

Country and Marine Parks Board (CMPB)
Confirmed Minutes of the 77th Meeting

Date : 18 February 2022 (Friday)

File Ref.: AF CPA 01/1/0

Time : 2:30 p.m.

Format : Video conferencing via Zoom

PRESENT

Chairman

Professor LING Kar-kan, SBS

Members

Mr CHEUNG Siu-keung, MH

Dr CHEUNG Ting-on Lewis

Dr CHUI Pui-yi, Apple

Professor HE Shen-jing

Dr LAW Man-yee, Caroline

Mr LAW Wing-fai, Teddy

Dr LEE Nam-yuk, Amelia, MH

Mr LEE Yee-keung, Charles

Mr LEUNG Kin-wai, Ian

Mr LO Pui-lam

Professor QIU Jian-wen

Mr SO Kwok-yin, Ken

Mr YAU Yik-chung, Henry

Ms YIP Yan-yan

Mr YU Hon-kwan, MH, JP

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP	Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
Mr LAI Kin-ming, Mickey	Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
Ms YU Hee-wah, Shirley	Assistant Director (Nature Conservation), Environmental Protection Department(Acting)
Ms CHEUNG Mei-yee, Vivian, JP	Assistant Director of Home Affairs (2), Home Affairs Department
Ms CHAN Suet-ching, Angela	Assistant Director of Lands (Specialist 2), Lands Department
Mr LUK Chi-kwong	Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services)3, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr LAI Chi-tung, JP	Assistant Director of Marine/Port Control, Marine Department
Ms TAM Yin-ping, Donna	Assistant Director of Planning/New Territories, Planning Department
Mr MA Hon-wing, Wilson	Assistant Director of Water Supplies/Development, Water Supplies Department

Secretary

Ms Lily CHEUNG	Assistant Secretary (Boards)1, AFCD(Acting)
----------------	---

IN ATTENDANCE

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Dr Jackie YIP	Assistant Director (Country and Marine Parks)(Acting)
Ms Y N NGAR	Senior Country Parks Officer (Management 2)
Mr Alfred WONG	Senior Country Parks Officer (Ranger Services 1)
Ms Louise LI	Senior Marine Parks Officer
Mr Alan CHAN	Senior Marine Parks Officer (Special Duties)

Ms Y N CHAN

Senior Geopark Officer(Acting)

Ms Angela CHAN

Country Parks Ranger Services Officer (Education)

ABSENT WITH APOLOGIES

Ms CHAN Kwai-fun, Brenda

Mr WONG Lap-kei, Alex

Professor HUI Cheuk-kuen Desmond

Ms YU Pik-fan, Vriko

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

1/22 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular the following members who attended the meeting for the first time:

- Ms CHEUNG Mei-yee, Vivian, JP, Assistant Director of Home Affairs (2);
- Ms TAM Yin-ping, Donna, Assistant Director of Planning/New Territories; and
- Miss YU Hee-wah, Shirley, Assistant Director (Nature Conservation), Environmental Protection Department (Acting)

2/22 The Chairman informed members that, as an established practice, to facilitate the taking of minutes, audio recording would be made during the meeting. It would be destroyed after the minutes have been confirmed.

3/22 The Chairman reminded members to press the “raise hand” button on Zoom to raise questions and comments.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Confirmation of Minutes of the 76th Meeting held on 28 September 2021

4/22 The minutes of the 76th meeting held on 28 September 2021 were confirmed

without amendments.

II. Matters Arising

(a) Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark 10th Anniversary Celebration Programme (Para. 59/21 to 72/21)

5/22 With the aid of a Powerpoint presentation, Ms Y N CHAN reported the celebration programmes organised by the AFCD. To celebrate the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong Geopark's accession to the Global Geoparks Network, the AFCD organised a series of programmes from July 2021. Highlights of the programmes and the promotion campaign were reported in the meeting. Two new facilities including the Kat O Heritage Trail and the Lai Chi Wo Story Room were also introduced.

(b) Annual Board Visit 2021 (Para. 130/21 to 131/21)

6/22 With the aid of a Powerpoint presentation, Ms Lily CHEUNG reported that the Annual Board Visit 2021 was held on 9 December 2021. Members visited the Shing Mun Reservoir Walk in Shing Mun Country Park and the Tai Lam Country Park to inspect the AFCD's enhancement measures for green tourism promotion and the facility enhancement items.

III. Promotion of Hiking Etiquette in Country Parks (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/1/2022)

7/22 With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Angela CHAN briefed members on the AFCD's promotion campaign of hiking etiquette (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/1/2022).

8/22 The Chairman complimented the promotional videos that the AFCD recently produced. He enquired about the view rates of them.

9/22 Ms Angela CHAN replied that the view rates were mostly in the order of ten thousands and could be as high as a hundred thousand for individual video.

10/22 A member suggested making videos to promote the appropriate behaviours of hikers entering villages. Hikers should wear surgical masks, respect village culture and

minimise disturbances to villagers when they enter villages. The AFCD may erect signage at appropriate locations to alert hikers that they were entering villages.

