

Minute of Meeting Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee.

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 21 June 2019	11:30	Council Chamber (North Ayrshire), Cunninghame House, Irvine KA12 8EE,

Present

Councillor Andy Steel, Councillor Tom Begg and Councillor Bill Binks (all Renfrewshire Council); and Councillor David Wilson and Councillor Innes Nelson (both Inverclyde Council).

Chair

Councillor Steel, Chair, presided.

In Attendance

F Carswell, Interim Park Co-ordinator, F Carlin, Head of Planning and Housing Services, A MacArthur, Head of Finance, M McKillop, Senior Auditor, S Jones, Assistant Regeneration Manager and E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officer (all Renfrewshire Council); S Jamieson, Head of Regeneration and Planning (Inverclyde Council); and L Forsyth, Cultural Development Manager (North Ayrshire Council).

Apologies

Councillor Andy Doig (Renfrewshire Council) and Councillor Donald L Reid (North Ayrshire Council).

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 Minute of Joint Committee

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 15 February 2019.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 Minute of Consultative Forum

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Consultative Forum held on 15 February 2019.

DECIDED: That the Minute be noted.

3 Unaudited Annual Accounts 2018/19

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to the unaudited annual accounts for the Joint Committee 2018/19 which were appended to the report.

The report intimated that the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019 showed a deficit for the year of £2,276 against a budgeted breakeven position.

In accordance with the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, the unaudited accounts had only been signed by the Treasurer as proper officer. The audited accounts would be signed by the Convener and Lead Officer, as well as the Treasurer, in accordance with the regulations.

The Head of Finance, Renfrewshire Council, undertook to provide Councillor Binks with information in relation to the under recovery in sales, fees and charges relating to the decreased levels of income generated by the café and shop.

DECIDED:

(a) That the annual accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019 be noted and that the accounts be further presented to the Joint Committee on completion of the audit;

(b) That the Annual Governance Statement be approved; and

(c) That the Head of Finance, Renfrewshire Council, to provide Councillor Binks with information in relation to the under recovery in sales, fees and charges relating to the decreased levels of income generated by the café and shop.

4 Revised Revenue Estimates 2019/20 to 2020/21

Under reference to item 4 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Committee held on 15 February 2019 there was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to revised revenue estimates for 2019/20 and associated requisitions.

The report intimated that the annual revenue estimates 2019/20 had been approved at the meeting of this Joint Committee held on 15 February 2019. The Joint Committee further agreed that, owing to an ongoing service review and an associated voluntary redundancy exercise, revised revenue estimates would be presented to this meeting of the Joint Committee.

The general financial environment in which the Park Authority and constituent authorities operated continued to be characterised by cost and income pressures and the Park Authority would continue to seek operational savings and alternative income sources to ensure financial sustainability.

The requisition income available to the Park Authority had reduced in recent years, acknowledging the financial pressures that councils had been facing and also an increasingly commercial approach to the operations of the park. The budget agreed in February 2019 included a service redesign saving which was required in-year to balance forecast income and expenditure. The Interim Park Co-ordinator had now concluded the associated voluntary release exercise which underpinned the service review and expenditure forecasts had been revised taking account of the release dates of staff. It was anticipated that recurring savings of £140,000 would be achieved through the release of six members of staff, of which approximately £80,000 would be released in 2019/20.

The unaudited accounts outlined the level of working balances as £97,845 which would be carried forward into 2019/20 and represented 9.9% of the park's turnover. The minimum level of resources recommended by the Treasurer to mitigate financial risk was 8% of turnover, or an absolute figure of £75,000. The report proposed that £20,000 of reserves be used to fund one-off release costs with the balance of £48,761 being funded by constituent authorities and as per the financial principles previously agreed, Renfrewshire Council would pay £29,257; Inverclyde Council would pay £12,190; and North Ayrshire Council would pay £7,314.

