

Country and Marine Parks Board (CMPB)

Confirmed Minutes of the 60th Meeting

Date : 22 March 2016 (Tuesday) File Ref.: AF CPA 01/1/0

Time : 2:30 p.m.

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

ATTENDANCE

Chairman

Mr TANG King-shing, GBS, PDSM

Members

Mr CHAN Ka-kui, BBS, JP

Professor CHIU Lai-har, Rebecca, JP

Mr CHOW Kwok-keung

Dr HAU Chi-hang

Ms KIU Kin-yan, Judy

Mr LAM Chung-lun, Billy, GBS, JP

Dr LAU Tai-wai, David

Mr LEE Chung-ming, Eric

Professor LEUNG Mei-yee, Kenneth

Dr NG Cho-nam, SBS, JP

Ms SO Ka Man

Ms WONG Pik-yan, Nicole

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Dr SO Ping-man Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Acting)

Miss Charmaine WONG, JP Assistant Director of Home Affairs (2), Home Affairs Department

Ms Trevina KUNG Assistant Director (Estate Management), Lands Department (Acting)

Mr SOH Chun-kwok Assistant Director of Planning / New Territories, Planning Department (Acting)

Secretary

Mr Timothy CHAN Assistant Secretary (Boards)1, AFCD

IN ATTENDANCE

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Mr Simon CHAN Assistant Director (Conservation) (Acting)

Mr Patrick LAI Assistant Director (Country and Marine Parks) (Acting)

Mr Alan CHAN Senior Marine Parks Officer

Mr Franco NG Senior Country Parks Officer (South-east)

Ms Y N NGAR Senior Country Parks Officer (North-west)

Mr Alfred WONG Senior Country Parks Officer/Ranger Services (Acting)

Dr YEUNG Ka-ming Senior Geopark Officer

Dr. Jackie YIP Senior Conservation Officer (Biodiversity)

Dr MAK Yiu-ming Marine Parks Officer (West)

Dr Mok Siu-yan, Flora Conservation Officer (Biodiversity)5

Ms Pauline TONG Country Parks Officer (Special Duties)

Environmental Protection Department (EPD)

Ms Vivian CHAN Senior Administrative Officer (Nature Conservation)

Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)

Ms Vienna TAM Senior Leisure Manager (Contracts)1

Water Supplies Department (WSD)

Ms LAM Lai-hang, Mable Senior Engineer/Planning Policy

Marine Department (MD)

Mr WONG Wing-hung General Manager (Vessel Traffic Services), Marine Department

For Agenda Item V only

Environmental Resources Management

Dr Jasmine NG Principal Consultant

ABSENT WITH APOLOGIES

Mr Jan CHAN

Ms CHAN Po-kam, Beatrice

Ms Suzanne M. GENDRON

Honourable HO Chun-yin, Steven

Ms KWAN Sau-wan

Ms MA Miu-wah, Katherine

Dr MAN Chi-sum, JP

Mr MO Ka-hung, Joseph

Mr AU Wai-kwong, Elvis, JP Assistant Director (Nature Conservation & Infrastructure Planning),
EPD

Mr Donald CHOY Assistant Director (Leisure Services)3, LCSD

Mr LAI Chi-tung Assistant Director of Marine (Port Control), MD

Mr C L LEUNG Assistant Director of Water Supplies/Development, WSD

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

1/16 The Chairman welcomed everyone attending the meeting, in particular the following officers, who were attending the meeting for the first time:

Mr SOH Chun-kwok Assistant Director of Planning / New Territories, Planning Department (Acting)

Mr Simon CHAN Assistant Director (Conservation) (Acting), AFCD

Dr Jackie YIP Senior Conservation Officer (Biodiversity), AFCD

Dr Flora MOK Conservation Officer (Biodiversity) 5, AFCD

Mr Timothy CHAN Assistant Secretary (Boards) 1, AFCD

2/16 The Chairman informed members that, as an established practice and to facilitate the taking of minutes, sound recording would be made during the meeting. The audio records would be destroyed after the minutes were confirmed.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 30 October 2015

3/16 The minutes of the last meeting held on 30 October 2015 were confirmed without mendments.

