

Runnymede Borough Council

CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 20 July 2017 at 2.30pm

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

The meeting was also attended by 10 members of the public, Honorary Wardens Mrs Lane, Mr Ashby, and Mr P Winfield, Green Spaces Manager.

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs C S S Manduca, Mr Barkham, Mr Midwinter and Mr Stephens

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 27 June 2016 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Cllr Sohi welcomed members of the public to the 2017 Annual General Meeting of the Cabrera Trust and introduced the members of the Management Committee, Honorary Wardens and Council Officers.

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 continued support in managing the Trust's land.

3. ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2017

a) Honorary Secretary's report

The Honorary Secretary reported that the present key issue on the Trust land was the condition of the boardwalks which would be discussed by the Committee at their meeting following the AGM.

There had been no encroachments during the past year.

The Honorary Secretary expressed his thanks to the co-opted members for their help and support over the past year.

b) Honorary Treasurer's Annual Report

The Honorary Treasurer presented the Trust's Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2017.

The balance sheet at the end of 31 March 2017 stood at £225,596. Share prices had moved up over the last year so there had been some capital gain on the Trust's investments.

A member of the public expressed their concern over the longevity of the fund particularly as there was considerable expenditure coming up with the need for the boardwalks and bridge to be replaced. The Honorary Treasurer advised that the Council was committed to the Trust and if the UK economy was in a good position over the next few years then the Trust's position could be reversed. However, if in several years' time the position of the Trust needed addressing the Council would look to set up a plan at that time. It was not possible for the Council to set up a plan at this stage as changes in government funding made that difficult.

The Honorary Treasurer was asked if the running costs could be reduced by using volunteers to undertake the boardwalk works, for example the Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT). Hannah Lane advised that SWT was not an option as they now totally relied on volunteers for their own sites, so had little spare capacity. Officers concurred with this and whilst the volunteers maybe able to undertake odd small pieces of work such as clearing vegetation the work needed for the boardwalks was a specialist job. Work undertaken professionally would also carry a warrantee.

A member of the public asked if it was necessary to replace the boardwalks as they hadn't been present years ago and it obviously cost the Trust money to maintain them. Officers advised that now due to the Disability Act, boardwalks were the only option on site as this made the site accessible for everyone.

4. ANNUAL INSPECTION OF THE TRUST LAND

The annual inspection of the Trust land had taken place on 5 July and had been attended by Councillor Wase-Rogers, Mr K Barkham, Mr J Midwinter together with four Council Officers.

Riverside Walk

The following points had been recorded during the inspection: -

- The path improvements at the entrance to the site from Cabrera Avenue were noted.
- The gabion that had been replaced close to the upstream bridge several years ago appeared to be working well
- Many of the boardwalks were rotten and at the end of their useful life.
- The bridge which had recently been refurbished was in good condition including the structure underneath. The expansion problems with the new boards had been rectified.
- The boardwalk leading to the Station Path had been closed as it was unsafe and needed completely replacing.
- Some coppicing of trees had been done in recent years and further coppicing would be beneficial. Officers would contact Egham and Staines Conservation Volunteers to see if they were available to help with future coppicing and also look at seeking help from other volunteers.

- Generally, the site was in good order and free from litter.

#### Cabrera Open Space

- The Cabrera Open Space was noted to be in good order, with no litter or graffiti.

### 5. DISCUSSION FORUM

A member of the public raised concerns regarding the Himalayan Balsam on the site and asked if steps were taken to keep this under control. Officers advised that the Egham and Staines Conservation Volunteers (ESCV) had been to the site on an annual basis to clear the Himalayan Balsam but problems with volunteer's availability did not always make this possible. The problem being you cleared it one year and it was back the next. Hannah Lane advised that it travelled from upstream and generally Himalayan Balsam was a huge problem in the South East. The SWT were very worried about it, the River Wey being a particular problem area. A catchment group was being set up which was hoped to address the problem. Work needed to start at its source. The possibility of setting up a volunteer group was then discussed. Options for recruiting volunteers included the Connections magazine, a letter drop and local Schools.

Officers were asked about the Committee's current position on opening up the path between 60 and 62 Harpesford Avenue. It was highlighted that the current access was overgrown and led to a boggy part of the site. Generally concerns were raised that selling off this part of the Trust land may set a precedent leaving it difficult for the Trust to turn down any future requests. The general consensus of opinion of members of the public present was they would prefer to see the path remain closed with concerns expressed regarding security at the rear of the properties adjacent to the path if it were to be opened. Additionally, if the path were to be opened a new boardwalk would need to be installed to join the path to the land which would be an additional cost for the Trust now and would have ongoing maintenance costs.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for their attendance and their input which had been extremely helpful. He was mindful of their concerns and this would be considered as part of the Committee's ongoing discussions.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 3.17pm)