

**Hutton Cranswick Parish Council  
Minutes of the Meeting of the Gatehouse Lake Management Committee  
held at the WI Hall, Main Street, Cranswick  
on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 at 7pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Mrs Johnson (in the Chair), Poolford, Richardson, Scullion, Mrs Thurlow.

**Parishioners present:** One

The Clerk recorded the minutes.

**17/GHL 001 Apologies: None**

**17/GHL 002 Declaration of interests: None**

**17/GHL 003 Minutes – Resolved** - That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 should be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to appending the Plan prepared by Cllr Poolford and the note dated 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 from Cllr Scullion (proposed Cllr Richardson and seconded Cllr Mrs Thurlow).

**17/GHL 004 Public Participation: All Members agreed to suspend the meeting to allow members of the public and councillors with pecuniary/non-pecuniary interest to ask questions or make statements (limited to 3 minutes per person).** Ben Thurlow had informed the Clerk on the 15th January, 2017 that he had found a carp at Gatehouse Lake which looked to have been killed by an otter. Ben had frozen the fish and showed the remains to Members. The majority of Members considered there was a strong indication that the fish had been killed by an otter. Cllr Scullion had sought an expert opinion who considered that it could equally well have been a mink kill, and that without other evidence it could not be assumed that an otter was responsible. The other Members were not convinced the kill was done by mink but far more likely by an otter.

**17/GHL 005 Otter fencing** – Discussion focussed on the potential impacts and protection that could be provided by the installation of otter fencing at the Lake. The Environment Agency had been notified of the incident that occurred on the 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2017. The Agency considered the likelihood of another fatality was fairly high, particularly with good numbers of otter in the Hull Valley and the fact that a lot of the fisheries in the area were already fenced off. Cllr Scullion was strongly opposed to otter fencing; it would spoil the ambience of the place for people who go there simply to enjoy the peaceful surroundings and to commune with nature; an otter fence would not exclude mink, which kill fish, water voles and any other creature they can catch; there was mink in the area, and there was well-documented evidence that the presence of otters tends to deter mink.

It was noted the planning approval was for the construction of a wildlife and fishing pond. **Resolved** – To recommend to the Parish Council to offer a short term lease to the proposed angling club to allow them to continue the removal of the weed and, if successful, the Parish Council to support protecting the Lake against otter attack (proposed Cllr Mrs Thurlow/seconded Cllr Poolford). Cllr Scullion opposed the decision and was very much against any form of otter fencing.

**17/GHL 006 Work Plan** – Cllr Poolford had produced a plan (not to scale) identifying nine specific areas. Members discussed the plan and presented some alternative suggestions for habitat management the following was noted:

- (A) An area of scrub (mainly hawthorn) that was to be replaced by other berry shrubs.
- (B) An area to remain undisturbed, apart for access for weed control.

Signed.....Date.....

- (C) The dipping pond; a clay bank to be formed to prevent the dipping pond drying out to include an overflow drain to prevent flooding of the footpath.
- (C)x Alder saplings to be removed.
- (C)xx Habitat for common and great crested newts.
- (D) An area to allow natural grasses to grow.
- (E) South East corner to be designated a natural habitat allowing vegetation to develop and provide an area for water voles.
- (F) Area to be planted with water margin plants (lilies, various reeds) to encourage further diverse habitat.
- (G) To fell encroaching trees and shrubs (willows). Coppice to regenerate banking and allow for light into the south side.

The following actions were noted:

To seek advice of a tree surgeon - Cllr Mrs Johnson.

To seek quotations for works to the dipping pond – Cllr Poolford.

To seek advice on protection of fish against predation by cormorants – Cllr Poolford.

To seek quotations for the provision of marginal plants – Cllr Richardson.

To arrange for the installation of ‘Keep dogs on Lead’ signs to give more protection to wildlife – the clerk

**17/GHL 007 Next Meeting:** - 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, commencing at 7pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.20pm

Signed.....Date.....