

HIGHGATE WOOD JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 21 November 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 21 November
2012 at 2.00 pm

Present

Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Deputy Michael Welbank (Deputy Chairman)
Dr Peter Hardwick
Barbara Newman
Stephanie Beer
Councillor Jonathan Bloch
Jan Brooker
Marguerite Clark
Councillor Bob Hare
Lucy Roots

Officers:

Edward Foale
Jonathan Meares

Simon Lee

Town Clerk's Department
Highgate Wood & Conservation
Manager
Superintendent of Hampstead Heath,
Queen's Park & Highgate Wood

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Deputy Dennis Cotgrove, Alison Watson and Michael Hammerson.

2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were no declarations,

3. **MINUTES**

The public minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2012 were approved, subject to the following amendment:

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Superintendent advised that it was currently unclear as to whether Local Nature Reserve status would conflict with the *Highgate & Kilburn Open Spaces Act 1886*, and legal advice would be sought before any decisions were made.

4. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE REPORT**

A report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath providing an update on matters relating to the management and enhancement of the Wood was considered.

Sustainability

The Highgate Wood Manager reported that a review of the existing waste management operations in Highgate Wood was coming to an end. Work was being done to implement a service level agreement with the City of London's waste contractors Enterprise. It was hoped an agreement on costs would be achieved soon and the service would be operating by the New Year.

Management of the Site 2014 and Beyond

The Highgate Wood Manager informed Members that discussions were currently taking place regarding staff rosters for 2013/14. The new staffing restructure and changes to job roles were necessary to meet the budget reductions.

Heritage and History

The Highgate Wood Manager reported that plans to progress the return of the Roman Kiln to Highgate Wood would advance following approval of the Conservation Management Plan. This project would provide Highgate Wood with an opportunity to re-establish links with the Museum of London and the Bruce Castle Museum in London Borough of Haringey. Funding would be applied for to carry out the required reconfiguration of the education building. The large earthwork structure at the northern end of the site would be protected by the new 2012 conservation area.

Tree Management and woodland conservation

The Highgate Wood Manager informed Members that tree inspections were progressing well, with investigations focussing on highest priority areas such as Muswell Road and the play-areas. There was a growing national trend towards tree risk management where risk evaluation was addressing the actual risk rather than perceived risk. This system would be introduced over the coming months. In response to a Member's query the Highgate Wood Manager advised that under the new system trees were treated in order of the risk they posed. Highgate Wood management team regularly met with consultants to audit tree management systems incidents.

The new mobile elevated platform had been used to carry out reduction work on two dead trees and removed significant dead wood on three others. The Highgate Wood Manager informed the Committee that the cold spells had led to a much healthier canopy.

Oak Decline Survey

There had been three tree deaths this year, and it was likely that there would be further losses this year and in subsequent years. Efforts were being channelled into creating a long term strategy to conserve the remaining trees and nurturing a stock of replacement.

Play area.

The Highgate Wood Manager reported that a mobile crane unit would be required to start the process of dismantling the tree sculpture due to concerns about progressing decay in the base. The removed sections would be relocated nearby. Members asked officers acknowledge in their monthly newsletters that this decay would continue and to include information on the work being done to prevent it.

Wildlife Update

In response to a Member's query the Highgate Wood Manager advised that the beehives were healthy and Officers would investigate selling the honey produced by the bees in the onsite café and shop. The hives were being managed and cared for by someone from the North London Bee Keepers Association.

Infrastructure and Buildings

City Surveyors had identified funding to replace section of fencing along Muswell Hill Road; this work was due to be completed in the next financial year.

Community and Events

This year's Heritage Day event was well attended and was a marked improvement on the 2011 event which was plagued by wet weather. The Highgate Wood Manager commended the contribution from the Heath Hands volunteers who had been invaluable with the coppicing and clearance work in the new 2012 conservation area.

In response to a Member's query the Highgate Wood Manager informed Members that Christmas trees would not be received for recycling at Highgate Wood.

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5. UPDATE ON TREE MANAGEMENT

Members received a verbal update from the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath relative to tree management. The following was noted:

- A tree survey had been undertaken which showed there was no ash die-back in the wood itself.
- Management was confident that there would be very little ash die-back in the wood as the ash population was so small
- There was currently no ash die-back reported in Queens Wood.

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6. HIGHGATE WOOD CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Members considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update on the production of the new Conservation Management Plan for Highgate Wood. Members noted that the Plan had progressed through four revisions and the latest draft was presented to the Committee. Members were asked to suggest any revisions to the Plan for final sanction and adoption.

The following was noted:

- Three public consultations were held and were well attended. There was overwhelming support for all policies and a broad agreement with the Master Plan.
- The general feedback from the public consultation days suggested that overall heritage was not appreciated by the public and it required further promotion. Officers reported that the location of the Roman Kiln at Highgate Wood should boost public interest in heritage.
- The Conservation Officer from Burnham Beeches had been very helpful by providing Highgate Wood Management with the extensive material that was used for Burnham's own Management Plan consultation.
- The inclusion of Highgate Wood's extensive and long history in the Heritage Chapter would be a priority for the New Year.
- Members noted that Local Nature Reserve status would be a great opportunity for Highgate Wood. The manager would meet with Natural England to discuss the preservation of the site, and strengthen links with neighbouring ancient woodland sites such as Queen's Wood.
- The site was open to funding and it was therefore very important to promote useful links between Highgate Wood and Natural England.
- Members requested that all current and future conservation areas be labelled on maps included in the Plan for clarity.
- The legal aspects of issues covered in the report would be investigated by lawyers in due course.

The Superintendent informed Members that the Conservation Management Plan would be considered by the Management Committee in January where it would be recommended that the Committee endorse it as a 10-year plan for the site. Members requested that all maps and photographs in the final plan be printed at a high quality and in colour. The Committee commended the Plan, and thanked the Highgate Wood Manager for a valuable and well written Management Plan.

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7. **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no urgent business.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be held at 12noon on 24 April 2013 in Highgate Wood.

The meeting ended at 2.45 pm

Chairman

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