

Present:	Councillor Neil Murray (<i>in the Chair</i>)
Councillors:	Councillors Yvonne Bodger, Helena Mair and Tony Speakman
External membership:	Ms A Griffiths, Mrs E Langdon-Manning, Mr C J Smith, Mrs M Smith and Mr G Woolfenden
Apologies for Absence:	Ms E Olivier-Townrow and Mrs C Steel

12. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interested were received.

13. Confirmation of Minutes - 26 June 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2017 be confirmed.

14. Matters Arising

None.

15. Presentation: Potential Play Area - Bowling Green (Verbal Report)

Michael Peel, a resident in Lincoln's West End, provided the Commons Advisory Panel with a presentation which set out a proposal to construct a children's play park with a view to improving recreational use of the West Common.

Mr Peel was of the opinion that there were no suitable recreational facilities in the West End for families and felt that the people of Lincoln and the West End deserved a play park to be proud of.

He explained that he was a Corporal in the Royal Air Force and represented over seventy military families in the West End. The Military Covenant sought to encourage integration between military and residential communities and funding could be available via the Covenant to support the proposed children's play park. Other funding, such as Section 106 Agreement funding, the Royal Airforce Benevolent fund, the National Lottery and funding from any other third parties, could also potentially be used to support the project.

Mr Peel outlined two proposed sites that could be used for the proposed play park as follows:

- site A was located on a grassed area close to the Grandstand Community Centre, benefiting from being in a prominent location with good parking facilities and good access for disabled users. Unfortunately, the site was not enclosed and it was close to a main road, a busy stables and the golf course;

- site B was located on the disused bowling green on the West Common, which was already enclosed and was sited further away from the main road. However, the site was quite secluded, there were no parking facilities close by and access for disabled users was poor.

Plans and illustrations showing how the play park on both of these sites would look once built were circulated at the meeting.

A question was raised as to the estimated cost of building the play park. Mr Peel referred to play parks that had been built at RAF Waddington, which were slightly smaller and had cost £250,000. He had received an opening quote of £350,000 for the play park he had presented at the meeting.

Mr Peel reported that he had liaised with the Council's legal team who had confirmed that site B, in principle, would be satisfactory from a legal perspective. It was noted that such a proposal would require planning permission and that the necessary public consultation would be undertaken as part of any associated planning application.

The Commons Advisory Panel agreed that site A was not suitable for the proposed children's play park.

Reference was made to the potential for vandalism to occur on the play park should it be built in respect of site B, but it was noted that CCTV was already in place in the area and could be extended to this site. It was also noted that if the Council had evidence of vandalism, it would prosecute.

The Chair made the point that a funding stream for maintenance would also need to be identified. Mr Peel informed the Panel that a twenty-year warranty for faults or problems would be in place for the equipment he had been quoted for, but appreciated that maintenance such as grass cutting would need to be paid for continuously. He also appreciated the potential for vandalism, especially with site B being as secluded as it currently was. He was keen to explore ways to mitigate this and felt that CCTV was a very good deterrent.

Steve Bird, Assistant Director of Communities and Street Scene at the City of Lincoln Council, made the following comments:

- the principle of a play park in this area was included in the Council's Play Strategy;
- the Council's legal team had confirmed that site B would be legal, in principle, based on the information provided to it at the time;
- with regard to the capital funding for the project, Mr Bird confirmed that Section 106 Agreement funding could be used to support it, but that a significant injection of other funds would be required to secure the quoted £350,000;
- with regard to revenue funding, an ongoing fund would be required to maintain the play park in terms of its equipment, ground covering, boundaries and signing for example, but also to cover arrangements for inspecting the park and its equipment routinely to ensure that it complied with British Standards. Mr Bird offered to provide details of these estimated costs to Mr Peel.

The Commons Advisory Panel agreed, in principle, with the proposal for a children's play park to be sited at the disused bowling club on the West Common.

16. Western Power Distribution- Plans to Lay Underground Cables-Discussion (Verbal Report)

Anthony Parker and Emma Caller from Western Power Distribution provided a presentation to the Commons Advisory Panel which set out a plan to lay underground cables through parts of common land in Lincoln.

They reported that there was a need to upgrade electricity supplies in Lincoln to support a large part of the area and significant new developments in and around the city. In order to create this new capacity it was necessary to lay new cables across the city, with part of the proposed route passing through common land. It was emphasised that they were trying to establish a route which caused minimum disruption to the land and associated wildlife. A map, outlining the proposed route at this stage, was shared with the Panel at the meeting.

