

MINUTES of the MEETING of the HERITAGE SUB-COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE, on WEDNESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2023 at 11.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Lesley Howes – Chairman
Councillor Ann Duke – Vice-Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross (substituting for Councillor Richard Lees)
Councillor Peter Harman

ALSO PRESENT: Lucy Sawyer-Boyd – North West Kent Country Partnership (NWKCP)
Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO
Natalie Shoulder – Administration Assistant

ABSENT: Councillor Claire Pearce

131/23-24. **ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

132/23-24. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Anita Barham, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Richard Lees, due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reasons for absence, for the Councillor(s) listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

133/23-24. **SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor Lorna Cross substituted for Councillor Richard Lees.

134/23-24. **TO DECLARE INTERESTS IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were none.

The Chairman gave the opportunity for the meeting to be adjourned at this point to accept questions from the public.

135/23-24. **URGENT ITEMS / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.**

There were none.

136/23-24. **TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2020.**

Recommended: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2020, be confirmed and signed as a true record.

137/23-24. **HERITAGE PARK IMPROVEMENTS.**

Members considered the report that was issued with the Agenda.

It was confirmed that the trail cameras being considered for the site were designed to be as tamper proof as possible, and that opportunities were in place for the images created from the cameras to be both shared with the wider public, and logged for research purposes with resources such as the Citizens Science Platform.

Members were made aware that initial discussions had been held on possible locations for interpretation within the site. It was confirmed that the design and finalised location plan would be created in consultation with the Town Council. Temporary signage would be installed on site informing/updating the public of what works were being undertaken.

A discussion was held on how community volunteers could be engaged, and it was confirmed that publicity would be made available during 2024 to promote activities for the public to participate in alongside the volunteers from NWKCP.

Lucy Sawyer-Boyd from NWKCP updated the meeting that as well as the corporate volunteer date set for the 17 November 2023, an additional corporate event had been arranged for 24 October 2023, with Nat West Bank as the corporate partner. This event would involve meadow preparation works and grass clearance.

The proposed improvement works to the pond were hoped to be undertaken in the Autumn of 2023, but the contractor was still being engaged on a suitable initial water source for the pond once the lining work had taken place.

Recommended: That the work being done to implement the objectives set out in the Lower Thames Crossing funding award be noted.

138/23-24. **NATURAL ENGLAND – SWANSCOMBE SKULL SITE NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE (NNR) AND SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI) - VISUAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/LEASE.**

The Assistant Town Clerk/RFO verbally updated members that discussions were ongoing with Natural England to update the management plan for the NNR for the next 5-year period.

In addition, further guidance was being sought from Natural England on the process of seeking designation for the wider Swanscombe Heritage Park as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). The work to review both the management plan for the NNR and to create a wider management plan for the whole site, in partnership with NWKCP, would be integral to pursuing this status.

Recommended: That the update be noted.

There being no further business to transact, the meeting closed at 11.25 am.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)