



## Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee

**Date:** WEDNESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2013

**Time:** 1.45pm

**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

**Members:** Jeremy Simons (Chairman)  
Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman)  
Dennis Cotgrove  
Barbara Newman  
Deputy Michael Welbank

**Co-Optees:** Stephanie Beer (Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association)  
Councillor Jonathan Bloch (London Borough of Haringey)  
Jan Brooker (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)  
Marguerite Clark (Highgate Society)  
Peter Corley (Tree Trust for Haringey)  
Lynne Featherstone (MP for Hornsey & Wood Green)  
Councillor Bob Hare (London Borough of Haringey)  
Lucy Roots (Muswell Hill Friends of the Earth)  
Alison Watson (Friends of Queen's Wood)  
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)

**Enquiries:** Alistair MacLellan  
[alistair.maclellan@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:alistair.maclellan@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

Lunch will be served in the Guildhall Club at 1pm

**John Barradell**  
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

# AGENDA

## Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

3. **MINUTES**

To agree the public minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2013 (copy attached).

**For Decision**  
(Pages 1 - 6)

4. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE REPORT**

Report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath (copy attached).

**For Discussion**  
(Pages 7 - 30)

5. **QUESTIONS**

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

7. **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on 30 April 2014 at 12.00pm in the Highgate Wood Offices, Highgate Wood, Muswell Hill Road, N10 3JN.

# Agenda Item 3

## HIGHGATE WOOD JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE Wednesday, 24 April 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee held at Highgate Wood Offices, Highgate Wood, Muswell Hill Road, N10 3JN on Wednesday, 24 April 2013 at 12.00 pm

### Present

#### Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)  
Deputy Michael Welbank (Deputy Chairman)  
Barbara Newman  
Stephanie Beer  
Jan Brooker  
Marguerite Clark  
Peter Corley  
Councillor Bob Hare  
Alison Watson  
Michael Hammerson

#### Officers:

Jacky Compton - Committee and Member Services Officer  
Alistair MacLellan - Committee and Member Services Officer  
Simon Lee - Superintendent of Hampstead Heath, Queen's Park & Highgate Wood  
Jonathan Meares - Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Jonathan Bloch and Lucy Roots.

#### 2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were none.

#### 3. MINUTES

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on Wednesday 21 November 2012 were approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Page 3, paragraph 1 to read – Members asked officers to acknowledge that this decay would continue in their newsletters and to include the information on work being performed to prevent it.

#### Matters Arising

**Local Nature Reserve Status** – The Superintendent stated that he felt an application by Highgate Wood for Local Nature Reserve Status was

superfluous and could potentially undermine the legal guarantees currently provided by the 1886 Act.

**Sustainability** – The Highgate Wood Manager stated that the new waste contractor was conducting their first visit on 25 April. The Superintendent stated that, whilst costs were slightly higher given the expense of incinerating waste versus sending it to landfill, this was offset by the fact incineration is more sustainable in the long term and that there was potential for cost savings on future contracts.

**Infrastructure and Buildings** – The Highgate Wood Manager reported that one remaining section (30-40m in length) of fencing remained to be installed along the Muswell Hill Road and that this would be completed this year.

#### 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.

##### **Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan**

The Highgate Wood Manager informed the Committee that following the January stakeholder meeting, the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) had been amended to include material on Queen's Wood and had undergone some changes in terms of its timeline. It is hoped that the current draft is the final version of the plan before it can be published. The plan would be reviewed again after 5 years.

The Superintendent stated that Michael Hammerson had been involved in providing comments on the CMP. Furthermore the Superintendent advised that in consultation with the Highgate Wood Manager that they would produce a summary document, say 6-8 pages, that would be suitable for public consumption.

##### **Highgate Wood Restructure**

The Committee were advised that a new staff roster had commenced that included two playground attendants joining the team in being responsible for closing the Wood to the public at the end of the day. He stated that this needed to be reflected in their job descriptions. The Highgate Wood Manager advised that the attendants had been given conflict avoidance training given the likely nature of their interaction with the public in the evenings, and with potential anti-social groups within the Wood, and this training was underlined by mentoring and support from the wider team and the Hampstead Heath Constabulary.

The Superintendent provided context behind the need for the new staff roster, in that 10% budget reductions necessitated the need for staff to be more flexible. Furthermore as a public body facing a difficult funding climate it is likely further flexibility and new ways of working would be needed in future years. The Deputy Chairman stated that the budget year 2015/16 is likely to be difficult for the City of London Corporation as a whole.