II. Matters Arising

(a) Preliminary Boundaries and Management Plans of the Proposed Southwest Lantau and Soko Islands Marine Parks (Para. 136/15)

4/16 Mr Alan CHAN reported that a new round of consultation for the proposed Southwest Lantau and Soko Islands Marine Parks was conducted in July last year. In response to the views collected from different stakeholders, the preliminary boundaries of the proposed Southwest Lantau Marine Park and Soko Islands Marine Park had been revised. Given that the subject would be discussed in detail in agenda item V of this meeting, he would provide more information to members later.

(b) Preparation of Draft Map for the Proposed Brothers Marine Park (Para. 140/15 to 158/15)

5/16 Mr Alan CHAN indicated that members gave general support to the draft map for the proposed Brothers Marine Park (BMP) during the last meeting. Having consulted the Survey and Mapping Office of Lands Department and Department of Justice, the draft map of the proposed BMP had been made available for public inspection from 12 February 2016 to 11 April 2016. During the 60-day inspection period, any member of the public might send the Authority a written statement of his/her objection to the draft map. Special CMPB Meeting(s) would be held, if necessary, for hearing the objections to the draft map. After the hearing, the Authority would submit the draft map, together with a schedule of objections and representations, to the Chief Executive in Council for consideration and approval. He anticipated that the statutory designation procedures could be completed by the end of 2016. He would keep members updated of the latest development.

6/16 In response to a member's enquiry about the progress of providing education and publicity about the BMP as mentioned in the minutes of the last meeting, Mr Alan CHAN said that AFCD was preparing pamphlets to promote the ecological features and management plan of the BMP.

(c) Country Parks Public Education Programme: Take your Litter Home (Para. 159/15 to 162/15)

7/16 Mr Alfred WONG informed members that since the pilot scheme was launched in September last year, there had been a decrease in the amount of litter collected at the trial sites. According to the observations of our frontline staff and the volunteer patrol teams, the trial sites were clean. It seemed that visitors were becoming accustomed to the removal of litter bins from the trial sites. In order to further promote "Take your litter home", AFCD had been planning

another phase of education and publicity programme, which aimed at promoting the sense of responsibility to the environment in country parks. Members would be consulted on the details of education and publicity programme at the next meeting.

8/16 The Chairman said that as he pointed out in the last meeting, compared with regular hikers, weekend hikers tended to produce more waste. According to his observation, more litter would be found on Mondays. He therefore suggested putting more emphasis on weekend hikers when planning for the next phase of education and publicity programme.

9/16 A member indicated that the route between Luk Keng and Kuk Po was full of cattle droppings. He was of the view that the cattle droppings were especially eye catching on asphalt roads. He wondered if the departments concerned could clean the area in question more frequently.

10/16 In response to the Chairman's observation that weekends hikers produced more waste in country parks, Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP indicated that AFCD would try to conduct more education and publicity activities at schools to promulgate the theme "Take your litter home" among students and youngsters. As for the issue of cattle droppings, he pointed out that there were currently around 1,200 stray cattle in Hong Kong. AFCD was trying to sterilise the cattle to control their number. In addition, AFCD also worked with Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) to drive them away from main roads. AFCD would also liaise with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) for providing additional cleansing services in the area in question as necessary.

(Mr Eric LEE and Ms SO Ka-man attended the meeting at this juncture.)

III. Public Consultation on Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Hong Kong (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/1/2016)

11/16 The Chairman reminded members to declare if there were any potential conflicts of interest in the matters to be discussed under this agenda item. No members made such declaration.

12/16 With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Dr Jackie YIP briefed members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/1/2016.