The revised constituent authority requisitions for 2019/20 and the date of drawdown for the requisitions were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report and the indicative level of requisition for 2020/21 and 2021/22 had been increased in line with the assumed level of pay award.

DECIDED:

(a) That the revised revenue estimates for 2019/20, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, and the revised requisitions payable by each constituent authority, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;

(b) That the one-off contributions payable by each constituent authority in relation to the voluntary early release of park staff, as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of the report, be approved; and

(c) That the indicative estimates of costs for 2020/21 and 2021/22 be noted.

5 Internal Audit Annual Report 2018/19

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor, Renfrewshire Council, relative to the Internal Audit annual report on the Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority 2018/19.

The report intimated that the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards required that the Chief Auditor prepare an annual report on the internal audit activity's purpose, authority and responsibility as well as performance relative to its plan. The report must also provide an audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment of the audited body.

The annual report for the Park Authority was appended to the report and outlined the role of internal audit, the performance of the internal audit team and the main findings from the internal audit work undertaken in 2018/19 and contained an audit assurance statement.

DECIDED: That the Internal Audit annual report for 2018/19 be noted.

6 Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Governance Review - Update

There was submitted a report by the Head of Planning & Housing Services, Renfrewshire Council, providing an update on the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park governance review.

The report intimated that an initial review of the governance documents had identified several areas where existing processes and agreements were not sustainable; did not reflect best practice; and did not accord with the agreed Park Strategy and Action Plan. A process had been identified for amending the documents which complied with existing procedures and took cognisance of reporting requirements and consultation activity.

Initial revisions of the Minute of Agreement, Procedural Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegated Functions and Delegations to Officers had been drafted by Renfrewshire Council officers and shared with Inverclyde and North Ayrshire Council officers. Senior officers in those councils had indicated support for the principles of the proposed changes and would make resources available as required to facilitate the process.

It was noted that positive early discussions had taken place with Renfrewshire Council services to facilitate increased support to the park in the key areas of procurement, ICT and marketing. It was envisaged that the park would adopt Renfrewshire Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts in the short-term to realise operational and cost efficiencies.

Opportunities to re-align and integrate park services to existing Renfrewshire Council processes would be further explored and where advantageous, park functions would be migrated to Renfrewshire Council's in the short-term, within the scope afforded by the existing governance documents. Further collaboration would take place with Inverclyde and North Ayrshire Council officers and other key stakeholders to inform the detail of the propose governance amendments. Documents would be further developed by Renfrewshire Council officers with a subsequent draft being subject to a consultation process in summer 2019. A revised suite of proposed governance documents would be presented to the three Councils for consideration by their respective Policy Boards between September and December 2019 and thereafter to the Joint Committee for approval by March 2020.

DECIDED:

(a) That the progress made to date in revising the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park Minute of Agreement and supporting governance documents be noted; and

(b) That the key milestones of the review, in particular the intention to present a final version of all relevant governance documents for Joint Committee approval by the end of March 2020 be noted.

7 Quarterly Absence Statistics

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator relative to the quarterly absence statistics for the period 1 January to 24 March 2019.

The report provided information relating to the absence statistics and reasons for absence.

DECIDED:

(a) That the quarterly absence statistics for the period 1 January to 24 March 2019 be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that regular reports on absence statistics would be submitted to future meetings of the Joint Committee.

8 Quarterly Health and Safety Report

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator providing information on the quarterly health and safety monitoring for the period January to March 2019.

The report intimated that there had been no RIDDOR reportable accidents. It was noted that staff continued to work with Renfrewshire Council Health & Safety Officers to align its health and safety policies, plans and accident prevention programmes with those currently in use within Renfrewshire Council.

DECIDED: That it be noted that there had been no RIDDOR reportable accidents during the period.

9 Grant Award: 'Semple Stories' Project

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator relative to the award of grants of up to £19,700 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and £18,621.35 by Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde LEADER to the 'Semple Stories' Project, an oral history and interpretation project for the Lochwinnoch area.

