

## Meeting with Waterbeach Parish Council: 21 October 2014, 8pm

### **Present:**

Adrian Wright  
Myra Gaunt  
Peter Johnson  
Brenda Johnson  
Brian Williams  
Jane Williamson  
Alice Grant  
Kate Grant  
Barbara Bull (Deputy Chair)  
Liz Jones (Clerk)  
Tim Leathes (UC)  
Rebecca Britton (U&C)

### **Notes:**

TL set out some broad principles of:

- Unusual position where lots of facilities on site, and U&C starting the process of establishing their condition, as well as put in place their own security and access arrangements, health and safety and risk processes etc.
- U&C aspire to work with both Parish Council and directly with community groups to look at opportunities to make use of things on site, or to look at local issues where facilities or resource from the development can support existing needs or aspirations.
- the importance of being upfront with regard to some of the complexities / issues in terms of cost, timing and how they fit into short, mid and long term planning for the development
- Vital to talk and learn from those who have the historic knowledge
- Also had lots of people and early suggestions, U&C keen to get a process around those to do a proper analysis of the background, the options, the established need etc to ensure things that do come forward are the right things delivered in the right way to be of genuine use to the community.

We then went through the project listed and shared work to date to agree a way forward with each.

U&C also agreed to prepare a map which numbered the projects below and shared where they are within the barrack site.

## **Waterbeach project: Memorial Garden**

### **The Issue (as raised):**

A memorial garden was developed by Major Hornby and put in place by the Engineers in June 2009. It is currently over-run (thought not in too bad a state), and there is concern among local residents that it is not honouring the men and women who served and is not accessible to families wanting to visit.

### **Feedback from U&C:**

Clearly keen to honour those who served and a memorial garden is a fitting tribute. Keen to understand more about the nature of the garden and ashes etc there. There's an immediate need to get that garden into better shape to honour the fallen, and then a discussion about a longer term way of managing, maintaining and ensuring access. Also to fit it in with wider heritage plans as the Masterplan comes forward to ensure that future plans recognise the history of the site, the sacrifices made and the bonds between the village and the barracks.

### **Background Information gathered so far:**

It appears the memorial is to all who served at Waterbeach and not to any specific unit or squadron, but it is heavily supported by 514 Squadron Association, the Museum trustees and members of the public.

There are 99 men from the Barracks killed with no known grave. It is believed that 13 sets of ashes are interred there, although it is not believed to be consecrated ground. There is also a memorial to Maj Hornby's grandson there.

A village group raised and donated money to the uptake of the garden and there is a willingness to volunteer to get the garden back into shape.

There are other spots around the site where memorials have been developed, including to a serving officer who died of a brain haemorrhage – near to the golf club. These need to be mapped out fully.

Major Hornby is suggested as the best contact to fill in the gaps. BB to forward contact details on.

WPC also suggested that if the cemetery is being expanded there may be options for moving the Garden somewhere easier to access, with full permissions etc as needed.

### **Key people for working group:**

Adrian Wright (museum trustee)

Jane (local resident and part of Keep Waterbeach Rural)

Simon Hepworth (514 Sq Assoc)

Brenda Johnson

### **Next Steps:**

- U&C to contact Major Hornby to establish both design/landscape elements and nature of memorials/remains in the Garden.
- U&C landscape team to review and recommend work needed
- Meeting of Group to pull run through the info from Major Hornby and agree work to take place
- Options of volunteer party offered and U&C also happy to commit people/expertise to get the existing garden back into shape
- Subsequent meeting to discuss longer term options for the Garden, access etc.

## **Waterbeach project: Museum**

### **The Issue (as raised):**

A museum was established on site in 1968/1984 (different dates given) and then taken over by local volunteers until the base closure in 2013. The artefacts are currently distributed across the trustees and volunteer. They relate to 514 Squadron mostly but also the engineers. The building was in the building next to the Guardhouse, on the left as you enter the site.

### **U&C feedback:**

Shared some feedback from South Cambs, as to whether a single heritage destination should be established as part of the Farmland Museum. WPC clear that the 2 were very different, and wanted own space for this. U&C happy to look at the options for rehoming the Museum in it's previous building. Discussion around opening hours and access led to a suggested that the Museum is open for a set period during the week, eg one day, and then by appointment with key contact from the group.

### **Key people for working group:**

Oliver Merrington (former Curator of Museum)  
Adrian Wright (museum trustee)

### **Next Steps:**

- U&C to review state of building and necessary repairs
- U&C to review security and access arrangements for museum team and public
- Working group meeting to establish a plan for reopening the museum

## Waterbeach project: Golf Course

### **The Issue (as raised):**

Golf course constructed by the Engineers has fallen into disrepair and been closed to the public since 2013. Early feedback that the community would welcome it coming back into use with a number of key people offering to volunteer to help and help run the club.

### **U&C feedback:**

The course requires significant investment to get it back into useable condition, and it is unclear of the demand. The group have offered to test this with local surveys to establish interest. Other issues include: security and access issue, as the course is not easily accessible from the entrance; club house refurbishment; management of the course; length of time for it to remain, given that it is unlikely to be part of the longer term masterplan for the site.

