

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK
JOINT VENTURE BOARD HELD AT CRESSING TEMPLE ON 9 JANUARY
2013**

Attendance:

Councillors:

Jeremy Lucas	- Essex County Council (ECC)
Simon Walsh	- Essex County Council (ECC)
Mrs Wendy Schmitt	- Braintree District Council (BDC)

Officers in attendance:

Tim Dixon	- ECC/Head of Country Parks
Paul Partridge	- Braintree District Council/Head of Operations
Steve Bunn	- Senior Ranger
Sophie Campion	- Committee Officer (ECC)

1. Apologies and Substitution Notices

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Graham Butland, BDC.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4. Site Report from the Senior Ranger Great Notley Country Park

The Board received and noted the site report July - December 2012 (GTP/01/12) from Steve Bunn, Senior Ranger Great Notley Country Park. The Chairman congratulated Steve and his team on a good year.

Some of the on-going issues at the Country Park were discussed:

- **Catering Contract** – The Board was reminded that the current caterer had resigned and given notice as it was not financially sustainable for him to continue with the contract. The lease for a replacement caterer had been out to advert in the local newspapers for the past 3 weeks asking for interested parties to put their names forward. The next stage of the process would be interviews. The current provider's contract had been extended whilst the process to lease was progressing.
- **Weather Conditions** – The wet weather had affected the Country Park, particularly the horse track and the sand play which had been completely

under water. Lots of work was planned over the next few weeks on drainage and sorting out the pathways. New Year's Day had been busy as it had been dry day.

5. Sports Update

The Board received report (GTP/02/13) providing an update on the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Great Notley Country Park.

Paul Partridge, Head of Operations Braintree District Council, updated the Board on the withdrawal of NACRO from Sports Development work in the District from 30 September 2012. The District Council was being credited for £7.5k through the Service Level Agreement which was due to run until 31 March 2013.

The District Council had been in discussion with Colchester United Community Sports Trust (CUCST) with a view to engaging them for a 12 month period to assist in delivering the Football Development Plan for a similar cost. CUCST had produced a proposal to deliver the key objectives for the AGP and MUGA and this had been endorsed at a meeting with the Football Foundation earlier that morning. The intention was now to engage CUCST for the next 12 months and the funding for this had been identified. The District Council was confident that the experience, knowledge and skill brought in from CUCST would be beneficial and in addition the CUCST had already been in discussion with Fusion (the District Council's new leisure operator) regarding opportunities for a collaborative working approach across the leisure facilities in the District.

Improvements had been made prior to NACRO withdrawing and with the progress made towards delivering the Football Development Plan, the Football Foundation had confirmed that it was not necessary to hold a 'special review' as they were pleased with progress. The income over the six month period had significantly increased on the same period from the previous year and it was considered that good progress had been made.

Realistically there was still difficulty in attracting off-peak usage, however an arrangement with Braintree Town Football Club had been developed, whereby a pilot programme was being run with their Youth Academy players with block booking of several off-peak slots through the winter period.

The proposal from CUCST still focusses heavily on working with the 'home team' Great Notley Football Club. They remain the largest single user of the facilities and have agreed to attend quarterly meetings with CUCST.

6. Stakeholder Feedback

No issues have been raised by the Stakeholder Groups.

7. Other Issues

Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks, clarified the position regarding the review of Country Parks.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was **Agreed** that the next meeting of the Board would be arranged after the County Elections.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 2.45pm.

Chairman