

Committee Minutes

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

Regional Park Headquarters, Biggar Road, Edinburgh
14 January 2011

Present:-

Members:-

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Paisley (in the Chair) and Cairns (substituting for Councillor Keir).

Midlothian Council – Councillor Thacker.

West Lothian Council – Councillor Carl John.

Scottish Natural Heritage – J Winning

In Attendance:-

A McGregor (Regional Park Manager), D Jamieson and K Logie (City of Edinburgh Council), G Cormack (Midlothian Council) and D Emerson (City of Edinburgh Council).

1 Minutes –

- 1.1 **Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee of 24 September 2010** - the minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record, subject to addition of Mr C Alcorn to list of attendees.
- 1.2 **Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum of 22 October 2010** – the minutes of the meeting were noted.

2 Regional Park – Operational Update

The Regional Park Manager gave an update on matters affecting the Regional Park. Amongst points raised were: Bonaly Country Park – woodland planting;

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Harperrig: possible new car park, footpath on the south shore and new woodland; meeting of chairs of Pentland Hills and Muirshiel Regional Parks, and charging for events and activities. On the latter point, the Regional Park service was proposing to introduce modest level charges for certain activities, particularly those that incurred costs for the Regional Park.

The Regional Park Manager proposed charges for 2011/12 as follows –

Bat Walk	£3 adults, £1.50 children
Pentland Skyline Walk	£5 person
Map and Compass course	£25 person/day

The introduction of charges would bring in additional income for the service and could be extended to other areas in the future.

Decision

To note the report on operational matters and to approve the proposed list of charges for events.

(Reference – report by the Parks and Greenspace Manager, 14 January 2011, submitted)

3 Connections to the Pentland Hills Regional Park – Access Study

The Regional Park Manager reported on a successful bid to the Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund for a study on improvements to access to the Pentland Hills. A firm of consultants had been appointed to undertake the study and report by the end of March 2011.

The award was for £13,000 towards a study aimed at looking at the scope for providing new pedestrian links from established communities into the Pentland Hills. The study was to provide a strategic over-view of routes into the Regional Park and detailed proposals for up to four path improvement projects.

Decision

To note the study award and that a report on the findings would be submitted in due course.

(Reference – report by the Parks and Greenspace Manager, 14 January 2011, submitted)

4 Policy for Memorials in the Regional Park

The Joint Committee had earlier asked the regional Park Manager to carry out consultations on a draft policy to give guidance to the public on requests for memorials within the Regional Park. He now reported on a final draft of the policy, having taken account of the responses received. The responses were largely supportive of the policy and a number of helpful additions and amendments had been made.

Decision

To approve the revised policy for dealing with requests for memorials in the Regional Park, as contained in the report by the Regional Park Manager.

(Reference – report by the Parks and Greenspace Manager, 14 January 2011, submitted)

5 Places Managed for People and Nature

Scottish Natural Heritage had issued a consultation paper 'Places Managed for People and Nature' at the end of the year, the intention being to develop a policy to replace the existing SNH policies on regional parks, country parks and local nature reserves and set out a new vision for how SNH was to support the management of places for informal recreation.

The Regional Park Manager submitted a copy of a response made on behalf of the Regional Park. Mrs J Winning (SNH) explained the intentions of SNH in developing their new policy, further details of which she would report to the Joint Committee in due course.

Decision

1. To note the response to the SNH consultation paper as submitted by the Regional Park Manager.
2. To note that further information on SNH policy development would be reported to the Joint Committee in due course.

(Reference – report by the Parks and Greenspace Manager, 17 January 2011, submitted)

6 Charges For Car Parking

The Joint Committee had previously agreed that consideration be given to the principle of introducing charges for car parking within the Regional Park.

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The Regional Park Manager had subsequently carried out studies and was now recommending that there was scope to introduce charges at four public car parks within the Regional Park i.e. Threipmuir, Harlaw, Bonaly and Flotterstone. The car parks each attracted between 60,000 and 77,000 visitors per annum. It was suggested that a system of 'voluntary charges' be applied in the first instance.

In terms of financial implications, at a charge of £1 per visit, it was estimated that charging could generate a minimum of around £28,000 per annum, based on uptake of a voluntary charge system, or a net income after operating costs, of around £25,000. The capital cost of installing equipment was estimated at around £20,000.

The Regional Park Manager suggested that if the Joint Committee approved the principle of charging, he proceed to consult further with the local authorities, landowners and others in the Regional Park, and including viability of 'out-sourcing' a parking solution.

In discussion, members asked that discussion emphasise the point that the monies were to be applied to the Regional Park, with a suitable press release to accompany the further consultations. Matters of traffic and road safety (from any displacement parking) would also be included within the Regional Park Manager's assessment, prior to a further report.

Decision

- 1 To note the findings of the preliminary investigations.
- 2 To agree to further consultations with the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum and a wider consultation exercise, as recommended.
- 3 To request that the viability of an out-sourced parking service be further investigated.
- 4 To consider a further report once a consultation exercise had been completed and the viability of out-sourcing assessed.
- 5 To agree that a press release be made at time of consultation and to make the point that income would be applied to Regional Park projects including car parking upgrading.

(Reference – report by the Parks and Greenspace Manager, 14 January 2011, submitted)

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7 Date of Next Meeting

Friday 8 April 2011 at 10.00 a.m., in the Regional Park Headquarters.