11/22 The Chairman concurred with the member with the new video suggestion and further suggested making videos about animal encounter advice.

12/22 A member said that volunteer groups had been cleaning up refuse at remote coastal locations. The refuse collected were bulky and difficult to be taken away for disposal. He enquired if the AFCD would arrange staff members or an outsourced service provider to collect the refuses at remote locations upon volunteer groups' requests.

13/22 A member echoed with the member that erecting signage would be effective to remind hikers to respect villagers. In addition, he suggested the AFCD advising hikers not to use loud speakers to minimise noise disturbance to the natural environment and other hikers.

14/22 A member complimented that the promotion was down-to-earth and could easily be understood by the general public. He suggested distributing the promotional materials to students through schools. He further apprised the AFCD that Scout Association of Hong Kong planned to organise refuse cleanup activities. The AFCD may share cleanup locations it deemed appropriate with Scout Association of Hong Kong for organising activities after the pandemic was relieved.

15/22 A member remarked that some of the AFCD's Facebook posts received fewer "likes", revealing that those topics or the presentation methods were less popular among the general public. He suggested that the AFCD reviewed and identified suitable method and channel to promote its messages. He opined that as both the Environment Protection Department (EPD) and the AFCD were promoting hiking etiquette, the two departments could join hands in their promotions. Also, he observed that there were more surgical masks left on the trail during the COVID-19 pandemic. Surgical masks were made of materials that were not readily degradable. The member suggested reminding hikers to keep their surgical masks properly.

16/22 A member considered the promotional materials were well designed to target the youngsters. To expand the coverage of the messages, she suggested extending the drawing

competition to kindergartens. The educational information would be a good teaching resource for kindergarten teachers. To further promote the campaign, the AFCD may consider reaching out to local travel agencies and tour guides organising hiking tours.

17/22 A member suggested promoting hiking etiquette through encouragement instead of warning and alerts. For instance, she suggested the AFCD giving out “hiking passports” to children. Parents would stamp on the “hiking passport” when their children demonstrated good hiking behaviours.

18/22 Dr Jackie YIP replied that the AFCD was aware of the disturbances brought by hikers to villages. She said that the Department seized every opportunity to enhance public education. In the geopark, visitors were verbally reminded to respect village culture when travelling on the kaito ferry. As for the refuse collected in the coastal cleanup activities, the event organiser could notify EPD via its Clean Shorelines online platform in advance. Relevant departments including the AFCD would be alerted to take follow-up actions. Concerning the enhancement of education programme for schools, the AFCD had ongoing educational projects, including school visits, educational publications distribution and an online learning platform. The AFCD would duly consider members’ suggestions in future campaigns.

19/22 Mr Alfred WONG supplemented that AFCD had been offering field study opportunities for schools before the suspension of classes due to COVID-19 pandemic, to bring the green messages to students. The Department welcomed text book publishers to make use of its photos and educational materials in school books. As regards the collaboration with local travel agencies, the AFCD had shared the green messages and the countryside code with them. The relevant information was also disseminated to the local travelling sector through the Tourism Commission and the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

20/22 Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP further supplemented that the AFCD would enhance education in the aspects of respecting village culture, disposing surgical masks properly and minimising noise disturbance. The Department would also expand its promotion channels with a view to attracting a wider audience.

21/22 A member suggested stepping up prosecution of improper behaviour in country parks, especially littering along the shore. He believed prosecution could have a deterrent effect.

22/22 A member suggested promoting hiking etiquette through news reports, radio and bus stop advertisements.

23/22 A member suggested the AFCD proactively sharing its promotional materials to relevant organisations and popular hiking Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) to expand the reach. Instead of placing advertisements on television, he suggested that advertising on social media could be a cheaper and effective alternative.

24/22 Another member suggested the AFCD educating the public about the improper disposal of fruit peels and human waste on hiking trails.

25/22 The Chairman said that the peak season for clam digging at Shui Hau Village was approaching. He remarked that it was imminent to educate the public on clam digging. He suggested the AFCD erecting signage at appropriate locations to discourage the public from digging clams and explain the adverse impacts of clam digging on the environment. Also, he suggested expanding the smoking ban to country parks and educating hikers about the danger of causing hill fires.

26/22 A member responded to the Chairman that he had produced a video in collaboration with the WWF-Hong Kong on the clam digging guidelines and the introduction of the clam gauge. He welcomed the AFCD to use the video in its educational campaign.

27/22 Dr Jackie YIP thanked members for their suggestions. The AFCD would consider them when preparing for other educational campaigns. She remarked that the public tended to accept and share the educational messages in a softer tone or an entertaining style. She believed that such approaches were instrumental in correcting misinformation. Concerning the clam digging activities at Shui Hau Village, she said that the Sustainable Lantau Office was working on relevant education programmes. The AFCD would keep in view the situation and assess if the information was appropriate to be shared via its channels. As for prosecuting illegal activities, she apprised members that country parks had stepped up enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic and the prosecution figures would be revealed in Agenda VI - Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report. She added that the refuses found on the coastline

may not solely be a result of nearshore littering. They might have been washed up the shore by water current.

