavy rain. The Committee was advised the work had been completed in August.

Forest School

Due to the pandemic activities had not re-started. The Forest School leader, believed families had used the woods more of their own accord during Covid. It had, however, been difficult to plan for official Forest School sessions due to fears of spreading the virus. She was hopeful that 2022 would see a return to the after-school clubs that had been running so successfully prior to 2020.

Tree Works

An order had recently been issued to fell two Alders to the rear of 28 Cabrera Avenue following an inspection showed them to have serious defects. This work had now been completed.

Litter

At the AGM in September, it was agreed that Officers would report back to the Committee on the levels of litter. Since that meeting it had not been necessary to submit any requests to the Council's Streetcare team for clearance of litter on site for either the Cabrera Trust Riverside Walk or Cabrera Avenue recreation ground. Monthly inspections had not flagged excessive litter on the site. Green Space Officers were expected, as part of the site inspection, to carry out a litter pick as necessary.

Officers were asked if the issue of brambles and nettles going through the wire fencing into the Preschool had been resolved. Officers present did not have this information but would ascertain this from Chris Dulley (Assistant Head of Green Space) when he returned from leave. Officers would then advise the Committee via email.

Matthew
Godfrey/
Chris
Dulley

5. **Tree Management**

The Committee's view was sought on undertaking woodland management work on the site.

Officers advised the Committee that a management plan had been written for the Cabrera woodland in 2001. The purpose of the plan was to maintain the woodland as a marshland and to preserve the species found within in it. Wetlands such as this provided habitat for species that were unlikely to thrive elsewhere and were becoming increasingly rare.

Within the management plan six operation objectives were set:

- To maintain species variety
- To maintain woodland vegetation
- To maintain existing water table and raise it where feasible and desirable
- To keep some areas remote and wild
- To maintain safe access to some of the features of the site
- To open up glades along the riverbank

To date the works carried out within the woodland were predominantly undertaken by volunteer groups and contractors. Work undertaken included control of invasive species, maintaining and improving access, way marking, maps and information.

One outstanding objective of the management plan was the re-coppicing of Hazel, Alder, and other species along the riverbank, this would encourage the re-establishment of understorey species and improve the riverbank. It was understood that there was some re-coppicing work carried out in the early 2000's but none since. Mrs Lane reported that previous re-coppicing work had been very successful and was very beneficial to the flora on the site. The proposed work would also protect the habitat and biodiversity of the area. Officers reported that if the trees were left when the trees reached maturity some ongoing maintenance work would be required.

Whilst the Committee supported the proposed work, given the Trust's financial position at this time, they did not feel they could currently commit to a long-term program of re-coppicing. It was therefore suggested that a budget for a one-year block be agreed. This would enable a small amount of the work to be done and thereby give the Friends Group once established an indication of the benefits of re-coppicing.

The Honorary Secretary suggested that there may be other external funding sources to the Council, including potentially the Your Fund Surrey grant scheme. He would arrange to meet separately with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to discuss.

Darren
Williams

RESOLVED that –

- i) A one-year program of re-coppicing be re-established along the banks of the river in order to create a diverse habitat in that area and;**
- ii) A budget of no more than £4,000 be set for the re-coppicing of the trees along the riverbank and:**
- iii) The Committee review the re-coppicing works on an annual basis**

6. Draft Annual Estimates for 2022/23

The Committee was asked to approve the probable budget for 2021/22 and the draft estimates for 2022/23.

Mr French reported that the day to day running costs of the site remained relatively static year on year with the biggest cost relating to the supervision of the site by Council staff.

It was estimated that an additional £10,000 would be required to be drawn down from the Trusts investment holdings in 2022/23 to offset the net costs of running and managing the site. Assuming the net cost of £10,000 continued, the Charifund investments would only last another 8-10 years as each withdrawal reduced the investment income available thus increasing the net cost of the service. However, it was worth noting that values of investments would go up and down in response to market fluctuations. This could potentially extend the lifespan of the investments if markets increased but equally values and investment income could fall. It was therefore crucial that the Friends group was established to assist with income generation.

