

Minute of Meeting Clyde Muirshiel Joint Committee

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 05 June 2015	10:00	Barnbrock Farm, Clyde Muirshiel Park Headquarters, Barnbrock Farm, Kilbarchan, PA10 2PZ

PRESENT

Councillors Bibby, Caldwell, Andy Doig and Gilmour (Renfrewshire Council); Councillors Nelson and Wilson (Inverclyde Council); and Councillor Dickson (North Ayrshire Council).

CHAIR

Councillor Gilmour, Chairman.

IN ATTENDANCE

D Gatherer, Interim Regional Park Manager; J Arthur, Head of Service (Inverclyde Council); F Carlin, Head of Planning & Economic Development; D Forbes, Finance Manager; K Campbell, Assistant Chief Internal Auditor; M McKillop, Senior Auditor; D Low, Senior Committee Services Officer and K Druce, Assistant Committee Services Officer (all Renfrewshire Council).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Clerk intimated this was a standard item on the Agenda and asked members to indicate if there were any declarations of interest.

No declarations of interest were expressed.

ADDITIONAL ITEM

The Chairman intimated that there was an additional item of business which had not been included in the notice calling the meeting in relation to the State of the Park report which was referred to in the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 20 February, 2015. The Chairman being of the opinion that the item which was dealt with at item 2 below, was urgent, authorised its consideration.

1 MINUTE

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee held on 20 February, 2015. Councillor Gilmour suggested that the Minute be approved subject to the correction of a number of typographical errors.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved subject to the correction of a number of typographical errors.

2 STATE OF THE PARK REPORT

With reference to item 6 of the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 20 February, 2015, Councillor Andy Doig moved "that this Committee recognises the importance of the 'State of the Park' Report, and its potential areas of diversification. This Committee agrees that as part of considering the assets and resources of the Park that examination be given to the economic benefits of promoting Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park as a Retreat Centre for those of all faiths and none". This was agreed.

DECIDED: That this Committee recognises the importance of the 'State of the Park' Report, and its potential areas of diversification. This Committee agrees that as part of considering the assets and resources of the Park that examination be given to the economic benefits of promoting Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park as a Retreat Centre for those of all faiths and none.

3 UNAUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2014/15

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to the unaudited annual accounts for the Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority for 2014/15 which were attached to the report. The accounts for the year ended 31 March, 2015 had been completed and forwarded to Audit Scotland for audit. The accounts showed a deficit for the year of £21,541 against a budgeted deficit of £26,300 resulting in an underspend of £4,659.

DECIDED: That the annual accounts for the year ended 31 March, 2015 be noted and that the accounts be further presented to the Joint Committee on completion of the audit.

4 ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2014/15

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to the annual audit plan 2014/15 for the Joint Committee which outlined Audit Scotland's planned activities in their audit of the 2014/15 Financial Year.

DECIDED: That the annual audit plan 2014/15 be noted.

5 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to the Internal Audit Annual Report for the Park Authority 2014/15.

DECIDED: That the Internal Audit Annual Report 2014/15 be noted.

6 DEVELOPMENT OF YEAR LONG HEALTH WALKING PROGRAMME

There was submitted a report by the Interim Regional Park Manager relative to the proposed funding application to Awards for All in partnership with Renfrewshire Walking Network volunteers to develop a year-long walking programme for all abilities and ages.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the continued development of services within the Park be supported; and
- (b) That it be recognised that applying for funding and working in partnership with other organisations would provide more opportunities for service users, increase income and raise the park profile.

7 WINDOWS ON WILDLIFE PROJECT - UPDATE

There was submitted a report by the Interim Regional Park Manager relative to the completion and achievements of the two-year 'Windows on Wildlife' (WoW) project.

The report detailed the achievements of the project which was focussed on increasing participation and understanding of the park's natural heritage. Based at Castle Semple Country Park, the project used images of wildlife as its main theme for engaging audiences and footage of otters, badgers, deer, fox, rabbits and hares had been shown on social media.

Councillor Gilmour suggested that he write to the Project Officer engaged on the 'WoW' on behalf of the Joint Committee, expressing appreciation of her input to the project. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the achievements of the completed 'WoW' project be recognised and that in this regard the Convener write to the Project Officer engaged on the 'WoW', on behalf of the Joint Committee, expressing appreciation of her input to the project; and
- (b) That it be noted that although the project funding finished in September 2014 the Regional Park had continued the employment of the WoW Officer for four days a week.

8 TAG-N-TRACK PROJECT

There was submitted a report by the Interim Regional Park Manager relative to the Tag-n-Track project that aimed to improve environmental education by being able to follow satellite tagged birds in the classroom, engage people through social media, encourage volunteers and run training courses and wildlife events.

The report intimated that the Park Authority had made a successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to provide £66,100 for the project. A shortfall in resources as a result of the revised timetable for Leader funding applications would require the Park Authority to request additional monies to ensure the success of the Tag-n-Track project.

Councillor Gilmour proposed that consideration of this item be continued to a future meeting of the Joint Committee. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That consideration of this item be continued to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.

