



FLEETWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

FLEETWOOD MARSH NATURE PARK – REPORT ON PILOT PERIOD AND FUTURE PROPOSALS

DOCUMENT CONTROL

First Issue Date:	November 2018
Document Status:	Final
Effective From:	Date of resolution by the Council to approve and accept proposals
Scope of Document:	Report on what has been delivered on the Fleetwood Marsh site over the 2018 season, costs of operation, results of consultation with site users and members of the public, and future proposals.
Objective:	To inform the members of the council and Fleetwood residents of the activity on the Marsh Park to date and seek approval from council to progress with proposals.
Author:	Clerk to the Council Debra Thornton, with additional data from Tim Blythe, LCC Countryside Manager, Dawn Spooner, FTC CDO, and Jamie Shields, Regenda.
Reviewer	Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park Working Group
Authorised by:	Fleetwood Town Council
Date of Resolution:	29TH January 2019
Review/Amendment:	

1. Introduction and Summary

On the 3rd October 2017, at an extraordinary meeting of the Town Council, members voted to approve the proposal *in principle* that Fleetwood Town Council (FTC) assume custodianship of the Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park from March 2018 on the understanding that Lancashire County Council (LCC) retain land ownership and responsibility for major issues.

On the 13th March 2018 amendments to this resolution were proposed to approve a 12 month pilot partnership, jointly funded between FTC and LCC to commence with effect from 1st April 2018. This was approved by council.

Terms of Reference (TOR) were also agreed for the creation of a Nature Park Working group. This group has met regularly to discuss ideas for short and long-term enhancements and projects, and to carry out a comprehensive consultation into what existing and potential users of the site would like to see happen.



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2. Consultation Results and Working Group assessment

During July and August consultations were carried out on Social Media, at Aldi Fleetwood, The Nature Park, directly by phone with professional dog walking companies and at local schools by councillors, FTC/LCC staff and Regenda. Over 180 responses on 26 different issues were collated and these are ranked and summarised at **Appendix A**. The working group met on the 31st October 2018 to discuss the viability and make recommendations as to which could be taken forward as quick wins, and longer-term projects. These recommendations are also detailed in Appendix A.

3. Current position and costs to date.

As well as the extensive consultation detailed above, quick wins have been delivered in the form of:

1. An additional litter bin, funded in 3 equal parts by LCC, FTC and Regenda. This was installed by the resident ranger as part of his regular maintenance role, and he reports it is being well used, with a reduction in dumped bags on the site.
2. A new noticeboard funded in 3 equal parts as above. This is being reinforced by LCC countryside team and will be installed at the start of the path from the car park for maximum visibility.

Costs for the pilot period to date are detailed at appendix B. **Council are asked to approve the payment of £1769.59 to LCC as the FTC contribution to the 2018 running costs on receipt of an invoice.**

4. Proposals

Due to extended timescales for drawing up the legal agreements for a transfer of lease between LCC and FTC and the current situation with LCC sites across the county, the Working Group have agreed to propose an extension to the pilot period for a further 12 months to the end of March 2020. This would benefit FTC by continuing the 50% joint funding arrangement with LCC and provide additional time for a joint bid to the LEF. If this proposal is approved by full council the expenditure for fixed running costs against the approved precept budget for the Nature Park (£10,000) will fall well within this budget. Any additional spend proposed by the working group or LCC would be at the discretion of full council as per financial regulations.



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5. Estimated Costs: Year 1 2019/20 financial year

It is expected that income and estimated basic running costs for 2019-20 will be as follows:

Income

Fylde Coast Model Aircraft Club ground rent	1400.00
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Expenditure

Wyre Council waste collection (large bin) – 5% increase on previous year	1911.00
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Community Ranger annual contract - 5% increase	3276.00
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Bin liners and sundry items (contingency)	500.00
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Balance	£4287.00
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Estimated annual cost to FTC (50% of total amount)	£2143.50
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6. Funding streams

An expression of interest was submitted to the Lancashire Environmental fund in early November for a grant of £30,000 to help regenerate the area and deliver many of the longer - term recommendations that came out of the consultation.

The Lancashire Environmental Fund (LEF) is a partnership between SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK Ltd, Lancashire County Council, The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside and Community Futures. It has distributed over £25m of Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) grants support to community and environmental projects which benefit the environment and people of Lancashire since its start in 1998. The Fund is supported financially by SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK Ltd, Lancashire County Council and various third-party funders.

The fund is an ideal source of potential revenue for the Nature Park as it is targeted specifically at sites on or adjacent to landfill. We should hear whether we will be invited to submit a full bid in February 2019.

In addition, a further £2000 which is directly linked to the Healthier Fleetwood and Walney bid (some of which has part funded the bin and notice board). The fund is available as soon as it is needed and was agreed that this would support the LEF funding bid at the last meeting of the six Green Spaces Steering Group.



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It was agreed that £2000 would be used as additional income to match the LEF funding that would be required should we be able to access the LEF fund through the bid that was placed.

7. Review of initiative.

If Fleetwood Town Council see fit to approve the extension of the jointly funded pilot period, it is envisaged that LCC countryside and legal teams will be in a position to present a draft legal agreement for the adoption of the lease of the Nature Park by FTC before February 2020. As there will be a newly elected council in place by that date, it is proposed that a final decision on a long-term lease is made by the Town Council then.