The report intimated that the project would involve volunteers in the creation of interpretation material focussed on Castle Semple Country Park and Muirshiel Country Park, including interpretive boards, posts with audio recordings and website development; would improve the visitor experience and encourage repeat visits; develop interpretive trails to encourage interest in local walks and involve schools and youth groups to create an exhibition through photographs.

A temporary Project Officer would be recruited by Renfrewshire Council to deliver the project's objectives; ensure compliance with the funder's approved purposes; liaise with the Garnock Connections Landscape Initiative to allow information sharing; and identify potential opportunities for volunteers to receive training.

DECIDED:

(a) That the grant funding awarded to Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park to deliver the 'Semple Stories' Project be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that the 'Semple Stories' Project would be delivered in accordance with the grant funding.

10 Special Olympic Success

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator relative to the success of the Special Olympic GB Sailing Team at the recent World Games held in Abu Dhabi.

The report intimated that the Castle Semple Centre became an RYA Sailability Centre of Excellence in 2012 and was the only one in Scotland. The centre delivered mainstream and accessible outdoor activities for pre-booked groups throughout the year, annually hosting the Sailability and the Scottish Multi-class Regattas.

Two local sailors from the Special Olympics GB Sailing Team, Jamie Cairns and unified partner, Darren MacGregor, were awarded a bronze medal in the Division 2 fleet; Shannon McGhee and Laura Carrick were 4th in Division 3; and Lewis Nicolson sailing with Mick Kelly, from Riverbrae School, Linwood finished 5th.

The teams had shown great commitment having completed all their training over the last two years at Clyde Muirshiel with senior instructor and head coach, David Hill.

DECIDED: That the success of the Special Olympic GB Sailing team at the World Games held in Abu Dhabi and the assistance provided by the coaches and facilities of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park to support these activities be noted.

11 Castle Semple: Accessibility Improvements

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator relative to the proposed accessibility improvements adjacent to Castle Semple Visitor Centre.

The report intimated that Renfrewshire Council had identified an opportunity to enhance the quality of the key public area adjacent to Castle Semple Visitor Centre. Through focussed resurfacing works it would be possible to deliver significant accessibility improvements to the site and further the development of inclusive leisure activity.

DECIDED: That it be noted that Renfrewshire Council was progressing improvements to the area adjacent to Castle Semple Visitor Centre to improve water access.

12 Barnbrock Farm

There was submitted a report by the Interim Park Co-ordinator seeking agreement for Barnbrock Farm, the parks former headquarters, be to declared surplus to operational requirements.

The report intimated that Barnbrock Farm was located approximately 5km north of Lochwinnoch and sat adjacent to agricultural land and consisted of a farmhouse, offices, storage facilities and a former campsite. The site served as the park headquarters until 2016 when staff and services relocated to Castle Semple Visitor Centre.

At the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 20 February 2015 it was agreed that the assets and resources within the park be reviewed. A key outcome of this was to focus service accommodation and provision at Castle Semple Visitor Centre providing a more

accessible hub for staff and visitors. The Joint Committee also agreed to restrict the use of the campsite at Barnbrock Farm to organised groups only following a sustained period of operating at a loss and the campsite subsequently closed to all visitors in 2016.

The agricultural nature of the site and its buildings offered little scope for modernisation in line with evolving park services. The aging properties were in poor condition with repair and maintenance responsibilities being met by Renfrewshire Council as the owner.

DECIDED:

(a) That Barnbrock Farm and the 1.73ha of adjoining land be declared surplus to the park's operational requirements; and

(b) That Renfrewshire Council carry out the necessary processes to dispose of the site in line with the relevant legal, financial and procedural regulations.

13 Date of Next Meeting

DECIDED: That it be noted that the next meeting of the Joint Committee would be held at 11.30 am on 6 September 2019 in the offices of Inverclyde Council.