13/16 A member raised her concerns over the proposed action area on conservation. She indicated that only 6% of Hong Kong waters, which included the proposed Southwest Lantau Marine Park and Soko Islands Marine Park, would be put under protection. Compared with the conservation target of having 10% of marine and coastal areas under protection as stated in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), she considered that there was much room for improvement in Hong Kong. She suggested taking a more integrated approach to manage marine parks and identify suitable areas for designation as marine parks. As for conservation of terrestrial habitats, she considered that the designation of country parks was an effective means to protect terrestrial habitats. She urged the department to take every opportunities to incorporate the existing country park enclaves into respective country parks, especially those located at the margin of villages and low-lying areas such as rivers and swamps because most of these areas were important habitats for species of high conservation value.

14/16 Mr Simon CHAN of AFCD indicated that any views on the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) would be welcomed. As regards the target of having 10% of marine and coastal areas under protection as mentioned under CBD, Mr CHAN pointed out that it was a global target for all Parties of CBD to achieve together. In Hong Kong, AFCD would make efforts to designate marine parks and fisheries protection areas on the one hand, and to incorporate country park enclaves into the respective country parks on the other according to established criteria. Development within enclaves could also be controlled by the concerned Outline Zoning Plans.

15/16 In response to a member's enquiry about the rationale of setting a five-year period for BSAP, Mr Simon CHAN indicated that BSAP would be carried out continuously. However, it would be reviewed after a five-year period so that adjustments could be made to address any change in circumstances.

16/16 A member commented that among the four proposed action areas mentioned in the paper, mainstreaming, which had not been stressed in the past, was most important. He indicated that apart from AFCD and EPD, other government bureaux/departments should also participate in BSAP implementation. For instances, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) could add ecological elements in the catchment areas of reservoirs, while the Leisure and

Cultural Services Department (LCSD) could make use of those large urban parks under their management for conducting ecological education to the public. He said that the Drainage Services Department (DSD) had already introduced some ecological features in the upper courses of rivers when they carried out river improvement works in recent years. He considered that similar concepts should also be applied to the lower courses of rivers in future. He also supported the idea of getting private land owners of enclaves involved in BSAP implementation through different management plans. He stressed that it was worth putting more emphasis on mainstreaming in the coming five years.

17/16 Another member agreed that mainstreaming was most important, yet difficult to implement. He would like to know if AFCD had any plan to promote BSAP among government departments and members of the Legislative Council and the District Council.

18/16 Mr Simon CHAN replied that AFCD had started their work on mainstreaming before the commencement of this public consultation exercise. Being the conservation authority, AFCD made efforts to raise government bureaux/departments' awareness of the importance of biodiversity so that they would incorporate biodiversity considerations into their planning and decision-making processes. For example, AFCD had been working with the relevant bureaux and departments to incorporate biodiversity considerations into the territorial planning strategy which was being updated. He stressed that mainstreaming was definitely a long-term work because the messages need to be tailored for different groups of recipients. AFCD aimed at convincing more decision makers that biodiversity was not only important to the environment but also beneficial to their work, so that they would actively incorporate biodiversity considerations into their plans, projects and programmes.

19/16 A member opined that the idea of biodiversity should also be applicable to the built environment as well as the natural environment. She considered that the private sector and even the entire civil society should also be involved in promoting the idea of biodiversity.

20/16 Mr Simon CHAN replied that the government also endeavoured to get the private sector involved in biodiversity conservation. He gave the example of BEAM Plus award to illustrate that private sectors could be motivated to incorporate biodiversity considerations into their built environment. He also shared with members that some opinions received in the consultation supported enhancing urban landscaping to benefit local ecology and promote urban biodiversity.

21/16 Based on Mr Chan's feedback, the member further pointed out that being a member of the Hong Kong Green Building Council, she noted that the Council was promoting a scheme called "BEAM Plus Neighbourhood". She could help AFCD liaise with the parties concerned if necessary.

