

Minute of Meeting

Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority Joint Committee

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 22 June 2018	11:30	Corporate Meeting Room 2, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present

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

Chair

Councillor Andy Steel, Chair, presided.

In Attendance

F Carswell, Development and Marketing Manager, K Campbell, Assistant Chief Internal Auditor (for items 1 to 6 only), F Carlin, Head of Planning and Housing Services, M Ball, Principal Accountant (Management Accounting), E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officer and P Shiach, Committee Services Officer (all Renfrewshire Council) and S Afzal, Auditor (Audit Scotland).

Apologies

Councillor Andy Doig (Renfrewshire Council); Councillor David Wilson (Inverclyde Council); and Councillor Donald L Reid and Councillor Todd Ferguson (both North Ayrshire Council).

Declarations of Interest

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

Additional Items

The Chair intimated that there were two additional items in relation to Park Staffing and Governance Update and Whithorn Way which had not been included in the notice calling the meeting. The Chair, being of the opinion that the items which are dealt with at items 9 and 10 below, were urgent in view of the need to advise members of the position, authorised their consideration.

1 Minute of Joint Committee

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 16 February 2018.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 Minutes of Consultative Forum

There were submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Consultative Forum held on 16 February 2018 and the note of the inquorate meeting held on 18 May 2018.

In relation to item 2(c) – Park Signage – of the Minute of the meeting held on 16 February 2018, it was noted that the Minute had been amended by the Consultative Forum and that the last paragraph should read “invite the Chair of the Friends of Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park” and not “invite the Chair of the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust” as stated.

DECIDED: That the Minute, as amended, and the note of inquorate meeting be noted.

3 Unaudited Annual Accounts 2017/18

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to the unaudited annual accounts for the Joint Committee 2017/18 which were attached to the report. The report intimated that the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 had been completed and forwarded to Audit Scotland for audit. The accounts showed a surplus for the year of £19,514 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 Chair and Park Manager, as well as the Treasurer, in accordance with the regulations.

DECIDED: That the annual accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 be noted and that the accounts be further presented to the Joint Committee on completion of the audit.

4 Internal Audit Annual Report 2017/18

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor, Renfrewshire Council relative to the Internal Audit annual report on the Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority 2017/18. 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 attached as an appendix 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 2017/18 and contained an audit assurance statement.

DECIDED: That the Internal Audit annual report for 2017/18 be noted.

5 Internal Audit Reporting Arrangements

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor, Renfrewshire Council relative to internal audit reporting arrangements.

The report intimated that Audit Scotland in their report to members on the annual audit for 2016/17 identified that "internal audit reports were not provided to members of the Joint Committee". This had presented the Chief Auditor with an opportunity to review and formalise the internal audit reporting arrangements for the Joint Committee.

It was noted that in line with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, Internal Audit must communicate the results of each engagement to the Joint Committee. The report outlined the details and outcomes of the Chief Auditor's considerations in relation to the Joint Committee reporting arrangements for completed audit engagements and follow-up work.

DECIDED: That the reporting arrangements put in place to communicate the results of internal audit work to the Joint Committee be noted.

6 Internal Audit Report Summary - Online Booking System

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor, Renfrewshire Council relative to the Internal Audit report summary on the online booking system.

The report intimated that in line with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, Internal Audit must communicate the results of each engagement to the Joint Committee. Internal Audit had undertaken a review of the arrangements in place for online bookings and payments and the report provided a summary of the work undertaken, the audit findings and the action being taken by management to address the recommendations made.

The appendix to the report provided a summary of the overall assurance rating for the engagement and the number of recommendations in each category and the committee summary for the engagement.

DECIDED: That the Internal Audit report summary for the online booking system be noted.

7 Quarterly Absence Statistics

There was submitted a report by the Interim Regional Park Manager relative to the quarterly absence statistics for the Regional Park Authority for the period 1 January to 25 March 2018. 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 25 March 2018 be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that regular reports on the Park's 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 Regional Park Manager providing information on the quarterly health and safety monitoring for the period January to March 2018.