It was noted that the estimates for 2022/23 did not include any budget for the re-coppicing works agreed in the previous item. Now that the decision to proceed with a one-year budget of £4,000 had been agreed, the estimates would be amended accordingly.

ACTION

RESOLVED that –

The probable budget for 2021/22 and draft estimates for 2022/23 be approved

Paul French

7. Any other business

The Committee discussed when the best time was to launch the Friends Group. It was felt that Spring/Summer was the most appropriate time of year but given the economic effects of the pandemic whether this year was viable or whether to wait another year. It was agreed that the most sensible approach would be to wait until March this year to decide. Officers would liaise with Phillip Beesley at that time to discuss.

Mr Beesley/
Chris Dulley

It was also suggested that if the Friends Group went ahead that the Launch Meeting was combined with the AGM. However, as the AGM was now held in the Civic Centre, it would be beneficial for any combined meeting to be held in the evening this year in Virginia Water in order to recruit local people. It was noted that the Virginia Water Community Hall had previously offered the Friends Group complimentary use of their hall.

Councillor Hulley suggested the Committee having a table/stall at the Jumble Trail being held in May. This event was being held in the Memorial Gardens and would be an opportunity to raise the profile of the trust land and possibly get people to sign up to the Friends Group. Councillor Hulley would raise this with the organiser and advise Officers accordingly.

Cllr J Hulley

The Honorary Secretary suggested there may be grant funding opportunities available to the trust which should also be considered. He would include Cabrera Trust in future discussions with the Council's new bid writing Officer.

Darren Williams

As the Honorary Secretary was new to the role and not familiar with the trust land he would arrange to visit along with Councillors and Honorary Wardens to familiarise himself with the area.

Darren Williams

The Committee noted the importance of getting the Friends Group established along with any other grants/donations.

Mr Beesley reported that the Neighbourhood Planning Group Committee had been liaising with him regarding the trust land. The land was now 'flagged up' as part of the neighbourhood.

A wildflower expert had offered to do a walk on the trust land in the Spring. Mr Beesley would liaise with Chris Dulley when this had been arranged. Councillors would also be invited to attend.

Mr Beesley

ACTION

Mr Beesley would liaise with Green Space Officers regarding the volunteer groups activities for the forthcoming year

Mr
Beesley

8. **Dates for meetings in 2022/2023**

The AGM and the July meeting of the Cabrera Trust Management Committee is scheduled to be held on **Thursday 14 July 2022 at 2.30pm.**
(Subject to change)

The January 2023 meeting is scheduled to be held on **Thursday 5 January 2023 at 2.30pm.**

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 3.27 pm)

Runnymede Borough Council

Chertsey Meads Management Liaison Group

Tuesday, 1 March 2022 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillor D Cotty (Chairman), Councillor M Nuti, V Baldwin, R Deacock, G Drake, K Drury, N Johnson, H Lane, C Longman D Mead, M Nichols, B Phillips, M Ray and T A Stevens

Members of the Committee absent: J Denton, I Girvan, F Harmer, J Hearne, G James, C Noakes, J O'Gorman and D Turner

Advisors Present: Mr C Dulley and Ms J Harper

1 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Liaison Group held on 31 August 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Isobel Girvan, Fran Harmer, Jane Hearne, Cynthia Noakes and Jim O'Gorman.

3 **Membership of the Management Liaison Group**

The Group welcomed new member, Mrs Valerie Baldwin, who had been appointed as a residents' representative. At the last meeting it had been agreed to go out on a recruitment drive to attract new members. This was done via social media, posters on site and on display at the Council Offices, and a press release.