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APPENDIX A - Fleetwood Marsh Consultation Results

Issue	Number of responses	Update and Working Group recommendations.
More bins required for dog poo and litter	36	One bin has been purchased and installed in the middle of the park. The on-site ranger has reported it is being well used, and he is also monitoring instances of poo-bag “dumping” to identify other likely sites for placement of a further bin for future consideration. It is hoped that a programme of education, awareness and volunteer involvement will also reduce dumping.
More seating / picnic tables	32	A longer-term enhancement - to be considered as part of a funding bid to LEF.
Fly tipping and condition of the approach road.	16	To be addressed as and when by Wyre/LCC Highways/United Utilities and other as it is not part of the footprint of the site.
Organised activities on site	14	The working group propose to meet with community/residents/organisations/schools to develop a calendar of events/regular activities i.e. guided nature/health walks; birdwatching club etc.
Provision of Refreshment facility	11	This is something to consider if a longer lease is agreed – perhaps a visiting supplier with a van/trailer. If taken forward there is the potential for a reciprocal agreement to involve a concession providing litter removal and tidy up of the car park.
Fenced off area where dogs can be let off the lead or protected dog free areas.	9	A longer-term project - to be considered as part of a funding bid to LEF



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Information area or information board to display leaflets / posters / trails, more signs at the site.		A replacement notice board has been delivered and will be positioned at the entrance to the park near the carpark. Additional information/educational boards could be positioned in key locations throughout the site – and will be included as part of the funding bid to LEF.
A small trim trail or play area to encourage families to visit	8	A longer-term project - to be considered as part of a funding bid to LEF
Provision of Toilets	6	The working groups advice is that this is probably not appropriate due to the size of the site and logistics of cleaning and maintenance.
A dog warden or ranger on site	5	LCC and FTC already fund ½ day per week, but it is proposed to approach the current ranger regarding the possibility of increasing this. Please also see proposals regarding a volunteer corps further down this appendix.
Accessibility problems – made in reference to the remoteness of the site and need to get there by car.	6	The comments were about the site only really being accessed via car – there is not a lot we can do about the park’s location.
A clear code of conduct for users of the site to be displayed.	4	Following a number of discussions about a code of conduct, it seems sensible to have a code of conduct for all visitors to the park – not just one for dog walkers. The working group propose to develop this in consultation with stakeholders including Wyre Council and the Dogs Trust.
Develop a circular walk / cycle route or longer walking and cycle paths.	4	A longer-term project - to be considered as part of a funding bid to LEF
Improvements to the paths.	4	A longer-term project - to be considered as part of a funding bid to LEF



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Bird observatory	4	It is thought that a bird hide would encourage people to use this for purposes other than birdwatching?
More trees and landscaping	4	The park is a natural site and should be allowed to self-seed/evolve naturally. There are minimal trees as the soil coverage is very thin, due to the previous use of the site as a power station, and only supports estuary and scrub flora. The working group propose a long term programme of conservation and protection of identified areas to encourage growth of existing plants and the protection of native birds and animals.
Name and shame irresponsible / inconsiderate users of the site	3	The working groups recommendation is that with better management and a code of conduct this should not be necessary.
The lake needs cleaning	3	How do we know it needs cleaning? Perhaps we should ask people not to allow dogs to swim in the lake – Sign saying as such?
Better directional signage from the road to direct people to the site	2	This is not needed – a large brown sign is already positioned at the entrance to Jameson Rd from Fleetwood Rd clearly displaying the location of the park.
Some fencing panels are missing on the road next to Harbour Village	2	This is not part of the site, nor in the view of the land owner (LCC) detrimental to the park.
Somewhere to post bird sightings	1	It is suggested that a Facebook page ‘Fleetwood Nature Park’ is created, which could be managed by FTC officers but have a number of admins i.e. possibly as resident from the harbour village; the model flying club; a local birdwatcher etc. This would be a great opportunity to post photography competitions, wildlife sightings and advertise events/activities to be held on the park, in conjunction with on-site noticeboards



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Opportunities to involve children or people with learning difficulties at the site	1	The working group suggest there is the potential to visit Red Marsh/Great Arley schools to ask for their views on the nature park: What would encourage/prevent them making regular visits to the park? Feedback from local Fleetwood schools includes: the need for the park to be a safe environment free from dog waste and out of control dogs, and the possibility of guided walks on the park and installation of educational information boards. The schools raised
Plant more wildflowers	1	The park should be allowed to seed naturally.
Lifesaving equipment / life buoy near to the water	1	Something else to maintain and possibly will be abused?
Opportunity to volunteer at the park	1	We have already received some expressions of interest and it is proposed that a volunteer corps is developed to help with the maintenance/overseeing and care of the park.
The bridge is in a poor state of repair:	1	There were 2 slats missing/removed which have now been replaced by the site ranger.



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APPENDIX B - FLEETWOOD MARSH NATURE PARK FINICAL STATEMENT FOR PILOT PERIOD (UP TO 3/12/18)

Income

Fylde Coast Model Aircraft Club ground rent	£1400.00
One third contribution to new bin – Regenda	£140.19 (received into FTC current account)
One third contribution to new noticeboard – Regenda	£84.40 (received into FTC current account)
Total	£1624.59

Expenditure

Wyre Council waste collection (large bin)	1820.00
Community Ranger annual contract	3120.00
New Bin	420.20
New Noticeboard	253.20
Total	£5613.77

Balance (expenditure minus Income)	£3989.18
LCC costs (50%)	£1994.59
FTC costs (50% minus £224.59 (one third of the bin and noticeboard))	£1769.59

Council are asked to approve the payment of £1769.59 to LCC as the FTC contribution to the 2018 running costs on receipt of an invoice.