22/16 The Chairman suggested beefing up the text to introduce the action area of mainstreaming so that the intention of getting private sector involved in biodiversity conservation in this action area would be more conspicuous.

23/16 A member commented that education was the key factor to get public support of biodiversity conservation. He suggested that the idea of biodiversity should be incorporated into the syllabus of the primary and secondary education. Another member concurred with the view of the importance of education. He suggested that the government could compile databases kept by NGOs and convert them into searchable databases so that they could be accessed by school teachers, students and members of the public.

24/16 A member enquired if there would be another round of consultation after BSAP had been formulated. In addition, he would also like to know whether there would be additional resources to implement BSAP. Mr Simon CHAN responded that the consultation exercise would end on 7 April 2016. Having considered all views collected in the consultation, a finalised BSAP document would be prepared. As it was the first BSAP for Hong Kong, further views on BSAP would always be welcomed and carefully considered when the first BSAP was reviewed. Mr CHAN added that the government had earmarked \$150 million for implementing BSAP. On top of that, additional resources would be available from the Environment and Conservation Fund for NGOs to apply for organising any BSAP-related educational programmes.

25/16 A member enquired about the detailed allocation of the reserved fund of \$150 million and if any other government departments would be allocated for a portion of the fund. Mr Simon CHAN replied that the fund would be allocated to AFCD for implementing BSAP, for examples, by creating a database for public access, conducting relevant studies, organising educational activities and recruiting additional manpower. Other government bureaux/departments would make use of their own resources to implement BSAP.

26/16 A member commented that it would be more effective if emphasis would be put on participants' involvement instead of knowledge transfer when organising any educational activities for promoting BSAP. She also suggested organising regular exhibitions to arouse public interest in biodiversity.

27/16 Another member pointed out that AFCD set up the Woodside Biodiversity Education Centre at Mount Parker Road. He suggested making reference to the practices of the Singapore Botanic Gardens, which was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to promote biodiversity to the public. He was of the view that while it was difficult to get support from the private sector without providing adequate incentives, AFCD could make efforts to promote the incorporation of biodiversity considerations into large-scale public housing projects in rural areas so that the government could strike the balance between meeting huge demand for housing and the need for environmental conservation. He also supported the idea of getting the local villagers in country parks enclaves involved in protecting their own environment.

28/16 A member pointed out that Ocean Park Hong Kong had recently organised training courses on cetaceans to the Marine Police. Having attended the course, these marine police officers had very positive feedback and showed their eagerness to protect cetaceans. He therefore considered that it was essential for AFCD to strengthen education of different bureaux/departments.

29/16 To sum up the above discussion, the Chairman pointed out that as biodiversity was a subject for the entire society, AFCD should not be the only government department to shoulder all of the responsibilities. In this regard, it was crucial for AFCD to get support from other government bureaux/departments, otherwise BSAP could not be implemented smoothly. He believed that AFCD would take members' views into account and make efforts to get support from other bureaux/departments.

**IV. Preparation of Draft Replacement Maps of Plover Cove Country Park and Lantau South Country Park
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/2/2016)**

30/16 Ms Pauline TONG of AFCD briefed members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/2/2016. Ms TONG highlighted that the proposals to incorporate the enclaves of

Fan Kei Tok, Sai Lau Kong and the site near Nam Shan into the respective country parks were discussed several times at previous meetings of Country Park Committee (CPC) and the CMPB. This paper was to seek members' views on the draft replacement maps of Plover Cove Country Park (PCCP) and Lantau South Country Park (LSCP) and their respective explanatory statements. Subject to members' comments, the draft replacement maps and the explanatory statements would be made available for public inspection in accordance with section 9 of the Country Parks Ordinance, Cap. 208.

31/16 Members did not have any comments on the replacement maps and their explanatory statements at the meeting. The Chairman then asked members to indicate whether they endorse the draft replacement maps of the PCCP and LSCP and the related explanatory statements. As members generally showed their support to the replacement maps and the explanatory statements, the Chairman concluded that the replacement maps and the explanatory statements were endorsed.

