

MEETING OF THE MCDONALD PUBLIC PARK ENDOWMENT TRUSTEES

MCDONALD GOLF CLUB, HOSPITAL ROAD, ELLON

MONDAY 16 MARCH 2020

Present: Trustees I Davidson (Chair), A Forsyth, J Gifford, A Kloppert and A Hassan (Items 3 – 7)

Apologies: Trustees K Adam, S Duncan, P Johnston, G Owen, A Stirling, I Taylor and R Thomson

Officers: E Brown (Formartine Area Manager), C Young (Area Committee Officer), M Ingram (Senior Solicitor), A McIntyre (Principal Landscape Officer) and O Deeming (Landscape Services Officer)

1. MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 22 APRIL 2019

The Trustees had before them, and **approved** as a correct record, the minute of the meeting of 22 April 2019, subject to the following update:

Lynn Gilbert, Friends of McDonald Park, highlighted that it was snowdrops rather than snowbells that were to be planted, and these works would now be carried out next year. The group had been considering improvement works to the burn, but no works had been carried out as yet.

2. TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

The Trustees had before them, and **noted**, the annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019.

The Chair highlighted that the balance was a slight increase on the previous year, due to interest.

3. SCOTTISH ACCESS CODE – VERBAL UPDATE FROM MCDONALD GOLF CLUB

Mike Morrice updated the Trustees that the Golf Club had been experiencing difficulties with members of the public putting themselves in danger by walking out in front of golfers taking a shot, thinking that they had a right of way. The club were very worried that this could result in life changing injuries if persons did not give way to the golfers, who often wouldn't see them until it was too late.

Following discussion, it was clarified that the main issues with access were where the paths intersected the fairways. Signage had been erected asking persons to look left or right, but they were often ignored or even damaged by others. It was **agreed** that the Council would issue a press release reminding persons that, although the park was available to all for recreational use, persons should be mindful and respectful of each other, and be aware of the dangers of walking on a golf course, particularly as golfers might not see someone emerging onto the fairway when they are playing a shot.

Mike added that the club had also experienced issues with dog fouling or persons leaving their bagged dog waste on the grounds. He also highlighted that some people were bagging waste and putting it into the golf club bins, but this prevented the club from sorting the waste to remove items for recycling.

During discussion, it was highlighted that it was an offence for persons not to pick up after their dogs and this could be enforced. It was suggested that the club erect signs on their bins saying 'no dog waste' and it was **agreed** that Landscape Officers would liaise with colleagues to look into installing a dog waste bin at the Jubilee Gardens, for use by dog walkers.

4. UPDATE ON ACCESS PATHS

The Area Manager introduced a paper that had been provided by the Transportation Strategy Team Leader, detailing the four options that had been investigated for a DDA compliant shared use path, linking the northern residential areas of Ellon to the town centre facilities as part of the Integrated Travel Town initiatives to support more active and sustainable travel within and across the town.

The Trustees debated the options before them, commenting that previously they had liked the shortest route shown to them and they had welcomed an approach that avoided Caroline's Well Woods. It was highlighted that these new options were for a more minimal path.

The Trustees asked about solar lighting; whether the path would be adopted by the Council; whether drainage was required; if there would be a contribution by the developer; if the prices quoted would include any required steps; and what capital funding was available for this project.

In noting that the project would need to come forward to the Formartine Area Committee for a final decision, the Trustees **agreed to recommend** Option 4 as their preferred option for the path, with confirmation that this included solar lighting and steps, and further details of the developer contribution.

5. WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN – VERBAL UPDATE FROM LANDSCAPE SERVICES

The Principal Landscape Officer and Landscape Services Officer updated the Trustees on progress with the Woodland Management Plan.

Last year any dead or diseased trees were felled; trees were planted to replace those that had fallen or been felled; and the main path at the obelisk had been widened. This was the last year of the current management plan, but it would be reviewed in conjunction with Landscape Officers and the team were also working with the Friends of McDonald Park. Works would continue with officers considering any new diseases that they might need to manage within the woodlands, as well as removing any species that were not natural to the habitat.

Trustees asked whether the thickening of the hedges was to continue. It was confirmed that these works were ongoing.

6. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Curling Pond

Trustees asked about the wet area at the former curling pond. The Landscape Services Officer advised that they had approached the Flood Defence Team due to the flooding, following the wettest February on record. However, it would have taken a vast amount of engineering to remove the water and it was not a priority for the flood team at that time. But on a positive note, the flood water gathered in that one area and did not affect any neighbouring properties. The Landscapes team would remove any trees that had been affected but would not be able to replace them. The litter would be removed when the area dried up. It was also clarified that no water came into Caroline's Well Woods from the nearby estate, due to drainage in place. Lynn commented that the group had never seen this level of water before, but they were content that it was a natural wet area.

Trustees asked whether there was concern about the level of water, given the thin hedging at the boundary. It was highlighted that it was possibly no more dangerous than the river, however efforts had been made to erect signage that the path was closed - but due to the level of the water, the sign was now in the pond. It was commented that the hedging was not so thin that someone could fall through it.

Markers

Lynn asked about different coloured stakes that had appeared in the woodlands for no apparent reason. It was explained that these markers had been used to mark out the proposed paths that had been discussed earlier. Lynn asked that the Friends of McDonald Park be kept informed of these activities in future.

Vandalism

Trustees asked if there were any issue with vandalism. It was advised that any vandalism was minor and caused by a small group. Mike confirmed that the Golf Club had only experienced minor issues to date.

Gritting

It was queried whether any gritting would be carried out within the park, but it was clarified that it was not within the core gritting network.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Trustees **agreed** that they wished to continue meeting on a 6-monthly basis. The next meeting would be arranged for September 2020, date to be advised.