The report intimated that there had been no RIDDOR reportable accidents; one incident involving staff; one incident involving a volunteer; two acts of vandalism; one equipment malfunction and some fly-tipping. There had been three health and safety related courses held during the period which eight members of staff had attended and one toolbox talk delivered during the period.

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.

The report highlighted that there was still a problem with water ingress at Muirshiel Visitor Centre and that further investigation was required to fully rectify the problem.

DECIDED:

(a) That it be noted that there had been no RIDDOR reportable accidents, no occupational diseases and six incidents during the period; and

(b) That it be noted that the problem of water ingress at Muirshiel Visitor Centre continued to be under investigation.

9 Park Staffing and Governance Update

There was submitted a report by the Head of Planning and Housing Services, Renfrewshire Council updating the Joint Committee on temporary alterations to the Park's staffing structure and amendments to the financial governance following the recent resignation of the Interim Regional Park Manager.

The report intimated that following the recent resignation of the Interim Regional Park Manager it was recognised that a temporary arrangement needed to be put in place to ensure the ongoing delivery of the Park's operational and functional obligations. Recognising that there was significant experience and knowledge of the operations of the Park within existing staff the report proposed that an Interim Park Co-ordinator would be appointed to lead staff and progress short-term activities. This position would initially be fixed-term until the end of March 2019 and the recruitment process would be open to applications from existing Park staff. This approach sought to utilise existing Park resources and ensure a suitable staffing arrangement was in place for the Park's operations.

The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 required the Chief Officer of the Park Authority to sign-off the audited financial statements together with the Treasurer and Chair no later than 30 September each year. Following the departure of the Interim Regional Park Manager, and in order to ensure the Regulations were adhered to, the responsibility to sign-off the audited financial statements would transfer to the Lead Officer within Renfrewshire Council.

The report further intimated that whilst the appointment of an Interim Park Co-ordinator would ensure that arrangements were in place to deliver the ongoing operations of the Park, a review of the Park's finances and governance was underway which might have implications on the structure of the Park and the way it delivered services in the future. The review would continue throughout 2018 in consultation with each of the constituent Councils with preliminary findings expected by September 2018 in advance of a full report in early 2019.

As Chair of the Consultative Forum, Councillor Nelson, referred to the review of the Minute of Agreement and the fact that this had been ongoing for some time with no update ever being submitted to the Consultative Forum. The Head of Planning and Housing Services advised that officers from the three constituent councils were currently discussing the review of the Minute of Agreement and that it was expected that an update on the ongoing review would be included in the report being submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee to be held 7 September 2018.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the proposed alterations to the staffing structure for the Park following the recent resignation of the Interim Regional Park Manager and the intention to appoint an Interim Park Co-ordinator be noted;
- (b) That it be agreed that the responsibility to sign-off the financial statements for the audited accounts transferred from the Interim Regional Park Manager to the Lead Officer at Renfrewshire Council; and
- (c) That it be noted that officers from the three constituent councils were currently discussing the review of the Minute of Agreement and that it was expected that an update on the ongoing review would be included in the report being submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee to be held 7 September 2018.

10 Whithorn Way

Information relative to Whithorn Way was provided to members which advised that the Whithorn Way was a long-distance pilgrimage route from Glasgow Cathedral to St. Ninian's Priory in Whithorn and that the route shared a great part of its journey using Route 7 of the Clyde and Pathway network.

Whithorn Way steering group members had met with Renfrewshire Council's Tourism Officer, Senior Marketing Officer, Economic Development Officer (Social Enterprise), Access Officer and Project Development Assistant with the LEADER programme and had been provided with information and assistance to promote this project.

It was proposed that communications staff from the three constituent councils and the Park be encouraged to assist in the marketing and publicity of the Whithorn Way. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the ongoing work of the Whithorn Way steering group be noted; and
- (b) That communications staff from the three constituent councils and the Park be encouraged to assist in the marketing and publicity of the Whithorn Way.

11 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 7 September 2018 within Inverclyde Council, Municipal Buildings, Clyde Square, Greenock.