V. Preliminary Boundaries and Management Plans of the Proposed Southwest Lantau and Soko Islands Marine Parks
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/3/2016)

32/16 The Chairman welcomed Dr Jasmine NG of Environmental Resources Management to the meeting.

33/16 The Chairman reminded members to declare if there were potential conflicts of interest in the matters to be discussed under this agenda item. Mr Billy LAM, GBS, JP declared that he was a member of Lantau Development Advisory Committee. In addition, Dr HAU Chi-hang also declared that being the Programme Director of MSc in Environmental Management, he employed Dr Jasmine NG, the consultant of this project, as one of the visiting lecturers of the programme.

34/16 The Chairman also informed members that he received a letter from WWF Hong Kong regarding their views on the proposed Southwest Lantau Marine Parks (SWLMP) and Soko Islands Marine Parks (SIMP) before the meeting. The letter had already been forwarded to all members before the meeting.

35/16 Dr HAU Chi-hang also declared that he was a member of Conservation Advisory Committee of WWF Hong Kong. In addition, Ms Nicole WONG declared that she was a member of WWF Hong Kong.

36/16 Dr MAK Yiu-ming of AFCD gave a PowerPoint presentation with regard to Working Paper WP/CMPB/3/2016.

37/16 A member indicated that the Development Bureau hired a consultancy firm to carry out a feasibility study for a spa and resort development proposal on Soko Islands. He wondered if AFCD had been consulted about the proposal. He worried that the proposal would not be compatible with the designation of the proposed SIMP. He would like the representative of the Planning Department (PlanD) to furnish members with more information about the proposal.

38/16 Mr SOH Chun-kwok of PlanD replied that AFCD would be consulted for any development proposal which might have potential ecological impacts on the environment. PlanD was aware of the proposed SIMP and had been working with AFCD to ensure that development proposals at Soko Islands would not be in conflict with the proposed marine park designation.

39/16 Mr Alan CHAN of AFCD supplemented that AFCD was well aware of the spa and resort development proposal and had liaised with the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) earlier to express views and concerns over the development proposal, especially on its potential impacts on the proposed SIMP. He was given to understand that CEDD was conducting a feasibility study for the development proposal at the moment. AFCD would provide comments on the proposal from the perspectives of ecology, marine parks, fisheries and nature conservation to CEDD. As regards the proposed SWLMP and SIMP, AFCD would continue to take forward the proposal according to the original schedule and aimed at completing all statutory procedures of designation of the two marine parks by 2017.

40/16 A member said that he had reservation about the proposal of building spa and resort facilities on Soko Islands. He would like to remind PlanD of the need to consult CMPB if there were any actual plan to implement the proposal. Mr SOH assured members that CMPB would be consulted in due course if the proposal was to be pursued further.

41/16 The Chairman expressed concerns over the management plan of the proposed SWLMP in future. As the marine park located in a busy marine traffic zone, it would be challenging for AFCD to ensure proper management of every aspect of the marine park. He also anticipated that recreational fishing in the proposed marine park might exert further pressure on the management as well. In the circumstance, he suggested allocating adequate resources to AFCD to ensure that the proposed marine park, which involved so many different stakeholders and was located in a heavy marine traffic zone, could be properly managed.

42/16 In response to a member's view on the importance of keeping close liaison with the marine police and other enforcement agencies in marine park management, Dr MAK Yiu-ming pointed out that AFCD had regular contacts with the Marine Police of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) and Guangdong Provincial Marine and Fisheries Inspection Bureau (GPMFIB). AFCD had conducted joint operations with HKPF and GPMFIB to combat illegal fishing activities before. He assured members that similar joint operations would be conducted from time to time in future.

