

**Country and Marine Parks Board
Confirmed Minutes of the 83rd Meeting**

Date : 2 February 2024 (Friday)

File Ref: AF CPA 01/1/0

Time : 2:30 p.m.

Venue : Room 701, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)
Headquarters

PRESENT

Chairman

Professor LING Kar-kan, SBS

Members Attending in Person

Dr Apple CHUI Pui-yi

Miss Natalie CHUNG Sum-yue

Professor LI Xin

Mr LO Pui-lam

Mr SHUM Si-ki

Mr Alex WONG Lap-kei

Mr Henry YAU Yik-chung

Mr YU Hon-kwan, MH, JP

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP

Director, AFCD

Mr Mickey LAI Kin-ming, JP

Deputy Director, AFCD

Mr Desmond WU Chia-chun

Principal Assistant Secretary (Nature
Conservation), Environment and Ecology
Bureau

Members Attending via Zoom Video Conferencing

Mr CHEUNG Siu-keung, BBS, MH

Professor Desmond HUI Cheuk-kuen

Dr Jeffrey HUNG Oi-shing

Dr Caroline LAW Man-yee

Mr Ian LEUNG Kin-wai

Dr Angie NG Ying-sim
Professor QIU Jian-wen

Mr LAI Chi-tung, JP

Assistant Director/Port Control, Marine
Department

Miss Sapphire LO Pui-yiu

Assistant Director (Specialist 2), Lands
Administration Office/Headquarters), Lands
Department

Ms Kathy CHAN Cheuk-ling

Senior Town Planner/New Territories District
Planning Division Headquarters 1, Planning
Department

Ms Brenda CHUI Wai-yee

Assistant Director (2) (Acting), Home Affairs
Department

Mr Wicky CHEUNG Wing-keung

Chief Leisure Manager (Management), Leisure and
Cultural Services Department

Mr Davis WAN Chin-man

Senior Engineer/Planning Policy 1, Water Supplies
Department

Secretary

Ms Lily CHEUNG Man-lee

Assistant Secretary (Boards) 1 (Acting), AFCD

In Attendance

AFCD

Mr Patrick LAI Chuen-chi

Assistant Director (Fisheries and Marine
Conservation)

Dr Jackie YIP Yin

Assistant Director (Country Parks)

Ms Louise LI Wai-hung

Senior Marine Parks Officer

Ms NGAR Yuen-ngor

Senior Country Parks Officer (Management) 2

Dr TAM Tze-wai

Senior Country Parks Officer (Recreation
Development)

Ms Lindy TAM Lam

Country Parks Officer (Recreation Development)2

For Agenda III Only

Mr Paul CHAN

Director, Otherland Limited

Ms Kate LAU

Director, 2 Square Metres

Absent with Apologies

Ms Vriko YU Pik-fan

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

1/24 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2/24 The Chairman informed Members that, as an established practice, audio recording would be made during the meeting to facilitate the taking of minutes. It would be destroyed after the confirmation of the minutes.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. **Confirmation of Minutes of the 82nd Meeting held on 10 November 2023**

3/24 The minutes of the 82nd meeting held on 10 November 2023 were confirmed without amendments.

II. **Matters Arising**

(a) **The Proposed Robin's Nest Country Park (RNCP) (Para 157/23)**

4/24 Ms NGAR Yuen-ngor reported that the Chief Executive had made a designation order for the land shown in the approved map on 24 November 2023 in accordance with the Country Parks Ordinance. It was gazetted on the same day, designating the area shown in the map to be a country park. The Government then introduced the designation order into the Legislative Council (LegCo) for negative vetting on 29 November. A subcommittee was formed by the LegCo in December to discuss the designation order and the scrutiny work had already been completed. The RNCP was expected to be officially established on 1 March this year, becoming the 25th country park in Hong Kong.

(b) **The Proposed North Lantau Marine Park (NLMP) (Para 158/23)**

5/24 Ms Louise LI Wai-hung reported that the AFCD would seek the approval of the Chief Executive in Council on making a designation order for the area shown in the approved map of the marine park in accordance with the Marine Parks Ordinance. It was expected that the designation order would be introduced into the LegCo for negative vetting in the second

half of this year. All statutory designation procedures were expected to be completed within 2024.