The response had been very good, resulting in 10 people coming forward for 5 vacancies. The Group considered all the nominations and it was agreed to make the following appointments:

Ms Sarah Hall – Local Horse Riders Representative
Mr Toby Athersuch – Local Dog Walkers Representative

There were other volunteers who the Group wanted to appoint which would necessitate amendments to the Group's Constitution which could be done under delegated authority. It was suggested that a member of the Conservation Volunteers be changed to a person with an active interest in conservation, and to amend a member of the Environment Agency to a person with an active interest in the Environment as neither organisation had appointed or attended any meetings for some years. This would accommodate two of the volunteers with relevant experience and expertise in these areas, Mr J Alexander and Mr P Bickford.

There was also a vacancy for a member of Surrey Bird Club. [After the meeting they were approached to see if they had a replacement for Hugh Evans, who had retired, and if not to suggest that the definition be widened to a person with a love of nature, as this would accommodate another of the potential members].

It was agreed to follow this up with an email to Group Members confirming the details and to contact the other people thanking them for their interest and to put them on a waiting list and invite them to events such as the litter picks.

4 **Update on Actions from the Last Meeting**

The Group was provided with updates on the following five topics since the last meeting:

Moorings – To date the overstaying moorer, despite indications that he would move on, had not. Officers would continue their efforts in this regard and an update would be provided in due course.

SANGs Leaflets – Officers confirmed that the vandalised dispenser would be replaced and replenished accordingly.

UK Power Networks (UKPN) Proposal – The Group was advised that colleagues in Legal Services were waiting for some technical information from the design engineer, so as to be able to conclude negotiations on the wayleave for a new power cable to be installed at Dumpsey Stump. It was understood that it might impact on the Esso Pipeline plans and UKPN had been advised to contact them to discuss further and prior to the engineer's next site visit to review all elements of the scheme before proceeding. The latest position would be taken forward to the next meeting.

Bridge Repairs – The Group was pleased to note that progress had been made with Surrey County Council's Rights of Way Officer. A meeting on-site had taken place and the County Council had made contact with the landowner. Replacement railings could be installed at no cost. It was advised that the original railings were to prevent aircraft rather than pedestrians from falling in the river.

Boardwalk Extension – Officers were thanked for the extension to the boardwalk. It was confirmed that it deliberately fell short of the road edge. It was agreed to look at installing some hard standing, and cutting the reeds to improve sightlines. Warning signage was already in place on the back of the existing sleepers.

5 **Management and Maintenance**

The Group reviewed the management and maintenance issues discussed at the meeting with reference to the latest copy of the Management Plan.

Height Barrier – The Group agreed that since the new barrier had been installed there had been no reported failures. However, Safer Runnymede did sometimes have difficulty when CCTV coverage was interrupted. For safety reasons, they were instructed to leave the barrier open at these times. It was reported that owing to perhaps not understanding how the barrier works that some users had difficulty with it.

SANG Projects – The Group was pleased with the progress made with a number of projects funded by SANG monies. These included new finger posts, various new signage, repainting of picnic benches, road markings and tarmacking of the unofficial unsurfaced passing place. Officers agreed to confirm whether the more robust signs about BBQs were fire proof. Officers confirmed they had also gained authority to address drainage problems in the second car park with a new surface, bee bumps and a shingle trench. A new lockable gate would be installed under the barrier to discourage anti-social behaviour caused by dangerous driving in the car park. It was asked whether CCTV could be installed as an extra measure to combat anti-social behaviour. The group agreed this would be welcomed, resources permitting.

Memorial Benches – The second of two new benches was due to be installed shortly near the beach area.

Tree Funding – The Group was pleased that the long awaited tree screen consisting of some 1,200 young trees had been planted. Mr Phillips was thanked for his contribution

and he confirmed that the trees seemed to be in good shape. The Council's Tree Officer in Green Space was thanked for his work to get funding for this from Surrey County Council's Treescapes Fund.