### **Sustainability**

The Superintendent stated that the new Enterprise waste contract had been live for three months and that he was shortly to attend a site visit of the waste plant at Belvedere in Bexley. He advised that the estimates of the amount of electricity likely to be generated by proposed photovoltaic units suggest that generation will match demand from the machine shed. In response to a question from a Member, the Highgate Wood Manager advised that once funding was secured, installation of the photovoltaic system would take around two months.

### **Heritage and History**

The Highgate Wood Manager reported that the five recent Woodland Archaeology courses had been a success and in response to a question from Alison Watson, he stated that it was hoped that the courses would be repeated next year around May or June 2014.

The Highgate Wood Manager advised that the Roman Kiln Project Working Group meetings had been well attended, and that attendees included members of the original excavation in the 1960s. In response to a question from a Member, the Manager reported that the date of a new Education building being opened depended on the success of the forthcoming Heritage Lottery application. He noted that budget priority for the current year was the installation of the photovoltaic cell system which meant that the likely the Roman Kiln Project would be deferred until 2014.

### **Tree Management and Woodland Conservation Work**

The Manager stated that usefulness of the new mobile elevating work platform in clearing deadwood from the canopy over pathways through the Wood. He also noted that coppicing had been carried out on the trees located along the Muswell Hill Road perimeter fence to improve their stability, as many of these trees were located on the old wood bank, a comment area for root failure.

The Manager updated the Committee on the new GPS equipment that was being used by staff for inspecting trees within the Wood. In response to a question from the Deputy Chairman, the Manager confirmed that the GPS technology was being used by other authorities such as Haringey.

At the request of the Director of Open Spaces, the Manager advised that a report on Oak Processionary Moth had been reported in Brent, ten miles from Highgate Wood. The Superintendent reported that DEFRA had set aside £5m for the eradication of OPM in the London Region.

The Chairman suggested that, given the risk of OPM transfer by vehicle, that City of London vehicles transiting between Queen's Park and Highgate Wood be singled out for disinfection.

### **Play Area and Recreation**

The Highgate Wood Manager reported that the tree sculpture adjacent to the play area may be further reduced in 2015. He went on to report that the Cricket Season had recently started. He stated that the recent winter weather,

although affecting tree stability, had also attracted visitors to the Wood thanks to picturesque snow scenes.

### **Dogs in Highgate Wood**

The Manager advised that the use of the Wood by dog owners was increasing and the issues arising from this had been highlighted in the local magazine. The Superintendent stated that complaints were arising around the tethering of dogs outside the café whilst their owners used the face facility. This exacerbated poor dog behaviour and increased noise due to barking and whining.

Councillor Bob Hare suggested that dog tether points be provided on the outside of the café open area fence, at spaced intervals, that corresponded with tables within the fence perimeter. This would allow owners to have their dog nearby and therefore easier to monitor and control. Alison Watson advised that this technique was in use at other sites.

The Superintendent suggested that the café open area could be extended to provide more tables and chairs, thus increasing capacity, footfall and revenue.

### **Community and Events**

The Manager advised of the dedication and excellent work of Heath Hands and their contribution to the Wood. The Manager informed the Committee that a traditional woodworker was in the process of completing a new wooden bench for the use of visitors. It would be ready for inspection by the Committee on their next visit.

## **5. QUESTIONS**

**Compaction** – In response to a suggestion from Councillor Bob Hare, the Manager stated that the use of concrete stepping stones to create pathways through areas prone to compaction was a possibility that could be investigated.

**Mobile Elevated Working Platform** – In response to a question from Councillor Bob Hare, the manager confirmed that MEWP would continue to be used to remove deadwood from above woodland paths, to fulfil health and safety requirements.

**Impromptu Noticeboard – Muswell Hill Road** – In response to a question from Marguerite Clark, the Committee agreed on principle that the fence adjacent to the bus stop on Muswell Hill Road continued to be used as an informal noticeboard for the local community, provided it could be cleared on a regular basis to ensure the area did not become cluttered or prone to litter.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT** **Deputy Chairman**

The Chairman informed the Committee that this was the Deputy Chairman's last meeting as he would be stepping down. The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee thanked the Deputy Chairman for his 6 years work on the Committee and wished him well in his other City of London duties.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the next meeting would be held at 2pm on 20 November 2013 at Guildhall.