(c) Annual Board Visit 2023 (Para 211/23)

6/24 With a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Lily CHEUNG Man-lee reported on the Annual Board Visit 2023 held on 12 December 2023. Members visited the Pak Tam Chung Management Centre in Sai Kung Country Park to inspect the country park management work of the AFCD. Subsequently, they visited Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival and Kau Sai Village Story Room co-organised by Hong Kong Geopark in High Island and Kau Sai Village and learnt about the implementation of the “Same Roots-Same Origins” Project.

**III. Conceptual Designs on Setting Up of New Type of Camping Facilities in Country Parks
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/1/2024)**

(Representatives of Otherland Limited and 2 Square Metres
joined the meeting at this juncture.)

7/24 The Chairman welcomed representatives of Otherland Limited and 2 Square Metres to the meeting.

8/24 Ms Lindy TAM Lam introduced the background of the project. With a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Paul CHAN of Otherland Limited and Ms Kate LAU of 2 Square Metres explained the conceptual designs.

9/24 A Member enquired about the arrangements for cost recovery, school and group bookings, as well as the reservation of parking space. She also pointed out that each of the three sites had its own characteristics which should be suitably incorporated in the design. For example, the Tai Mong Tsai site was close to the sea and the design should take advantage of the sea view; while the Tai Tong site was close to the Yuen Long town centre and nearby villages where camping gears were available for rent or sale, and as such, it was unnecessary for the AFCD to provide equipment rental services for campers; and the Rotary Park site was better equipped so that the AFCD only needed to upgrade some of the facilities.

10/24 A Member enquired about the positioning of the new type of camping facilities. He remarked that public demand for glamping had increased in recent years. He enquired whether facilities like caravans, small air conditioners, power supply and private toilets would be provided, if the new campsites were designed for glamping.

11/24 A Member asked about the positioning of the campsites, the AFCD's expectations of this project as well as ways to incorporate educational elements into the campsites.

12/24 A Member would like to know how educational elements could be integrated with camping. She opined that providing waste collection and recycling facilities at the campsites would contravene the core value of "Take Your Litter Home". She also suggested providing composting facilities for campers to treat food wastes. The Member considered the provision of equipment rental services by the AFCD unnecessary and suggested stating the rules for campsite users and providing information on equipment rental services by private providers on the booking system. In addition, she suggested that barrier-free facilities should be provided at the campsites and trails nearby so as to enhance the outdoor experience for people with disabilities.

13/24 Dr TAM Tze-wai replied that the AFCD would consider different operation approaches, such as signing a revenue contract with an operator. Questionnaire survey conducted under this study showed that the public preferred to use the country park camping facilities for free or at a low cost. It would be difficult for the Government to recover the costs if this operational mode was adopted. The AFCD would continue to study different modes of operation with the Consultants.

14/24 Mr Paul CHAN pointed out that the proposed camping facilities should have a low impact on the environment, and would differ from those provided by the private sector. Therefore, there was currently no plan to provide power supply and private toilets. He agreed that each of the three sites had its own characteristics and the Consultants were exploring ways to make good use of them, including providing facilities for stargazing, campfires and kayaking along the coast of the Tai Mong Tsai site. He pointed out that some private operators on rental of camping equipment currently offered a number of pick-up points. Collaboration with those companies would be explored.

15/24 Ms Kate LAU responded that the Consultants had interviewed green groups and operators of sustainable camping to gather their opinions on the conceptual design of the new

type of camping facilities in the public engagement conducted earlier. Most of the respondents preferred basic camping facilities. Apart from hardware facilities, they expected some software support, such as the provision of educational activities, booking of workshop sessions as they book the campsites, on-site briefing on campsite rules upon check-in, and the setting up of a merit point system to encourage good behaviour. Regarding the disposal of waste, there were diverse views on the provision of rubbish bins. With reference to the operation of the existing campsites, there was possibility that campers would dispose of rubbish improperly if rubbish bins were not provided. Having weighed the pros and cons, it was tentatively proposed to provide recycling facilities. [Post-meeting note: The Consultants were studying how to enable schools and non-profit-making organisations to reserve multiple camping units through a designated electronic booking system. Applicants should specify the number of campers for checking by the staff. In order to encourage the use of public transport, it was preferred not to provide parking space reservation to ordinary campsite users. The Consultants were also studying the setting up of disability-inclusive camping units at Tai Tong and Rotary Park sites.]