43/16 A member expressed similar concerns over the management of marine parks. She recommended AFCD to take an integrated approach in resources allocation and management of marine parks and to strengthen the enforcement within the marine park area. It was especially essential when a few more marine parks might be consecutively designated in western part of Hong Kong waters as compensation measures under the Integrated Waste Management Facilities (IWMF) and Three-Runway System (3RS) Project. She further urged AFCD to consider expanding the SWLMP to cover the offshore waters of Tai O and Yi O, which were important habitats of Chinese White Dolphins (CWD), if such an opportunity arose in future.

44/16 A member indicated that as mentioned in the letter from WWF Hong Kong, it was essential to extend the SLWMP boundary further north to cover the offshore waters of Yi O and Tai O. He pointed out that with such extensions, all marine parks in the western waters of Hong Kong could be connected together. While he appreciated that the proposal could not be accomplished in the near future, he urged AFCD to consider the proposal proactively. He believed that the proposal would be greatly supported by the public especially the conservationists.

45/16 Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP replied that apart from the proposed SWLMP and SIMP, there would be two more marine parks, to be designated in the coming years as a result of the compensation measures of the proposed IWMF at Shek Kwu Chau and 3RS. While he agreed that it would be a great idea to connect all marine parks at western waters of Hong Kong to create an ecological corridor for CWD, the department would closely monitor the situation and seek suitable opportunities to raise such proposal provided that it would be compatible with the overall planning of the government.

46/16 The Chairman of MPC indicated that the proposed SWLMP and SIMP were discussed in details at the last MPC Meeting. At the meeting, MPC Members unanimously supported the proposal and would like to have the proposed marine parks set up as soon as possible so that CWD's habitat could be protected before the commencement of construction works of 3RS.

47/16 A member enquired about how to fix marker buoys in waters with strong current and make them more visible so that the boundary of the marine park would be easily distinguished. Mr WONG Wing-hung of Marine Department (MD) replied that although the waters in question had strong current, the key factor for fixing marker buoys was the substrate of the seabed. MD was aware that those marker buoys were liable to drift and might pose a threat to the safety of marine navigation at that area if they were placed too close to the shipping channel. MD would therefore closely liaise with AFCD on proposals for installation of boundary buoys in this area. To ensure marine traffic safety, MD also suggested making use of virtual aids to navigation in that area.

48/16 Mr Alan CHAN supplemented that the yellow marker buoys as shown in the photo of the letter from the WWF Hong Kong were not used as markers to demarcate the boundary of marine parks. The buoys used for demarcating the boundary of marine parks were larger in size and equipped with light. He stressed that AFCD would endeavour to ensure marine traffic safety of the area and liaise with MD to identify suitable locations for installing boundary buoys in that area.

49/16 The Chairman thanked Dr Jasmine NG for attending the meeting.

(Dr Jasmine NG left the meeting at this juncture.)

VI. Summary Report of Country Parks Committee (CPC)
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/4/2016)

50/16 Professor CHIU Lai-ha, Rebecca, JP, Chairman of the CPC, briefed members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/4/2016, which provided members with a summary of the issues discussed at the CPC meeting held on 18 December 2015. Members noted the Report.

VII. Summary Report of Marine Parks Committee (MPC)
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/5/2016)

51/16 Professor LEUNG Mei-yee, Kenneth, Chairman of the MPC, briefed members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/5/2016, which provided members with a summary of the issues discussed at the MPC meeting held on 19 February 2016. Members noted the Report.

52/16 Mr Alan CHAN supplemented that AFCD had consulted coral experts of the University of Hong Kong on the coral bioerosion issue at Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park after the MPC meeting on 19 February 2016.

53/16 A member informed members that although he was absent from the last MPC meeting, he provided his views on the proposed visitor centre at Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park subsequently in a working group meeting with the Architecture Services Department (ArchSD) and AFCD. During the meeting, he reiterated MPC members' views on using renewable energy and natural raw materials so that the visitor centre would be compatible with the surrounding environment. He told members that representatives of ArchSD had positive feedback to his comments and promised to consider using renewable energy and natural raw materials as far as possible. However, due to resource constraints, ArchSD would look into the possibility of dividing the project into two phases and aim at completing the work of phase 1 as soon as possible. In phase 2 of the project, ArchSD would seek extra funding for incorporating additional features suggested by MPC members.