### **Additional details discussed:**

Golf Course constructed by the engineers in 1969/70: 9 hole so play twice for 18 holes. Course includes a bore hole sunk to help watering the course, as well as a sprinkler system which uses rainwater. The Club used to have about 300 members (estimated about 50 from the base), and charge about £300 membership. This compares with about £800 at Ely. The costs were kept low by use of volunteers and less provision in the clubhouse etc (although initial budget work suggests some form of subsidy was still required to keep the costs that low).

The trees were planted on fairways as memorial trees, and many still have tags on them to mark this (that needs investigating as part of memorial work).

The golf course is in considerably poor state, requiring an estimated **40-60k** in the first year, mainly to upgrade, repair the irrigation system and purchase maintenance machinery. Annual maintenance /upkeep costs: **87k, however for the 1<sup>st</sup> year say 100k** as the course will need more work to get it in order. The clubhouse is also in a considerable state, and was never purpose-built. This would also require considerable investment.

Against that investment, there is an uncertainty of the potential membership of the future of the course, assuming that many members have found other clubs. Milton recently closed – though it was not seen as a good course – and others are struggling with membership. There are 9 existing 18 hole courses with a 20 mile radius of the site.

On review U&C felt this was very unlikely to happen, and WPC were content that it could not be brought back into use.

## **Waterbeach project: Fishing Lake**

### **The Issue (as raised):**

Constructed by the Engineers, the lake was filled with prize fish and open to members of the local angling club. The community have registered an interest in re-establishing fishing rights there.

### **The Issue (from U&C):**

U&C would need to take advice and costs of maintenance, and need to review tree health and health and safety/access issues, but see the lake as a great spot and would be keen to make this work. U&C raised the point that having an established Club, with membership, rules and some management of the use of the lake, would be very helpful in addressing the points above, as then some rules and procedures could be established and enforced if needed.

It was also raised that the village use to have bonfire and firework celebrations on the island.

### **Key people:**

Cllr P Johnson, Trustee and member of the Angling club

### **Recommendation:**

1. U&C awaiting advice on landscape work needed
2. U&C/WPC to establish what fish were left in place (Major Hornby / James Ryley)
3. PJ to discuss interest from the Angling Club and develop a working group
4. U&C to establish security and access
5. Working group meeting to pull together

## **Waterbeach project: Swimming Pool**

### **The Issue:**

Outdoor LIDO was previously available for use by the community who would be keen for access to a refurbished pool.

### **U&C feedback:**

The pool has been peckered through and filled with rocks. It is not feasible to bring it back into use and would be cheaper to build a new one. If there is a need and desire for a swimming pool in the future development, that can be considered and would be subject to future discussions with the community

WPC content that swimming pool is dropped.

## **Waterbeach project: Pitches, Courts and Hangars**

### **The Issue:**

Rugby and football pitches, squash courts, rifle range and gym are all on the base. Can the community make use of them?

### **U&C feedback:**

U&C are just starting to do a review of the facilities there now, and also understand the time frame for future development to see how short, mid and long term uses fit together. We'll need to continue to do that work, but acknowledge there is interest there.

Key element is to understand how any use coming forward fits with existing provision, and where there is real immediate need, or long term aspiration. That needs a bit of work with WPC, SCDC and specific sports groups locally.

One immediate area that could be worth a proper look at would be hangar 43, with the potential to convert into some sort of all weather sports use. But it needs a proper Working Group to establish options and needs:

- Brian Williams
- Mike
- U&C
- Possibly input from SCDC

### **Next Steps:**

- U&C to establish feasibility options on building structure before first working group meeting set up
- UC to raise with SCDC about local gaps in sports provision

### **Waterbeach projects: Cemetery Access and Extension**

**Issue** is two-fold: The access to the cemetery is part of the MOD land ownership, but the village has access by permission. WPC want assurance that the access is secure with the change to the nature of the Barracks, and also to discuss maintenance of the approach, which has some pot holes and needs repair.

The Parish Council also identified a need for expansion of the parish cemetery, owing to the capacity of the existing site and had detailed discussion with MOD previously on this, which came to a halt and led to significant legal costs. The cemetery lies adjacent to the barracks and there is an identified area that would meet the needs requested.

#### **U&C feedback:**

Happy to get to the bottom of the ownership and access issue and come up with a form of agreement that meets the needs of the WPC and does not incur cost to them.

Happy to look at the access road and make some repairs as needed.

Happy to look at extending the cemetery, subject to some detailed planning and environmental processes which U&C are being advised on to enable this.

Once those have been established, happy to sit down with a Working Group and go through and agree next steps:

#### **Key Working group people:**

Michael Williamson, PC Chair

Liz Jones, PC Clerk

### **Waterbeach project: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Well Head and footpath to Denny Abbey**

Issue: the well head has been recently restored by Oliver Merrington, and was established by Dorothy Drewitt and is an interesting part of the former agricultural history of the barracks site. The historic footpath connection to Denny Abbey is also a part of the historic connections of the land, and it's farming history with the Toller family.

#### **U&C feedback:**

U&C shared a picture of the well-head and said they were keen to know more about the history and ensure it had appropriate setting and maintenance.

In the early masterplanning work that U&C did as part of the bidding process for the site, they set out the re-establishment of the footpath to Denny Abbey, so that was definitely something that they would be looking at and pursuing.

Very happy to work with **Jane Williamson** on that.