

**OUTWOODS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
31ST JULY 2019**

PRESENT: Councillors Bailey, Campsall (Vice-chair), Fryer (Chair), K. Harris,
Parsons and Poland.
PB, RE, GM and JN.

Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces
Monitoring Officer
Democratic Services Officer (NC)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Morgan, Tillotson, and CN

1. CHARNWOOD FOREST FOSSILS

Dr. Phil Wilby from the British Geological Survey gave a talk about the fossils of Charnwood Forest.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

In accordance with the Trust Deeds, the Mayor of Charnwood had been invited to become the Chair of the Outwoods Management Committee but had declined and requested that the Committee proceed to appoint from within its Committee membership.

It was proposed by Councillor Campsall and seconded by Councillor Harris that Councillor Fryer be appointed Chair of the Outwoods Management Committee.

AGREED that Councillor Fryer be appointed Chair of the Outwoods Management Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Fryer and seconded by Councillor Poland that Councillor Campsall be appointed Vice-chair of the Outwoods Management Committee.

AGREED that Councillor Campsall be appointed Vice-chair of the Outwoods Management Committee.

3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

Disclosures of personal interests were made as follows:

- (i) by PB who farmed land adjacent to the Outwoods.
- (ii) by RE whose wife was a member of Artspace Loughborough.
- (iii) by JN who lived on land adjacent to the Outwoods.
- (iv) by Councillor Bailey who farmed land adjacent to the Outwoods.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2019 were agreed.

5. OFFICER UPDATE REPORT

A report of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces was submitted (item 6 on the agenda). The Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces drew the Committee's attention to the information in the report regarding the Natural Play Area, Events Barn, Septic Tank, Bluebell walk, Bylaws, Edible Forest, Loughborough in Bloom and Site Information Boards.

With respect to the items below, the following points were raised:

- (i) Green Flag Judging – the judges had decided not to award a Green Flag for the site this year as they did not like the format and contents of the Outwoods Management Plan. The Plan had been written to suit the type of site, whereas green flags tended to be awarded to more formal gardens and parks.

Trustees discussed the benefits of having a green flag and/or applying for local nature reserve (LNR) status. It was noted that most of the work to be carried out to apply for LNR had already been done as routine maintenance.

- (ii) Entrance Works – this was proceeding as indicated in the report. Trustees discussed times for opening and closing of the gates once the work had been completed. Other parks like Beacon Hill used daylight hours and changed the times depending on the season, although the kind of visitors to the different sites varied.

- (iii) Visitor Centre/cafe planning application– as four Corporation (council) Trustees sat on the Plans Committee, advice would be sought regarding attendance. The Chair of the Outwoods Management Committee would also confirm whether it would be acceptable to speak at the Plans Committee meeting in support of the planning application.

- (vii) Into the Outwoods Sculpture Trail – the damage to some of the art installations was discussed. It was noted that it wasn't mandatory for schools to alert the Council if they intended to visit the woods.

The Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces stated that the carparking machine had been robbed over one weekend, losing the weekend's takings. He noted that other machines had also been targeted elsewhere in the County. The machine would be out of action for several weeks before being replaced with a coin only machine that had been ordered. This machine could be retrofitted with a card reader module for approx. £1000.

AGREED

1. that work towards designating the Outwoods as a Local Nature Reserve is progressed and that a new application for Green Flag status is not submitted;

2. that the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces in consultation with other officers circulates a briefing paper regarding the criteria and process for applying to be a Local Nature Reserve to Trustees before the next Committee meeting;
3. that the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces circulates a proposal regarding opening times of the Outwoods carpark to be introduced after the entrance works have been completed, to Trustees before the next Committee meeting;
4. that the proposal regarding opening times of the Outwoods carpark is added as an agenda item for the next Committee meeting scheduled on 9th October 2019;
5. that the Chair of the Outwoods Management Committee and the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces write a letter to the relevant school expressing concern regarding the conduct of some pupils with some of the art installations during the Sculpture Trail 2019;
6. that ArtSpace Loughborough be invited to present an evaluation report concerning the Sculpture Trail 2019 to the Committee at its meeting on 9th October 2019;
7. that a card reader module be purchased and is retrofitted to the coin only machine in the Outwoods carpark, and that once it has been installed, the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces informs the Committee;
8. that the contents of the report be noted.

6. OUTWOODS CONIFER FELLING PROGRAMME – PHASE 1

A report providing details of the conifer compartment felling phase 1 was submitted (item 7 on the agenda).

The Senior Green Spaces Officer stated that it was the start of a 10-year programme to remove conifers. There were two parcels to be felled this year – one near the crags and one near the carpark. The entrance gate by the layby would require modification to allow for lorries to enter to pick up felled wood. A temporary closure order would be obtained from the County Council for closing the entrance.

