

Runnymede Borough Council

CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 16 June 2015 at 8.00pm

Members of the
Committee present: Councillor P S Sohi
Mr C Hunt (Honorary Secretary)
Mr P McKenzie (Honorary Treasurer)

Apologies were received from: Councillors Mrs M Roberts and N Wase-Rogers

The meeting was also attended by 13 members of the public, Honorary Wardens Mr Barkham, Mr Midwinter, Mr Ashby and Mr P Winfield, Green Spaces Manager.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 17 June 2014 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Cllr Sohi welcomed members of the public to the 2015 Annual General Meeting of the Cabrera Trust and introduced the members of the Management Committee, Council Officers and Mary Braddock of RSPB.

The purpose of the Annual General Meeting was to inform local residents of how the Trust had managed the land and how its funds had been spent over the past year, together with a formal report on the current state of the Trust's accounts. The meeting would include a discussion forum, during which residents could ask questions of the Trust Members.

The Cabrera Trust was constituted by Deed of Trust, as amended by a Scheme made by the Secretary of State for Education and Science, dated 24 March 1972, and was a registered charity. Runnymede Borough Council was the Trustee.

The Trust was responsible for the management of the open space playing area on Cabrera Avenue and approximately 52 acres of land alongside the River Bourne, known as the Riverside Walk. It was also responsible for the administration and use of the Trust funds. The Trust Deed required that the Riverside Walk was maintained for the exercise, recreation and benefit of the inhabitants of Virginia Water and the neighbourhood, and the open space on Cabrera Avenue was to be used as a public recreation ground for the benefit of the same area.

The Management Committee had been set up by the Trustee to provide a clear local focus for the management of the Trust land. The Management Committee comprised of the three Virginia Water Ward Councillors, together with two Council Officers, acting in the capacity of Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary.

In addition to this, the Committee had six co-opted members, Mrs H Lane, Mr T Ashby, Mr K Barkham, Mr J Midwinter, Mr A Saunders and Mr P Stephens. The Trust wished to express their thanks to the co-opted members for their invaluable help, support and advice. The Chairman stressed the importance and value of this team who reported back any problems. This undoubtedly assisted Officers to maintain the land to such a good standard.

3. ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

a) Honorary Secretary's report

The Honorary Secretary reported that the last twelve months had been relatively quiet in terms of work needed on site. A few fallen trees had to be cleared from the Riverside Walk and the vegetation alongside the path was cut back three times a year.

The site boundaries were regularly monitored for encroachments from neighbouring properties, although incidences of these had reduced significantly.

The Honorary Secretary thanked Councillor Woodger, who had now stepped down from the Council, for all of the assistance that he had provided to this Committee as member and Chairman in the past. He had now been replaced by Councillor Wase-Rogers.

The Honorary Secretary thanked the co-opted members – Mrs H Lane, Mr T Ashby, Mr K Barkham, Mr J Midwinter, Mr A Saunders and Mr P Stephens for their continued support in managing and monitoring the Trust's land.

The previously approved Forest School sessions on the Riverside Walk had commenced in late April and were proving successful.

b) Honorary Treasurer's Annual Report

The Honorary Treasurer presented the Trust's Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2015.

The statement of Financial Activity showed a deficit in the year of £6,047. This was offset against increase in the market value of the external investments of £19,527, which resulted in an increase to the fund balance of £13,480.

Total expenditure had been £15,967, which exceeded total income of £9,920.

The Trust had investments in Charities Official Investment Fund (COIF) Income Shares and M & G Charifund Shares, both of which had increased in value during the year. At 31 March 2015, the value of the holding in COIF Income Shares was £90,494 and £144,807 in the M & G Charifund Shares. These were held as long term investments and provided a regular income stream, with dividend income of £9,816 during the year.

At 31 March 2015, the Trust also had £8,000 invested with the Council, on which interest was paid at the Public Works Loan Board rate, this produced income of £104 in 2014/15. This investment increased from £4,000 to £8,000 after 867 COIF Shares were sold to raise additional funds to cover day to day running of the Trust.

The Balance Sheet showed an overall fund balance of £243,295 at 31 March 2015.

Details of the maintenance works undertaken on both Cabrera Open Space and the Riverside Walk area was noted.

In response to a question regarding the sustainability of Trust funds, the Honorary Treasurer reaffirmed that based on the current levels of expenditure; Trust funds should last for 10-15 years, although this was dependent upon the amount of required maintenance work. In addition, Officers had held or reduced recharges to assist the financial position of the Trust. In particular, the legal recharge had reduced owing to a reduction in need for encroachment work.

4. ANNUAL INSPECTION OF THE TRUST LAND

The annual inspection of the Trust land had taken place on 13 May 2015 and was attended by former Councillor Woodger, Councillors Sohi and Wase-Rogers, Mrs H Lane, Mr T Ashby, Mr K Barkham, Mr J Midwinter and Andrew Sanders, together with four Council Officers.

Riverside Walk

The following points had been recorded during the inspection and Officers would address some of these in coming months.

- i) The Riverside Walk was noticeably free from litter, fly tipping and graffiti.
- ii) The Notice Board at entrance needed updating.
- iii) Part of boardwalk between marker posts 4 and 5 needed repair.
- iv) Alleged 'camping' would be investigated.
- v) Handrail needed to be repaired adjacent to marker post 8.
- vi) Wind damaged dead wood trees –damaged branches would be checked and removed as necessary to protect against injury, but otherwise the damaged branches would be left to promote wildlife habitat.
- vii) 'Forest School' clearing ('Vicki' to be invited to address January 2016 Management Trust meeting).
- viii) Bridges – checks would be made for any trip hazards and remedial action taken. Minor repairs to tread needed.
- ix) Vandalised railings on path immediately leading off Station Path (SCC) to Cabrera land needed repair.
- x) Railway Authorities would be consulted regarding damage/slack chain-link fence on Station Path.

Cabrera Open Space

The Open Space was noted to be in good order, with no litter or graffiti. It was noted that all trees were in good order and the children's play equipment was also in good repair.

A House in Mereside Place had with temporary scaffold poles which just encroached across the boundary on the Open Space. The Council had been advised that this had occurred to allow the new build to be rendered by the builder. The scaffold poles would be present for a short time but work would be completed by the time of Carnival Capers and the scaffold poles would be removed. No objections were made to this.

5. WORKS TO BRIDGE

Work to replace the failing treads on the bridge near to the centre of the site had now been completed by T J Hunts. The replacement boards were hardwood treads with factory fitted anti-slip strips. During the work a small amount of rot had been discovered to the central support beam. However, the contractor had been able to repair this as part of the job and had honoured the original quote given despite the additional work. The work cost a total of £11,455.54 excluding VAT.

6. DISCUSSION FORUM

Residents thanked the Committee and co-opted Members for their work.

A resident of Cabrera Avenue raised concerns over drainage and areas of stagnant water. A resident of Harpesford Avenue also raised concerns regarding drainage, as well as overgrown holly and a row of fallen dead trees.

Officers would arrange site visits and meetings with the two residents, but Mr Winfield pointed out that the areas around the Riverside Walk were natural woodland and therefore not formally managed. Mr Winfield stated that woodland was an unusual wet habitat and would not normally be drained. Normally, fallen trees would be left to naturally decay, thereby providing a wildlife habitat and would only be removed if they caused an obstruction or risk to safety.

7. PRESENTATION BY GUEST SPEAKER

Mary Braddock of RSPB gave a presentation on 'Raptors', accompanied by a range of excellent photographs of Raptors.

The Management Committee and members of the public thanked Mary Braddock for a very interesting and informative presentation.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.13pm)