

Runnymede Borough Council

CABRERA TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 19 July 2018 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 6 members of the public, Honorary Wardens Mrs Lane, Mr Ashby, Mr K Barkham, Mr J Midwinter and Mr A Saunders.

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs C S S Manduca, Peter Winfield, Chris Dulley, Vicki Balaam and Mr Beesley.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20 July 2017 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Cllr Sohi welcomed members of the public to the 2018 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 five co-opted members, Mrs H Lane, Mr T Ashby, Mr K Barkham, Mr J Midwinter and Mr A Saunders. 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 2018

a) Honorary Secretary's report

The Honorary Secretary reported that during the past year new boardwalks and information boards had been installed.

The Honorary Secretary expressed his thanks to the co-opted members for their help and support over the past year. It was very helpful to have regular feedback from co-opted members on any issues arising.

b) Honorary Treasurer's Annual Report

The Honorary Treasurer presented the Trust's Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2018.

The balance sheet at the end of 31 March 2018 stood at £173,620. It was reported that it had been necessary to draw down on the Trust's investments over the last three years. Interest rates continued to be at an all time low and current incoming resources of £9.428 did not cover the Trust's revenue costs. The Honorary Treasurer advised that it would therefore be necessary for grant funding to be applied for to cover both revenue and capital costs over the coming years, particularly if the Trust needed to finance another large project. Additionally, the community may wish to look at income generation through fundraising activities. Due to reduced support from central government Runnymede Borough Council was unable to provide any financial support at this time. However, if the Trust managed to generate some income themselves the Council would be more likely to look favourably at assisting the Trust in the future if the Council were then in a position to do so. It was, however noted that the Trust deed would need to be looked at to ascertain what could and could not be carried out on the Trust land. Councillor Wase-Rogers would speak to the Council's Head of Law and Governance in relation to this.

4. ANNUAL INSPECTION OF THE TRUST LAND

This year the Annual Inspection of the Trust land took place on 14 June and was attended by Mrs H Lane, Mr K Barkham, Mr J Midwinter, Mr T Ashby together with three Council Officers.

Riverside Walk

The following points were recorded during the inspection:-

- The new interpretation boards were now in situ at the entrances to the site
- Contractors were due to strim around the entrance to the site within the next two weeks
- Path hardening was due to take place in wetter parts of the path within the next two weeks
- The new way-marker posts were a great improvement
- A fallen tree was noted but Officers were already on site dealing with it. One other tree would need to be felled
- Some broken boards at the edge of the upstream bridge were noted. This had already been actioned by Officers and the repair was in hand
- One bench appeared to be rotting and will need to be monitored
- The Forest School site was in excellent order
- The site was in good order and free from litter.

Cabrera Open Space

The Cabrera Open Space was noted to be in good order.

5. DISCUSSION FORUM

Members of the public present at the meeting raised various concerns regarding the Trust's finances, Trust land, and open space;

Some concerns were raised regarding the cost of the replacement boardwalks detailed in the financial statement. Officers advised that the cost had been competitive. The works had gone out to tender, there had been a limited number of contractors able to do the work. It was noted that whilst the statement referred only to bridge repairs all boardwalks had been replaced.

The amount of dead wood and fallen trees on site was raised as a concern by a resident who suggested they should be removed. Co-opted members, Officers and a volunteer from Surrey Wildlife Trust present at the meeting advised the resident that the trees remained on site to ensure a natural habitat. Surrey Wildlife Trust had previously done various reports relating to the site which supported this approach.

It was reported that some muddy areas remained on site and the hole at the edge of the upstream bridge had not been repaired. Officers would look into getting this repaired as soon as possible.

It was reported that the contractors had left some waste on site when undertaking the recent boardwalk work. Council Officers would look into this and the removal of any contractors waste would be undertaken.

It was reported that the open space often had rubbish and litter in the area. Additionally not all of the bins were emptied regularly. Officers would look into this problem and rectify.

It was reported that there were no bins on the Trust land. Officers would organise for bins to be placed at both ends of the site.

There was a large amount of litter adjacent to the Station path which was on railway land and now fenced off. Officers would liaise with British Rail regarding this.

It was reported that the Egham and Staines Conservation Volunteers visited the site bi-annually. Additionally, Mr Saunders had regularly been visiting the site clearing the Himalayan Balsam by the bridges and he then visited the site weekly to prevent re-occurrences.

The idea of a volunteer group being formed was discussed. Members of the public present were happy to facilitate this. Whilst the Council were willing to support the group they did not have the resources to set up or manage the group. It was suggested that initially an advert to recruit volunteers be placed in the parish magazine, the library and on the Virginia Water Facebook page. Councillor Sohi was happy to exchange telephone numbers with residents to assist the group. Mr Saunders was also happy to support. It was noted that any works undertaken would need to be undertaken working to the SWT nature conservation guidelines. The site was unique being the rarest wetland woodland site in Surrey and boasted rare flora. It was suggested that it would be beneficial for the SWT to meet the volunteers on site to advise on the land. The philosophy of the site also needed to be agreed.

Officers advised that an Oak Processionary Moth had been discovered at the Riverside Walk for the first time this year. The caterpillars were covered in hairs which easily shed and could cause health issues.

Officers were asked if they could re-consider the times of the meetings from 2.30pm to either lunchtime or AM. Officers would discuss this and advise Members of the Committee of any changes in due course.

The possibility of using Christchurch in Virginia Water for a venue for the AGM in the future was discussed. There would be no charge. Officers would discuss this option and advise Members of the Committee of any changes in due course.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 3.30pm)