Esso Pipeline Proposal – The Group was advised that formal confirmation of entry on to the site had not yet been received. However, informal conversations with Esso's agents indicated that work was likely to be carried out later in 2022. Members were directed towards the official pipeline website for the current plan. [Southampton to London Pipeline Project \(slpproject.co.uk\)](http://slpproject.co.uk)

Neospora – The Group was very sorry to hear that a virus affecting cattle had been found by the farmer who took the hay cut from the Meads. The virus resulted in livestock being infected by neosporosis which could cause a pregnant cow to abort or produce unviable calves being born. This serious virus was caused by dogs who were a definitive host of the parasite. The high levels of dog excrement on the Meads was a real problem. Therefore, the Council and Natural England had given the farmer permission to chain-harrow the least botanically sensitive areas of the Meads (where the Chertsey Show was held) to try and disperse the excrement earlier in the season and reduce the risk of further infection. Members agreed that information posters alerting dog owners to the problem was necessary to try and change behaviours and stop people allowing their dogs to foul the Meads. In addition, it was confirmed that the known commercial dog walkers would be written to. The Group noted that if hay continued to be so contaminated that the farmer would need to be paid to dispose of hay that was unusable.

6 Annual Work Programme

The Group reviewed progress with the Annual Work Programme which had been updated to reflect work that had or had not been completed as well as future works.

Some of the high priority areas included the annual mowing regime on the grassland, monitoring and maintenance of the reed bed, removal of invasive species such as privet, clearing vegetation around the Bourne, managing public use of the Meads through litter clearance and regular bin emptying, and habitat monitoring in liaison with Surrey Wildlife Trust.

The maintenance of the reed beds was an outstanding issue which members sought to prioritise and which would be discussed with the farmer that took the annual hay cut. It was agreed that the expanse on the opposite side of the road to the boardwalk should be tackled, but that weather conditions had prevented a proper cut back and re-introducing cattle grazing was currently too problematic. Opening up the western pond was suggested as another area in need of attention.

7 Events

The Chertsey Show would be taking place, subject to the usual permissions being in place on 10 – 11 August 2022. Much also depended on when the Esso Pipeline work started and how it might affect the show. However, the Chertsey Show's Organisers had to date little success with obtaining a definite answer. It was understood that work had commenced in Spelthorne and Chobham. Officers confirmed that the overflow car park would not be possible this year.

A date for the summer site visit would be advised once Dr Denton was able to confirm a date to lead an invertebrates walk.

Dates of Sunday 10 April 2022 (to coincide with the Great British Tidy) and Sunday 16 October 2022 were agreed for the litter picks. Both would be between 10am and 12 noon meeting in the first and second car parks respectively and including the children's play area

which Officers had been assessing for repainting of some of the equipment.

8 **Any other Business**

The recent storms had caused damage and more debris in the Bourne but it was agreed that in recent months the amount of litter on site had reduced and there were more visitors since Covid 19. However, there was a worrying report of people on social media suggesting it might be an idea to scatter wild flower seeds at the Meads which the Group agreed was definitely not to be encouraged and could affect the site badly.

An issue regarding a failed conifer on the border between Hamm Court and the Meads was discussed. A temporary BT line being installed would be brought to the attention of the Tree Officer in Green Space. [After the meeting, Officers confirmed that the BT engineers had agreed to cut a hole through the foliage to enable easy installation of the new cable.]

It was asked whether any of the tree screen could be registered for the Jubilee. Officers confirmed that they had been with Surrey County Council.

It was confirmed that SANGs monies was held centrally but that Chertsey Meads had benefited the most so far. Cattle grazing could be looked at in this regard in the future.

Monitoring the site for Otters and bats was a project to be undertaken.

The Group was thanked for their tribute to Dennis Wheeler, a much loved and never forgotten individual, whose love of the Meads and local knowledge was highly valued.

9 **Dates of Future Meetings**

The dates of future meetings were noted: Tuesday 6 September 2022 and Tuesday 28 February 2023, to be held at the Civic Centre in Addlestone.

(The meeting ended at 8.32 pm.)

Chairman