16/24 A Member opined that the fees should be set at a level acceptable to the public, and that equipment rental services should not be provided at the kiosks in view of the significant labour cost involved in handling the wear and tear, cleansing and turnover of the equipment. He stated that most overnight campers would stay at the campsites to enjoy nature instead of engaging in educational activities. He suggested adding educational elements to the campsites. Regarding waste collection, he opined that campers should be required to take away all their rubbish.

17/24 A Member enquired whether the Consultants had conducted a baseline survey to understand the utilisation rates of the various sites in different seasons. He suggested that if a booking system would be adopted, there should be arrangements to restrict the use of campsite without booking, as well as for refund and cancellation of booking. The provision of campfire activities might involve safety concerns. He suggested that the educational activities should be mainly targeted at schools or organisations, rather at individual campers, and be provided as a package during reservation.

18/24 A Member supported designs which blended well with nature. She was of the view that the AFCD should properly manage the lawn to keep it in good condition. She opined that the fees for using the camping facilities should be set at a level acceptable to the public to allow the enjoyment of nature by all people. If glamping facilities were to be provided, the fees should be set on a cost-recovery basis. She agreed with another Member

that educational activities might not attract individual campers, and suggested that it would be more economical to combine these educational activities with other existing country park programmes. In addition, she also enquired about the cost effectiveness of the Twisk Campsite in terms of manpower.

19/24 The Chairman enquired about the capacity of each site. In addition, he would like to know the considerations for selecting the potential sites, as well as the campsites considered and not selected. He remarked that the number of campsite users would affect the quality of the lawn and enquired whether the AFCD had formulated any plan to protect the lawn. He also enquired about the on-site staff requirement for the operation of the Twisk Campsite.

20/24 Dr Jackie YIP Yin explained that having considered the findings of the Consultancy Study and the market survey as well as the conditions of the country parks, the camping facilities would be positioned as providing campers with unique nature-based camping experiences in the country park setting, with the aim of causing minimal impact on the environment. Therefore, no luxurious camping facilities would be provided. It was preferred to be run by an experienced campsite operator which could readily respond to the market. A booking system would be adopted to provide convenience to campers, with reference to Twisk Campsite. A survey targeting users of the Twisk Campsite and the online booking system recorded a user satisfaction rate of 80%, indicating that the booking system was effective. The fee level would depend on the operation mode and the details would be further studied by the Consultants. As for the operational manpower of Twisk Campsite, there was one staff member manning the kiosk for check-in and answering enquiries, and another responsible for patrolling the Campsite. Moreover, the AFCD staff would also inspect the site from time to time.

21/24 Mr Paul CHAN said that the current design allowed 20–30, 25–35 and 15–20 camping units at Tai Mong Tsai, Tai Tong and the Rotary Park sites respectively.

22/24 Dr TAM Tze-wai supplemented that the three potential sites were recommended by the Consultancy Study conducted in 2019. The selection process covered a number of existing recreational sites, such as barbecue and picnic areas, with provision of basic facilities and relatively low utilisation rate. The Consultants had conducted ecological baseline surveys for the three potential sites and would draw up designs that would cause minimal impact on the environment. As for the campfire activities, the camp grounds would be divided into different zones by activities to facilitate management. The current design only

included a small campfire zone. He noted that intensive care and careful planning were required in maintaining the lawn. The AFCD would work with the campsite management company and temporarily close part of the campsites for lawn restoration where necessary. The requirements for protecting the lawn would be set out in the agreement to be signed with the management company and the campsite rules.

23/24 The Chairman said that the Wan Tsai Campsites in Sai Kung were very popular and the demand for camping units often exceeded supply. He asked about the reasons for not considering the Wan Tsai Campsites.

24/24 A Member opined that some people who camped at country parks preferred wild camping and did not require management measures or recreational facilities. She asked if the AFCD would promote environmentally-friendly camping practices.

25/24 Dr Jackie YIP Yin responded that the AFCD understood that campers had different preferences and some preferred wild camping. A diversified approach would, therefore, be adopted in the management of the campsites to cater for their needs. She said that the booking system would be introduced to the three new sites. The AFCD would continue monitoring the usage and demand of other popular campsites and consider the appropriate management approach. To meet the demand of campers, the AFCD would explore the provision of more campsites subject to the availability of resources.