A trench at least 1.2 metres deep would be required along the route. Photographs would be taken prior to any works commencing which would then be used to ensure that the Common was reinstated to appropriate standards.

A consultant would also be employed to provide advice and support in respect of any archaeological issues that may arise during the works.

It was envisaged that works would commence early in 2018.

Caroline Steel, representing the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, was not present at the meeting but offered to meet with representatives of Western Power Distribution to discuss any ecology matters. Anthony Parker welcomed this opportunity and confirmed that the route would be tweaked depending on the outcome of the ecology survey that would be undertaken.

The Commons Advisory Panel noted the presentation.

17. Tree and Scrub Works in Support of the Management Plan- South Common

Steve Bird, the City of Lincoln Council's Assistant Director of Communities and Street Scene, presented a report which advised the Commons Advisory Panel on proposals relating to tree and scrub work in support of the existing Commons Management Plan.

Dave Walker, the newly appointed Volunteer Coordinator, provided the Commons Advisory Panel with a presentation which set out a range of additional work recommendations he planned to undertake on the South Common. With regard to the Commons Management Plan and the recommended works, a key aspect of their delivery was encouraging volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator had been undertaking a lot of work to find volunteers for this purpose and was keen to make it easier for the Council to appoint volunteers through its Volunteering Strategy.

Since commencing the role, the Volunteer Coordinator had reviewed the current Management Plan which had been written and implemented in 2012/13. Task lists had been generated to reflect the Plan and its subsequent amendments which could

be shared with volunteers when undertaking required works. Caroline Steel, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, had met with the Volunteer Coordinator and had advised on ecology matters.

A number of handouts were provided at the meeting and it was agreed that these should be circulated to all members of the Commons Advisory Panel.

Members of the Commons Advisory Panel were asked to encourage volunteering through the organisations they represented to assist in delivering this work. Advertising in community magazines, such as Sincil News, was suggested and reference was also made to University students who may also be interested in undertaking some volunteer work.

The update was noted.

18. Fallow Period - Initial View

Caroline Bird, Community Services Manager at the City of Lincoln Council, presented a report which sought the Commons Advisory Panel's views on whether to hold a fallow period in 2018.

It was noted that no specific requests had been received either to hold a fallow period, or not hold one in 2018.

Caroline Steel, of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, had commented prior to the meeting that, at this time, the condition of the Commons was such that it was unlikely that a fallow period in 2018 would be needed, but that this should be revisited in December.

George Woolfenden, representing the West End Residents' Association, reported that a number of complaints had been raised by some West End residents in relation to West Parade gateways onto the West Common, which were very messy and heavy with gates often becoming stuck. Concerns had also been raised regarding the swamp at Long Leas Road with reports of a foul smell emanating from the area. Some West End residents were therefore supportive of a fallow period for the statutory six week period.

A suggestion was made that horses from the West Common could graze on the South Common during the six week fallow period.

The Commons Advisory Panel agreed to reconsider this and make a final decision at its meeting on 11 December 2017.

19. Standard Agenda Item: Commons Management Plan Update

Caroline Bird, Community Services Manager at the City of Lincoln Council, presented a report which provided an update to the Commons Advisory Panel on the Commons Management Plan.

An update on Management Plan actions was appended to the report, which showed a summary of the non-routine actions delivered since the previous update, ongoing works and works planned for the coming quarters.

It was noted that the current Commons Management Plan expired at the end of this year and that a lot of lessons had been learnt since its implementation in 2012/13. The new plan would reflect these lessons learnt, with the action plan being easier to read and understand. Writing the plan was a significant piece of work and officers were currently considering ways in which this could be undertaken, perhaps in partnership with organisations such as the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

The report was noted.

20. Reports from External Members

Councillor Tony Speakman reported that he was recently contacted by a concerned resident regarding someone using a firearm on the West Common. The resident had reported this to the Police but claimed that they had 'talked down' the incident. He asked whether the Council had been informed of this incident.

Steve Bird, the City of Lincoln Council's Assistant Director of Communities and Street Scene, confirmed that the Council had not been informed of this incident and, as landowner of the West Common, would expect such an incident to be reported. He would be meeting with senior Police representatives on a different matter on 20 September 2017 and agreed to raise this matter.