

Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee

Friday 19 August 2022

PRESENT:

Councillor Shayer, in the Chair.

Councillor Ewert, Vice Chair.

Councillors Carlyle, Salmon, Alvey, Pascoe, Tivnan, Worth and Briars-Delve.

Co-opted Representatives: Derek Richards, Ged Edgcumbe (FOMECP).

Also in attendance: Victoria Pomeroy (Chief Executive Officer for the Box), Chris Burton (Park Manager), Matt Jackson (Land and Heritage), Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Advisor) & Elliot Wearne-Gould (Democratic Advisor).

Apologies for absence: Councillors McDonald, Lennox-Boyd, Daw, Kelly and Rennie.

The meeting started at 10:00 and finished at 11:40.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

12. **To Note the Appointment of the Joint Chair (Plymouth City Council) and to Appoint a Joint Chair from Cornwall Council**

The Joint Committee agreed to note the appointment of Councillor Shayer from Plymouth City Council as Joint Chair for the municipal year 2022-23.

The Joint Committee agreed to appoint Councillor Ewert as Joint Chair from Cornwall County Council for the municipal year 2022-23.

13. **Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Kelly, Rennie, Lennox Boyd McDonald and Daw.

14. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

15. **Minutes**

The Joint Committee agreed the minutes from the meeting held on 19 November 2021.

16. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business from the Chair.

17. **Appointment of Co-opted Representative**

The Joint Committee agreed to co-opt Ged Edgcumbe, Chair of Friends of Mount Edgcumbe Country Park.

18. **Presentation on the Mount Edgcumbe Woodland Plan** (Verbal Report)

Matt Jackson Chief Executive of Land and Heritage delivered a presentation to the Joint Committee and highlighted the following key points:

- a) Land and Heritage was an environmental consultation company that dealt with heritage landscape conservation and woodland creation in Devon, Cornwall and Leeds;
- b) The target had been to have 500 hectares of woodland planted in two years around Plymouth and South Devon, Mount Edgcumbe had been contacted to assess whether the Country park and estate would fit into the project. The Project would see woodland planting, fencing and maintenance undertaken and funded by itself receiving no contribution from the Mount Edgcumbe Country Park and Estate.
- c) The entire estate had been a grade I listed landscape in Cornwall and the project had been looking to complete an environmental impact assessment.

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- a) Tree Planting for the project would be logged under the forest for Cornwall banner;
- b) Introductions of tree species would be given careful consideration and would take into account climate change and the Rame Peninsular's unique native species with its micro climate;
- c) The Project would look into planting a tree to commemorate Her Majesty Elizabeth II's 70th Anniversary of her reign;
- d) There had been a clear management process in relation to ash dieback with some of the worst affected trees being cleared. This problem would be unavoidable and presented a capital issue for the Park.

19. **Mount Edgcumbe Revenue Outturn 2021/22**

Councillor Mark Shayer presented the item to the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee agreed to:

- 1) Note the financial position contained in the report along with the risks, issues and any mitigating actions;

- 2) Note the capital programme and proposals to be presented to Plymouth City Council's Investment Board.

20. **Park Managers Report**

Chris Burton (Park Manager) presented a report to the Joint Committee and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The Park had settled into a new normal approach and had been working without restriction for six months. The Park and Country estate continued to act as the green lung for Plymouth and had recently welcomed thousands of children to a week-long activity session;
- b) The Country Park and Estate had, through various commercial activities, become financially independent from Plymouth City Council and Cornwall County Council;
- c) COVID had a negative impact on the Park in relation to its core volunteers which had significantly reduced. Chris Burton advised the Joint Committee that they had been attempting to rejuvenate the volunteer programme;
- d) The Park Manager had been working on drafting a development plan which included a buildings development plan in consultation with Historic England, it was hoped that the Development plan would be with the Joint Committee for approval in approximately two years;
- e) Parking machines had now progressed to provide payments over the phone and it had been planned to increase the offer to include machines that could accept contactless payments. This would support a move away from solely cash machines;
- f) Numerous events at the park continued to take place consistently, the park would cover its costs through ground rent or through a percentage of turnover;
- g) Lady Emma's cottage had been a success story and was a derelict property until a private individual bought the lease and set the cottage up as a holiday let. Through the Park Managers connections another individual visited the cottage and bought the cottage before returning it to the Park for its own use.
- h) The English Garden House got to the last six for a previous heritage lottery fund bid. The Country Park and Estate had been in discussions with Catherine Marlow with a view to receiving possible future grants. Should this be unsuccessful the Park and Estates would pay £20,000 a year on the building;
- i) The Holiday let portfolio saw the introduction of Rame Head lookout in May 2022, this had also been converted from a disused building and

provided the park with increased revenue. The Holiday let portfolio had recorded high levels of occupancy throughout the year and the Park had established a good partnership with Classic Cottages;

- j) The Park manager continued to ensure that the park was free to everyone and balanced its different user groups effectively;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- a) The Garden Battery would tell the story of the house, Battery, Park and its role in Plymouth Sound as a critically important defensive structure for Plymouth;
- b) All reports completed for the Park would be made available on the Mount Edgumbe website. All papers relating to the Joint Committee would also be published on the website;
- c) The Park continued to look into bringing electric bikes and scooters to the park which would link in to other areas in the region;
- d) Sea grass had been present in Cawsand Bay and it represented the best carbon sink. The Park had been looking into expanding the sea grass meadows;
- e) The park continued to progress as a deer park and had fenced half of the area with the other half coming to a halt due to difficult ground conditions, There had been issues with dog attacks this year and plans had been progressing to re-educate people;
- f) Over the ensuing two years the park would look to make plans for electric vehicle charging stations and the Park Manager had been looking to make changes to the highways and fleet vehicles towards electric;

The Joint Committee agreed to note the Park Activity report.

21. **Friends of Mount Edgumbe Country Park Update**

Ged Edgumbe, Chair of the Friends of Mount Edgumbe presented an update to members of the Joint Committee and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The membership of the Friends of Mount Edgumbe Country Park agreed on 3 April 2022 to proposed changes which had been required by the Charity Commission;
- b) Membership of the Group had increased from its lowest of 550 during COVID lockdowns to 675 members in August 2022;
- c) The cancellation of events during the pandemic significantly impacted fund raising efforts, yet despite this the FOMECP provided £26,795 of funding for 2021 for projects in the park. In 2022 the FOMECP supported four

significant projects in bedding plants (£3,500), Education shelter (£7,500), resurfacing of road adjacent to the Barrow Centre (£20,000) and the repair of statues Athena and Diana the Huntress (£10,000) with a total contribution of £41,000;

- d) Membership costs for a family of four had cost £20 a year and included 25% discounts on anything bought in the Orangery; 20% discount on purchases at business in the park and reduced annual parking fees;
- e) The FOMECP had continued to target an increase in members that were younger in age with the aim of increasing the cohort of younger volunteers;
- f) The FOMECP successfully continued to manage events which contributed positively significant finances to the Park;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- a) The Monitoring Officer for Plymouth City Council would provide advice as to whether Members were able to be part of the FOMECP and also be part of the Mount Edgcombe Joint Committee.