

Minutes - Hilbre Islands Nature Reserve Management Committee - 20 June 2006

Present	
Chair	JE Green
Councillors	G Gardiner , GCJ Watt
Council Officers	Mike Callon (Special Initiatives Team) , Dave Cavanagh (Ranger, Hilbre Islands) , Dave Cowling (Head of Parks & Open Spaces) , Josef Hanik (Ranger Service) , Malcolm Ingham (Ranger Service)
In attendance:	Sue Craggs (Friends of Hilbre)
Apologies	SA Brown , GJ Ellis , J Hale , A Taylor

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Minute 1 - APOLOGIES

As above.

Minute 2 - MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 25 November 2005, were accepted as a true record.

Minute 3 - MATTERS ARISING

Minute 23 (vii) S Craggs reported that its owner in Cornwall had scrapped the yacht "Hilbre."

Minute 22 Coastal Strategy - Presentation

M Callon, Special Initiatives Team, gave a presentation. He reported that the Wirral Tourism Strategy had identified Wirral's waterfront and coastline as its greatest asset, and one of its key aims was to promote the 'Wirral Waterside Way' as one of the best recreational facilities in the region. The theme of the "Wirral Waterside Way" was to develop links between the towns and attractions along the coast through the provision of walking and cycling routes.

The Special Initiatives Team was responsible for the delivery of a number of signature projects which were integral to the delivery of the strategy. Within the Hoylake and West Kirby Regeneration Master Plan which set out a 10/15 regeneration strategy, considerable progress had been made regarding the Market Street Improvements and other environmental improvements in readiness for the Open Championship. The key projects for West Kirby were:

(a) The Sail - This project involved the potential demolition of the existing Sailing School at the Marine Lake and its replacement with a distinctive and prestigious

landmark building. A development brief had been circulated to prospective developers and three firm proposals had now been received. Shortlisted proposals would be invited to submit a more detailed second stage proposal culminating in the appointment of a development partner.

(b) The Greater Concourse Project - The Masterplan for the regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby identified the area around the West Kirby Concourse site as a major opportunity for positive change and the creation of significant investment in the town. The potential outcomes to this project included a new bespoke health centre and fire station and improvements to the train station and the shops fronting the station. Fit out costs for both the new health centre and fire station were expected to be met by the Primary Care Trust and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service respectively.

In addition the creation of a new town square in front of the Concourse and potential improvements to the Concourse building itself through measures such as re-cladding to the building frontage were proposed. The public realm benefits would be achieved through the value of the scheme, generated potentially by a new quality retail offer. A development brief had been circulated inviting initial expressions of interest from prospective developers. Shortlisted proposals would be invited to submit a more detailed second stage proposal with a view to appointing a lead partner in late Summer.

(c) West Kirby Town Centre

A range of small to medium size proposals identified within the Masterplan were located along or near to the West Kirby coastline. These projects included environmental improvements to Victoria and Coronation Gardens, Ashton Park, South Parade and improvements to the education and visitor facilities at Hilbre Island and were brought together as a single 'West Kirby Coastal Improvements' package. The concept behind such an approach was that the respective initiatives would fit both within the overall coastal strategy for Wirral the coastal strategy of the MWRP – a prime funding agency for these types of activities.

An allocation of £300,000 had been secured from the Capital Investment Programme 2006/07 and this would be available from April 2006 to support initial work on the projects listed in the indicative list (a copy of which was circulated). Discussions would be held with interested parties to pursue the opportunity to generate additional match funding in support of these projects. Integral to the success of West Kirby, would be the connectivity between the marine lake with any remodelled Concourse area, ensuring that its town centre and waterfront could be qualitatively linked. It was also necessary to implement significant improvements to the existing public realm and street scene (including canopies) in Banks Rd, the Crescent, and Dee Lane, along similar lines to that currently taking place in Market St, Hoylake.

Councillor Gardiner emphasised the importance of identifying match funding for the £300,000 to make best use of this finite resource.

D Cowling reported that the outline bid to the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park (MWRP) for the Hilbre Island Centre had been approved and officers and a representative of the Friends of Hilbre would be visiting the island this week to discuss the scheme in more detail.

Councillor Green reported upon the need to continue with the current arrangements to control visitor numbers to the island to maintain the level of protection for the site. He welcomed the proposals for the development of the Interpretative Centre as a means of providing information about the island and the estuary without damaging

the important habitats and associated plant and animal communities through over usage.

Councillor Green and Councillor Watt expressed their concern regarding the condition of the Lifeboat Slipway, and asked for further information on actions that could be taken to address this situation.

It was agreed that an officer from the Technical Services, Coastal Protection Division, be invited to the next meeting of this Committee.

Minute 4 - SENIOR RANGER'S REPORT: DECEMBER 2005 TO MAY 2006

J Hanik submitted the six monthly Ranger Report for the Hilbre Islands Local Nature Reserve based on the objectives within the Hilbre Islands Draft Management Plan (2003).

The elected members were given a tour of the island to see some of the work that had taken place and including a look at the slipway and Buoymaster's complex of buildings as part of the meeting.

Minute Decision :

Resolved - That the report be accepted.

Minute 5 - FRIENDS OF HILBRE REPORT

S Craggs referred to the Friends of Hilbre AGM held at West Kirby Concourse on 24 May, 2006 which included a report on all the activities that had been carried out by the Friends over the last year, and allowed members of the public to raise issues about Hilbre Island and the activities of the Friends. Since The Friends of Hilbre were set up in 2001, they had raised small sums from local sources for repairs, painting of buildings, exhibition boards, and publications. They had now embarked on a series of larger funding projects , in co-operation with council officers, and the Ranger Service. These included:

(a) the restoration of the former Buoy Master's House and its out buildings as a community centre, for use by visiting groups;

(b) projects linked to the Buoy Master's House including the repair of the Lifeboat House slip way;

(c) the underpinning of the north and west cliffs.

S Craggs said that if the funding application was successful , it would be backed up with a lot of hard work from the volunteers.

The Chair thanked the Friends for their contribution as partners with the council in helping with the various management tasks, education and advice, and fund raising.

Minute Decision :

Resolved - That the report be noted.