**VIII. Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report
(Working Paper WP/CMPB/6/2016)**

54/16 Mr Patrick LAI of AFCD briefed members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/6/2016 on Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report for the period from 1 September to 31 December 2015.

55/16 A member wondered if AFCD had any enforcement actions against illegal feeding of cats. He also enquired about the reason for the relatively large amount of litter collected at Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau while the number of visitors to these two places was relatively few. Mr Patrick LAI replied that although the existing legislation governed only illegal feeding of wild animals at certain locations but not cats, AFCD would monitor the situation and educate the public not to feed cats in country parks. As for the litter collected in Sha Chau and Lung Kwu Chau, there was mainly litter brought by current.

56/16 A member enquired if the four cases of damaging and cutting of plant as shown in the paper involved cutting of Incense Tree (土沉香). He also suggested that installation of electric barbeque grills could be explored in country parks. In response to his enquiries, Mr Alfred WONG of AFCD confirmed that those four cases did not involve Incense Tree. Mr Patrick LAI supplemented that there were cases of illegal damage and felling of Incense Tree both inside and outside country parks. These offences were mainly prosecuted by the HKPF because heavier sentences could be imposed to offenders under the Theft Ordinance. Given that Incense Tree could produce resin at wounds as a reaction against fungal infection, AFCD would treat the wounds of affected trees with anti-fungal paint. This will suppress the formation of valuable resinous wood so as to discourage the offenders from causing further damage to the concerned trees. As for the suggestion of installing electric barbeque grills in country parks, Mr LAI indicated that AFCD had installed some electric barbeque grills in the Ma On Shan Country Park before but the outcome was not very positive.

57/16 Dr SO Ping-man furnished members with the relevant figures of illegal damage of Incense Tree. He informed members that there were 134 cases in 2014 and 120 cases in 2015. The maximum penalty of convicted cases in 2014 and 2015 was imprisonment for 55 months and 30 months respectively.

58/16 In response to a member's enquiry about the material used for building trails, Mr Patrick LAI pointed out that AFCD would use natural materials to build trails in country parks

as far as possible. Concrete would only be used in some areas with serious soil erosion. Though most of the trails in country parks were maintained by AFCD, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) had also carried out construction works for trails within country parks upon requests from District Councils or local villagers. Given that there were different views on the materials used to build trails in country parks, members were invited to provide their comments at the meeting.

59/12 A number of members provided their views at the meeting, which were summarised below:

- (i) Natural materials should be used as far as possible. Although boulders are beautiful, they would make trails slippery and pose a threat to trail users. Among other considerations, AFCD should accord priority to the safety of trail users.
- (ii) For those areas affected by serious soil erosion, concrete could be used as a base layer and a layer of gravels or other natural materials should be put on top of the base layer. AFCD could also consider preparing guidelines or “best practices” on paving trails for the reference of the general public and other government departments.
- (iii) Using concrete to pave trails in remote areas should be avoided.
- (iv) There was no hard and fast rule which was applicable to all trails in country parks. The maintenance works had to be tailor-made to fit different situations of the trails. Subject to the number of visitors and type of trail-users, the desirable type of materials for paving trails might vary. It would be impossible for AFCD to satisfy all different demand.
- (v) As vegetation was a very good surface for hiking trails in country parks, AFCD should consider planting indigenous species along some small trails as a pilot trial.

60/16 To sum up, the Chairman highlighted that AFCD should keep rural character as far as possible when carrying out maintenance works on trails in country parks. On the other hand, AFCD should accord priority to the safety of visitors when choosing suitable materials for paving trails.