26/24 A Member opined that the fee levels should be set taking into account the needs of the underprivileged, so that they could use the camping facilities at a low cost or free of charge. Furthermore, he opined that the underprivileged were less competitive in booking the camping units, and suggested that they should be given priority booking quotas on a regular basis.

27/24 A Member pointed out that the lawn next to tall trees was exposed to less sunlight, and the growth of grass might be affected. She suggested that trees that were excessively tall should be pruned regularly. She also commented that tree risk assessments should be carried out prior to the construction of facilities with a view to ensuring the safety of campsite users.

(Representatives of Otherland Limited and 2 Square Metres
left the meeting at 4:10 p.m.)

28/24 A Member suggested that a designated camping plot could be earmarked in the lawn area at the Tai Tong site, and the camping plots could be rotated periodically to allow time for the grass to grow and recover. Besides, he asked whether the AFCD would undertake the growing of grass themselves.

29/24 Dr Jackie YIP Yin said that the AFCD had prior experience in managing lawns at other locations, and arrangements would be made when necessary.

30/24 Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP said that camping units would not be provided in the lawn area, and attention would be given to lawn maintenance.

31/24 The Chairman agreed that camping facilities within country parks should adhere to the principles of simplicity, minimising environmental impact and easy management. Considering the extensive resources and high costs involved in rental services for camping gear, he did not recommend providing such services. Moreover, rules for campsite users should be formulated to ensure those camping in country park areas would take their litter home. As far as the charges were concerned, he was of the view that a deposit system would be inevitable. In the event of inappropriate behaviour, the deposit should be confiscated. Besides, he advised that the Wan Tsai Campsites in Sai Kung might as well adopt the management approach of the Twisk Campsite to avoid exacerbating environmental degradation.

32/24 A Member remarked that the Consultant's presentation did not cover any finding of studies on overseas cases.

33/24 The Chairman commented that given the scale of the three potential sites, if the venue management work was outsourced, it would be challenging for the contractor to sustain in a self-financing manner.

34/24 A Member opined that in addition to software support, educational activities also required hardware support, such as the erection of educational information boards and warning signs at the venues.

35/24 The Chairman concurred with Members' views. He suggested stipulating the camping rules on the booking system in order to promote self-discipline among campers.

36/24 Dr Jackie YIP Yin thanked Members for their opinions. She said that the findings of studies on overseas cases were contained in the full report of the Consultancy Study and only the key elements of the report were presented at the meeting. The full report had studied overseas examples of promoting good behaviour which could be adopted in Hong Kong.

**IV. Summary Report of the Country Parks Committee
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/2/2024)**

37/24 Mr LO Pui-lam, the Chairman of the Country Parks Committee (CPC), briefed Members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/2/2024, which provided a summary of the issues discussed at the CPC meeting held on 24 November 2023. Members noted the report.

**V. Summary Report of the Marine Parks Committee
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/3/2024)**

38/24 Professor QIU Jian-wen, the Chairman of the Marine Parks Committee (MPC), briefed Members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/3/2024, which provided a summary of the issues discussed at the MPC meeting held on 15 December 2023. Members noted the report.

**VI. Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/4/2024)**

39/24 Dr Jackie YIP Yin presented the Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report for the period from 1 September to 31 December 2023 (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/4/2024).

40/24 The Chairman quoted the examples of the cherry blossom garden at the airport and Tai Tong Sweet Gum Woods and asked if other potential sites could be identified for establishment of scenic spots featuring particular plants.

41/24 Dr Jackie YIP Yin pointed out that extensive planting of the same species of plants in country parks might not be appropriate, given the objective of nature conservation. In order to enhance the scenic value, the AFCD had been adding suitable plants during the

enhancement of 10 hiking trails with tourism value. For example, Buddhist Pines were planted in the vicinity of the Pine and Crane Pavilion to echo the name of the place.

VII. Any Other Business

42/24 There was no other business to discuss.

VIII. Date of Next Meeting

43/24 The Chairman informed Members that the next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 7 May 2024 (Tuesday) at 2:30 p.m.

44/24 The meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

- End -