

## DRAFT MINUTES

### Pagham Harbour Contract Management Committee

Monday 13 May 2013

Present:

- WSCC: Cllr Margaret Whitehead; Charlotte Eastley (Countryside Services Manager)
- RSPB: Rob Carver (Pagham Harbour Site Manager); Adrian Thomas (Pagham & Medmerry Interim Manager)

1. **Apologies.** No apologies

2. **Minutes of last meeting.** Agreed.

3. **LNR Agreements.** AT gave update on progress to sign new tripartite LNR agreements with the various landowners, which will allow RSPB to be a direct signatory rather than just a managing agent for the Council. The jigsaw is being put together piece by piece, but it is important to note that the key driver is not the agreements themselves, because the existing agreements are perfectly adequate, but because WSCC and RSPB would like the suite of agreements complete before WSCC re-declare the LNR boundary (which is needed because there are a few minor boundary changes).

4. **RSPB Progress Report.**

2012-13 Annual Report

Rob Carver gave a verbal presentation of the RSPB's annual report for 2012/13. In summary:

- The year was dominated by extreme weather
- Ecology: Good breeding wading bird and seabird numbers in 2012. Wintering bird numbers at or above average except Pintails.
  - Rare plants – Childling Pink and Southern Marsh Orchids have extended their range
  - Mammals – Water Vole populations increased
  - Issue with hare coursing
- Education: 1,094 pupils / 24 schools(16% increase)
- Events: 44 with 830 attendees
- Volunteers: 17 Practical, 41 visitor engagement, 40 professional/specialist put in a total of 5540 hours
- Visitor monitoring: 12,000 to VC including 20 coach visits
- 2013-18 Management plan completed and signed off by Natural England

#### Current activity and plans – spring 2013

- Internal Visitor Centre uplift – phase 1. Simple refreshing of visitor centre and opening up more space for staff/volunteers so that the working environment is appropriate
- Visitor Monitoring project due to take place this summer (people/vehicle numbers and surveys)
- Initial project development underway looking to deliver key infrastructure improvements over the next few years, such as toilet replacement wheelchair access improvements, replacement of Ferry Pool hide, field teaching facilities, Church Norton car park resurfacing, replacement toilet block. Key plans will be shared publicly once complete.
- Volunteer development - Support for new roles such as Reserve Guides and WEX leaders

Cllr Whitehead raised the option of submitting projects to the South Chichester Community Local Committee for possible funding.

5. **Finances.** There are no problems to report regarding the financial payments as set out in the SLA.

6. **Community Forum**

Cllr Whitehead will chair the Forum, which is on 15 July, 6.30-8.30, at St Ninians Church Hall, Pagham.

7. **Boating Code of Conduct**

- The Code has been pulled together by a subgroup and shared with all interested parties.
- Comments have been received from Natural England
- CE has said to EA that if she hears no comments, she will assume they are happy.
- The Royal Yachting Association has asked for two very small changes.
- Canoe England is happy.
- There is one issue regarding a small area of intertidal land currently shown on the Code map; the ownership is currently being resolved by EA and a private landowner, both of whom have claimed ownership.
- The aim is to complete the Code by 15 July.

8. **WSCC's Legal Agreements.**

- WSCC has a long term aspiration for the leases to be assigned to RSPB for Pagham Beach Holdings Ltd land and Bourne Leisure land in the LNR.
- PBHLtd land. Under the terms of the current Lease, WSCC is entitled to access the Pagham Spit Car Park via Harbour Road. The car park was previously available to the public but having listened to local residents, PBHLtd and the Parish Council, the County Council has restricted the use of the car park to operational visits and educational visits and events. This has resulted in a reduction of journeys along the road from 80,000 per annum to 800 per annum and these journeys include those of other legitimate parties such as Adur DC and the Environment Agency. PBHLtd continue to demand payment from the County Council over and above the annual rent WSCC already pays PBHLtd. WSCC has asked for a copy of the charging policy for other users of the road and this has not been supplied. Negotiations are ongoing.
- Bourne Leisure land. The key contact has recently returned from a period of sick leave which has resulted in delays but the Management Agreement is now being considered before reviewing the Lease.

9. **AOB**

WSCC commented that they are very happy with RSPB's tenure thus far.

**Next meeting:** Date to be found in November.