(Dr CHUI Pui-yi, Apple left the meeting at this juncture.)

IV. Summary Report of Country Parks Committee (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/2/2022)

28/21 Professor HE Shen-jing, Chairperson of Country Parks Committee (CPC), briefed members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/2/2022, which provided members with a summary of the issues discussed at the CPC meeting held on 26 October 2021. Members noted the Report.

V. Summary Report of Marine Parks Committee (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/3/2022)

29/21 Professor QIU Jian-wen, Chairman of Marine Parks Committee (MPC), briefed members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/3/2022, which provided members with a summary of the issues discussed at the MPC meeting held on 19 November 2021. Members noted the Report.

30/22 A member opined that the Po Pin Chau Viewing Platform might jeopardize the natural environment. He suggested reviewing the design so that the facility would be built on a minimal scale to preserve the natural scenery.

31/22 A member recalled that the Lantau Conservation Fund (LCF) had conducted research related to the biodiversity in the country and marine parks on Lantau Island. He asked if there was exchange of research resources between the LCF and the AFCD. He suggested inviting the LCF to share their work and findings in the CMPB meeting regularly.

32/22 Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP responded that the primary objective of constructing the Po Pin Chau Viewing Platform was to provide safe facilities for visitors to appreciate the Po Pin Chau scenery. He remarked that the current design, which won the first prize in the “Hexagonal Adventure” Design Competition, was regarded by the jury panel as the most harmonious with nature. The final design of the platform was still under preparation by the Architectural Services Department. As regards the suggestion to invite the LCF to the CMPB meeting, he

agreed that close communication with the LCF could benefit the understanding of the ongoing projects on Lantau Island. He told members that there was an established approval mechanism to avoid funding projects which overlapped with the existing or previous projects of similar scope during the vetting process.

VI. Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/4/2022)

33/22 Dr Jackie YIP briefed members on the Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report from 1 August to 31 December 2021 (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/4/2022). She informed members that more visitors were recorded in country parks and special areas as compared with last year. The increase may be attributed to the relief of the COVID-19 pandemic in Hong Kong during the reporting period. As for the visitor centres, she reported that the Ngong Ping Nature Centre was reopened on 30 November 2021. Though the country park school and public education programmes at visitor/education centres remained suspended, the AFCD launched online education programmes as an alternative. Concerning hill fires, the number of fires inside or threatening country parks remained the same as last year but the scale of the hill fires was smaller. Regarding marine parks and marine reserve, the Hoi Ha Visitor Centre which opened in June 2021 received good responses and was anticipated to receive more visitors in the peak season.

34/22 The Chairman enquired if there was any reason for the increase in the number of hill fires in November 2021 over a year earlier. Also, he asked for the effectiveness of the automated hill fire surveillance system in country parks.

35/22 A member asked if the AFCD had any control over virtual competitions in country parks.

36/22 Dr Jackie YIP replied that the Government was enforcing against group gathering during the COVID-19 pandemic. To consider approving an event application, the AFCD would assess whether the event complied with the relevant regulations. For virtual events that did not apply for permits, the Department would proactively seek clarifications from the organisers. As for hill fires, no apparent reason could be concluded to explain the increase of hill fires in November 2021 over a year earlier after investigations. In the surveillance of hill fire, the AFCD's Fire Control Centre operated round-the-clock during the fire season to monitor the country parks and make quick response to the public's fire reports. The AFCD was

also conducting a pilot trial of an automated hill fire surveillance system at the Tin Fu Tsai Fire Lookout.

37/22 A member asked if there was restoration to the fire sites. He also enquired about the fire prevention measures implemented by the AFCD.

38/22 Another member remarked that organising competitions in country parks usually had to be approved in advance by the AFCD because they had to be conducted on maintained trails and to avoid the eco-sensitive areas. He raised an example of a virtual competition in 2021 that required participants to run on Sharp Peak and opined that a large number of participants would damage the area even though they did not hike at the same time. He asked if the AFCD had implemented control over virtual competitions.

39/22 Dr Jackie YIP clarified that organising sporting events in country parks must apply for permits. When learnt about a virtual event without a permit, the AFCD would proactively contact the organiser and gather information for follow up action as appropriate. The approval of all sporting events, whether it was a virtual event or not, were handled in the same way. As for the restoration of fire sites, the AFCD would restore the sites after conducting site investigations. For instance, after the hill fire broke out in Kai Kung Leng in 2020, a series of restorations were done, including re-planting seedlings and constructing fire breaks to restore the site.

VII. Any Other Business

40/22 Members did not raise any other matters for discussion.

VIII. Date of Next Meeting

41/22 The Chairman informed members that the next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 20 May 2022 (Friday) at 2:30 p.m.

[Post-meeting note: The next meeting was postponed to 7 June 2022 (Tuesday) at 2:30 p.m.]

42/22 The meeting adjourned at 16:30 p.m.

– End –