In response to questions the Senior Green Spaces Officer explained that the widening of the gate by the layby would not weaken the access to the Outwoods in the long term as the gate would continue to be padlocked and that the closing of the carpark for two weeks would be widely publicised prior to the closure.

AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

7. CHARNWOOD FOREST LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP BID UPDATE

An update regarding the project proposals for the Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership bid was submitted (item 8 on the agenda).

The Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces explained that at the last Committee meeting it had been agreed that project one was no longer viable due to the restrictions placed on the Committee by the Trust Deeds. He had discussed with the Project Manager the possibility of improving the toilets, but as it would be considered as routine maintenance, the funding could not be used for this kind of work. Consequently, the discussion was now focussed on extending the scope of the other two projects or to purchase more trampers as these had proved to be popular, particularly after the use had been publicised on social media by a para-athlete.

Trustees discussed encouraging access from Nanpantan Sports Ground by improving the footpath and placing cycle racks near to the entrance of the Outwoods. This would be submitted as part of a different project. Placing a cycle path on the outside of the Outwoods boundary was not viable within the budget available.

AGREED

1. that contents of the report be noted;
2. that the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces works with the Chair and Vice-chair of the Outwoods Management Committee to finalise the final details for submission for lottery funding.

8. FINANCE UPDATE

An update regarding finance for years 2018/19 and 2019/20 was submitted (item 9 on the agenda).

The Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces stated that the finance for 2018/19 was as reported at the last meeting but had now been confirmed and that the budget for 2019/20 was on track. The income for selling the felled timber had not been included at present, as it would be a one-off addition to the budget.

He noted that the increase in carparking income during April and May this year compared to last year was likely to be due to the impact of the Sculpture Trail, the opening of the play area and recent good weather.

AGREED

1. that the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces provides answers to the Committee to the following:
 - a) the meaning of the account term 'contribution' for 2019/20 figures,
 - b) why there was £4K in the 2018/19 budget for 'Promotional activities' but no provision in the 2019/20 budget,
 - c) why the budget for 'Buildings – R&M' in 2019/20 was double the budget for 2018/19 (from £4.4K to £10.9K).
2. that the information be noted.

9. ACTIVITIES AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT AT THE OUTWOODS SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

An update regarding activities and operational management at the Outwoods was submitted (item 10 on the agenda).

In response to a question, the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces stated that the number of volunteer hours in the Outwoods was collated over a three-month period and it was possible to put a 'cash value' onto the volunteer hours to enable the Council to assess its benefits.

AGREED

1. that the number of volunteer hours in the Outwoods be forwarded to the Loughborough in Bloom judge in explanation that some volunteer work is not carried out only in the Loughborough;
2. that a 'cash value' is allocated to the volunteer hours recorded by the Council in line with other organisations;
3. that the contents of the report be noted.

10. A.O.B

A Trustee raised concerns about a wall near to a locked gate in the Outwoods that was continually being knocked down by members of the public using it to access the woods. It was noted that a small space beside the gate which had barbed wire across could be opened to allow access and could reduce the number of times the wall required rebuilding. During the discussion it was mentioned that there wasn't public access to that particular gate, the land beyond was private and was therefore being trespassed on.

AGREED that the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces determine whether the barbed wire could be removed after consulting relevant officers and land owners and informs the Committee of the decision.

The Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces checked that Trustees had enjoyed the presentation at the start of the meeting and suggested that other organisations could be contacted (RSPB, Naturalist Society, etc) to give presentations on relevant topics at the start of future meetings.

AGREED that the Clerk and Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces write a formal letter of thanks on behalf of the Committee to Dr Wilby for his presentation.

ADDENDUM - DECISIONS WHEREBY A VOTE WAS TAKEN

At the meeting of the Committee held on 6th September 2017 it was agreed that when the Committee voted by a show of hands on decisions made by the Committee that this information was documented as an addendum to the minutes (minute 2.2 refers).

Item 5. OFFICER UPDATE REPORT – Green Flag Status

It was proposed that recommendation 2 be agreed, to apply for local nature reserve status.

10 voted in favour
None voted against or abstained.

The proposal was carried.

AGREED

1. that work towards designating the Outwoods as a Local Nature Reserve is progressed and that a new application for Green Flag status is not submitted;

Item 5. OFFICER UPDATE REPORT – car parking machine

It was proposed that the card reader module be purchased.

10 voted in favour
None voted against or abstained.

The proposal was carried.

AGREED

7. that a card reader module be purchased and is retrofitted to the coin only machine in the Outwoods carpark, and that once it has been installed, the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces informs the Committee;