61/16 A member suggested issuing a letter to other government departments concerned to draw their attention to members’ views above. In response, the Chairman asked AFCD to convey members’ views on trail maintenance to HAD and other departments concerned.

62/16 In response to a member's enquiry about the frequency of grass pruning in country parks, Mr Franco NG of AFCD replied that AFCD would generally carry out one or two times of grass cutting a year depending on the actual site conditions. Overall speaking, grass cutting would be conducted in spring and late summer.

IX. Any Other Business

(a) Action Plan of Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark for 2016-17

63/16 Dr YEUNG Ka-ming of AFCD delivered a PowerPoint presentation on the action plan of Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark for 2016-17. In late 2015, Member States of UNESCO endorsed the creation of the "UNESCO Global Geoparks" label, making all 120 Global Geoparks, including the Hong Kong Geopark, UNESCO Global Geopark. Together with the World Heritage Sites, the UNESCO Global Geopark forms a comprehensive range of tools for conservation and sustainable development in both local and global contexts. AFCD would continue improving the geopark services in accordance with a new set of operation requirements. Following the formalisation, the next revalidation by the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) would be conducted in 2017. Major actions being taken were as follows:

- (i) Enhancing the synergy between Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark and the Hong Kong Country Parks. Improving visitor facilities with the adoption of new geopark branding system;
- (ii) Maintaining and enhancing the mutually beneficial and sustainable community initiatives;
- (iii) Strengthening our work in popularising science through new initiatives, including talks in local universities, tour guide training to the public and local villagers, establishment of a Paleontology Gallery and an Earth Science Gallery in the Hong Kong Science Museum jointly with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department;
- (iv) Enhancing accessibility of the geopark by facilitating the provision of ferry service running between Ma Liu Shui and Lai Chi Wo and shuttle bus tour service between Sai Kung Town and High Island Reservoir;

- (v) Fostering a closer relationship, strengthening networking activities and exploring further collaboration with other members of the GGN, in particular our counterparts in the Asia Pacific Region; and
- (vi) Facilitating the development, promotion and delivery of quality nature-based tourism products both for local and in-bound tourists.

(Miss Charmaine WONG, JP left the meeting at this juncture.)

64/16 A member expressed his concern over the accessibility of the Geopark. He urged AFCD to liaise with the Transport Department and other departments concerned to further improve the accessibility of the Geopark.

65/16 Another member commented that compared with the geoparks in Ireland and South Korea, the hexagonal rock columns of the Hong Kong Geopark were more impressive. While he considered worthy of promoting geo-tourism, it was essential to have suitable measures to protect the environment from any potential adverse impacts arising from increased tourist number in future.

66/16 A member expressed his concern over the safety issues of running shuttle bus tour service between Sai Kung Town and High Island Reservoir. As an alternate, he suggested introducing ferry service running between Sai Kung Town and the West Dam of High Island Reservoir and shuttle bus service between West Dam and East Dam of the reservoir.

67/16 Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP replied that AFCD always accorded priority to safety. He informed members that the shuttle bus tour service between Sai Kung Town and High Island Reservoir would only be operated by 28-seater coaches. Serving as a trial run, the service would only be provided during weekends and the schedule would not be too frequent. Furthermore, passengers had to buy tickets for the shuttle bus tour service in advance which would help control the maximum number of visitors using the service. He stressed that AFCD would endeavour to strike a balance between promoting geo-tourism and conservation.

68/16 A member thanked AFCD's staff for their efforts in the formalisation of the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark. He suggested making reference to the practices of other countries to create some gateways for the Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark, with a cluster

of souvenir shops and a visitor centre where tourists could join tours to the Geopark. He also suggested promoting cycling inside the Geopark.

69/16 After the above discussion, the Chairman asked AFCD to take note of the above members' views.

X. Date of Next Meeting

70/16 The Chairman informed members that the secretary would let members know the date of next meeting in due course.

71/16 The meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

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