9 **PEDAL THE PARK EVENT**

There was submitted a report by the Interim Regional Park Manager relative to the success of the 'Pedal the Park' event 2015.

The report intimated that four rides had taken place: a '68km Sportive', 18km mountain bike ride, 12km hand bike time trial and a 4km family ride. A total of 185 people participated in these four events and cafe visitor numbers totalled 753, an increase of 200 on last year's numbers.

It was suggested that British Cycling be contacted with a view to attracting more high profile cycling events to the Regional Park. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the continued development of cycling infrastructure and activities be supported;
- (b) That the Park's continued efforts to increase income using the existing staff skill base within the Park and the continued growth of its reputation as a Centre of Excellence for land and water based accessible sport be recognised;
- (c) That the hosting of a 'Pedal the Park' 2016 be agreed; and
- (d) That the Interim Park Manager contact British Cycling with a view to attracting more high profile cycling events to the Regional Park.

10 **DEVELOPMENT OF SPINAL INJURY SCOTLAND PROGRAMME**

There was submitted a report by the Interim Regional Park Manager relative to the hosting of an accessible sport festival for Spinal Injury Scotland (SIS) on 19 August, 2015 which would necessitate the closure of the Castle Semple Visitor Centre for that day.

The report intimated that SIS had been awarded £10,000 in 2014 by Awards for All to run a 40 day activity programme at Castle Semple and it was hoped that the event would encourage the growth of the SIS programme and result in an annual festival.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the proposals detailed in the report be submitted; and
- (b) That the Park's continued efforts to increase income using the existing staff skill base within the Park and the continued growth of its reputation as a Centre of Excellence for land and water based accessible sport be recognised.

11 SWAN 2 - FUNDING APPLICATION

There was submitted a report by the Interim Regional Park Manager relative to a successful bid to the Sports Lottery Active Places fund for the construction of a new pontoon and hoist at Castle Semple.

The report intimated that a total of up to £41,000 had been awarded for the project, which would commence in October 2015 and be ready for the 2016 season.

DECIDED:

- (a) That this project continue to be supported by the Park Authority;
- (b) That the progress in providing the infrastructure to widen the opportunities for water access at Castle Semple with the resultant opportunities to increase service and income be noted; and .
- (c) That the Interim Regional Park Manager make the necessary arrangements for the launch of this new facility.

12 QUARTERLY ABSENCE STATISTICS

There was submitted a report by the Interim Regional Park Manager relative to the Quarterly Absence statistics for the Park Authority.

The report advised of quarterly absence levels during the period 1 January to 22 March, 2015 and provided information relating to the absence statistics and reasons for absence.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the report and in particular the absence statistics for 1 January to 22 March, 2015 be noted; and
- (b) That it be noted that further regular reports on the Regional Park's absence statistics would be submitted to future meetings of the Joint Committee.

13 QUARTERLY HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Interim Regional Park Manager providing information on the quarterly health and safety monitoring for the period January to March 2015 which detailed accident statistics, management action and training. The report advised that there had been no RIDDOR reportable accidents involving members of Regional Park staff and that two members of staff and two members of the public sustained minor injuries from slips, trips and falls.

The report intimated that the reduction in staffing levels had resulted in employees becoming more focussed upon operational delivery and that there had been no update from the corporate landlord regarding the problem of water ingress at the Muirshiel Visitor Centre.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the health and safety monitoring report for the period January to March 2015 be noted;
- (b) That the impact of the reduction in capacity of the Senior Management Team on Health & Safety Processes within the Park be noted; and
- (c) That it be noted that there had been no update from the corporate landlord regarding the problem of water ingress at the Muirshiel Visitor Centre.

14 SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

Councillor Wilson referred to Supplementary Guidance being prepared by Inverclyde Council within the context of their Local Development Plan on renewable energy.

He referred to a plan that sought to provide a basis upon which proposals for wind farm and other forms of renewable energy developments would be considered which included areas of the Regional Park. Recognising the potential impact of development he suggested that the Interim Regional Park Manager be authorised to respond to the consultation. This was agreed.

Arising from discussion of this matter, Councillor Wilson referred to a public inquiry which would be convened in late 2015/early 2016 concerning a proposal to install wind turbines at Corlic Hill, Greenock. The planning application for this proposal had been considered and refused by Inverclyde Council and the applicants had lodged an appeal with the Scottish Government.

Councillor Wilson noted that the former Regional Park Manager had made a written representation in relation to the planning application and asked that an appropriate member of staff from the Regional Park should attend the public inquiry. It was noted that Inverclyde Council would lead the case in support of the decision to Refuse the application and if required would support the Park Officers as required albeit that this would be at no cost to the Park Authority. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the Interim Regional Park Manager be authorised to respond to the consultation on supplementary guidance on renewable energy;
- (b) That the Park Authority be represented by an appropriate member of the Regional Park Staff at the public inquiry into the planning application to erect wind turbines at Corlic Hill, Greenock; and
- (c) That it be noted that Inverclyde Council would lead the case in support of the decision to refuse the planning application and would provide the necessary support to the Park Officers at no cost to the Park Authority.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

That the next meeting be held on 11 September, 2015.