

Runnymede Borough Council

Cabrera Trust Management Committee

Thursday, 5 January 2023 at 2.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors C Howorth (Chairman) and J Hulley (Vice-Chairman), and Mr P Beesley.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor D Coen, and T Ashby, P Grobien and H Lane.

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 were signed and confirmed as a correct record

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor D Coen, Mr P Grobien, Mr T Ashby and Mrs H Lane.

3 Actions since the last meeting

The Committee was updated on various actions which had taken place since the last meeting.

- Graffiti wipes had been deployed to volunteer wardens.
- Management of the Trust had been discussed at the annual walk and the importance of preserving the habitat was highlighted.
- Boundary inspections would be taking place this spring/summer.
- The tree officer was obtaining quotes for coppicing work.
- The new development lead for parks and open spaces would commence employment with the council at the end of January. It was recommended that he engaged with the wardens as part of his induction, which was encouraged by the committee.
- Furthermore, establishing relationships with organisations such as Wisley and the Woodland Trust was encouraged, although it was acknowledged that the Cabrera Riverside was a wild area that could not be cultivated.

4 Incursion associated with Development Site Still Waters adjacent to Riverside Walk

Officers provided the Committee with an update on the incursion at the Riverside Walk which Members had been informed of on 18 November 2022.

The development site, Still Waters had imported a considerable amount of material which had fallen onto the Riverside Walk and blocked the ditch.

A method statement had been received from the developer, which had been shared with the Environment Agency, which pledged that the material would be removed. Officers would acknowledge receipt and ask for its removal by an appropriate date prior to legal advice being sought.

ACTION – Suzanne Murphy to follow up with developer to clarify when material would be removed.

However there was concern that the developer was claiming that a pond half owned by the Trust was entirely owned by him, therefore when the boundary investigations were taking

place it was strongly encouraged to clarify ownership of this area at an early stage.

ACTION – Suzanne Murphy to confirm to colleagues when the material had been cleared.

There was further concern with the impact of any potential contaminated land entering the ground water and damaging the habitat.

It was agreed that prior to any walkaround to establish boundaries that all properties that surround the site are given written notice to give them the opportunity to remove any material, and if there was still evidence of any material during the walkaround then a further letter sent to the properties concerned requesting its removal. Only failure to act after the second letter would prompt officers to seek legal action.

Mr Beesley offered the assistance of volunteers with the walkaround, which would take place in spring/summer when the ground was firmer.

It was agreed to establish when the previous walkaround took place due to concerns about potential claims on the land should the ten year legal time limit for dealing with such matters be close to expiring.

ACTION – Helen Clark to establish when the last walkaround took place to establish boundary ownership.

5 **Honorary Warden**

The Committee was advised that an expression of interest for the role of Honorary Warden had been received by Mrs Myra Owen.

Mrs Owen regularly walked her dog on the Trust land and had done so for the past 10 years. Ms Owen had reported fallen trees and other issues during that time.

Mrs Owen was also involved in the Work Party run by Mrs Thomas and had previously attended Cabrera Trust AGMs.

The Committee felt Mrs Owen would be an excellent Honorary Warden and therefore agreed her appointment to the role.

Resolved that:

Mrs Owen be appointed as Honorary Warden on the Committee with immediate effect and Officers to advise Mrs Owen accordingly.

6 **Draft Annual Estimates**

The Committee was asked to approve the probable budget for 2022/23 and draft estimates for 2023/24 under this Committee's remit.

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

The honorary treasurer would provide a breakdown on spend, including a coppicing heading, to circulate with the minutes.

Resolved that –

The probable budget for 2022/23 and draft estimates for 2023/24 was approved.

7 **Any other business**

1) Mr Beesley reported that the inaugural meeting of the 'Friends of Cabrera Trust' group would be taking place on the evening of Friday 10 March at the community centre. An article would be placed in the upcoming Virginia Water magazine.

The artwork for posters to distribute to local residents had been designed, and funds from the committee were sought for printing costs. Mr Beesley would provide further information on volume of copies and estimate of costs, however it was anticipated the funding could be obtained from the Community Services budget.

ACTION – Mr Beesley to follow up with further information on printing leaflets with a view to utilising Community Services budget.

A preliminary meeting would be arranged in advance of the Friends meeting to discuss practical help, along with items such as the constitution and agenda for the first meeting.

It was also suggested to reach out to Holloway University following the recent MoU signed between the university and council, to see if they can provide any further assistance in terms of funding of volunteering.

2) Mr Beesley would provide open spaces team further information about a recently coppiced tree to try and establish whether permission had been provided.

3) Following a recent residents' meeting there had been strong support for CCTV and lighting along the path outside Virginia Water station, which was very close to Trust land. It was believed that work focussed solely on the path would not have an impact on wildlife within the Trust.

It had also been proposed as part of the neighbourhood plan to turn part of that path into a cycleway, however the committee impressed that railway rather than Trust land should be utilised as part of the proposals.

4) Thanks were provided to Matthew Godfrey, the Council's Parks and Arboriculture Manager, for his prompt action in dealing with the clearance of overgrowth following the previous inspection. Cllrs Howorth and Hulley added their thanks to the volunteers for their ongoing work and support.

8 **Dates of future meetings**

The Committee noted that the AGM and July meeting of the Cabrera Trust Management Committee was scheduled to be held in the Committee Room at the Civic Centre on Thursday 13 July at 2.30pm.

The January 2024 meeting was scheduled to be held on Thursday 4th January at 2.30pm at the Civic Centre.

(The meeting ended at 3.30 pm.)

Chairman