**The meeting ended at 1.05 pm**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: Jacky Compton**  
**tel.no.: 020 7332 1174**  
**Jacky.Compton@cityoflondon.gov.uk**

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# Agenda Item 4

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Committee(s):</b>  | <b>Date(s):</b>       |
| Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee  | 20 November 2013      |
| <b>Subject:</b><br>Superintendent's update for November 2013  | <b>Public</b>         |
| <b>Report of:</b><br>Superintendent of Hampstead Heath  | <b>For Discussion</b> |
| <b>Summary</b>  |                       |
| <p>This report provides an update to members of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee on management and operational activities in Highgate Wood since April this year. The report describes progress on sustainability including the new solar panel installation, waste management, the team restructure, conservation and woodland management, infrastructure and facilities, and includes a draft summary document of the Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan. This report also provides information on several other projects which the team have been involved with, including the Roman Kiln and proposed cost saving changes to the play area.</p> |                       |
| <b>Recommendation(s)</b>  |                       |
| <p>That the views of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee be received.</p>  |                       |

## Main Report

### **Background**

1. The summer of 2013 proved to be exceptionally busy, with the extended period of hot weather attracting large numbers of visitors into the site to escape the heat and enjoy the cooler environment. The warm weather extended into the early autumn attracting high numbers to this year's Heritage Day. The team have worked extremely hard to provide a high level of service during this busy period and at the same time still allow time to host a large number of community based activities including two environmental education programmes aimed at primary school age children. The recent St Jude's storm has had a major impact on the site and the work to clear up is still in progress.

## **Conservation Management Plan**

2. A draft summary document has been produced by the same consultancy team that produced both the ten year Conservation Management Plan and the Heritage Assessment. These documents were adopted in March this year and it was felt that a summary document similar to the one produced for Hampstead Heath was required that would provide the core content of the Plan, and could be made available to visitors both in electronic form on the Highgate Wood website and in paper form on request. A copy of the draft document has been included with this report at Appendix 1 and members of the Joint Consultative Committee are invited to provide their comments.
3. The Highgate Wood Manager will be arranging a meeting in March 2014, with both the Highgate Wood Team and members of the Conservation Management Plan Advisory Group, to review progress on the objectives established within the Management Plan and discuss plans for 2014/15.

## **Sustainability**

4. In August the installation of the photo-voltaic panels on the machine shed roof was successfully completed and the specialist contractor returned in September to switch the system on and provide an induction to the team. To date the 32 units have produced 270kw/hrs, but this low output is to be expected during the winter months. The projected output of the installation is 6,400kw/hrs annually, but much of this will be produced in the spring and summer months when the solar input is optimum. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the team from City Surveyors who led on this project and realised its successful completion, in a relatively short timescale.
5. There are a number of other photo voltaic installations in progress at other sites notably Ashted Common office, which is of a similar size to the Highgate Wood system and it will be interesting to compare outputs over the next twelve months.
6. The Enterprise waste management contract which commenced in January this year has progressed relatively well but, there have been problems with the mingling of the contents of the dog waste bins with the general waste collected from the litter bins. The collection of dog waste remains constant throughout the year, but the general waste falls off significantly in the quieter winter months especially from the sports field area. Consequently, during the winter months the compactor unit will contain a relatively high proportion of dog waste This has led to issues with Enterprises collection team, the matter has now been resolved in the short term with the dog waste being put into separate bins and a weekly collection provided by Enterprise.
7. Unfortunately this problem is not easily resolved as the dog walker community using Highgate wood represents a significant component of the users of the site, and they have come to expect the City of London to provide this service as a matter of course. The Highgate Wood team welcome dog owners to use the Wood providing of course the owners exercise their responsibilities to keep their pets under control and clean up after them. However the issue of

disposal of the considerable volume of waste that the dogs visiting the site produce requires consideration and there is now a need to explore ways of resolving this issue.

### **Highgate Wood Re-structure**

8. The provisional roster introduced in April 2013 has experienced some problems, which were anticipated and the team have drafted a revised version that, it is hoped, will address the issues and improve the work/life balance of the team. It is proposed to adopt this arrangement in January 2014, subject to further consultation with both staff and management. As ever, the challenge is to maintain staff cover during the long opening hours that extend from the middle of May until mid-September, while still providing adequate staff for all the community based activities, sports fixtures and other key duties.
9. The evaluation process for the two new Keeper positions has been completed. During November, letters will be sent out to the team to advise them of progress with the re-structure and updating them on the introduction of the revised roster in early 2014.
10. From April 2014 onwards the team establishment will be six staff, with some additional resource for bringing in casual staff during the summer season, when the permanent staff take annual leave. We have been very fortunate to have had three years of financial support from City Bridge Trust to cover the deleted Wood Keeper post, but this funding will cease from the beginning of the new financial year and the team will need to be more resourceful, to maintain the same level of service that has been provided in previous years.

### **Heritage and the Roman Kiln Project**

11. This project is progressing well with a site meeting held in September with the company Norwegian Log who constructed the Education building in 1996 to obtain detailed costings for reconfiguring the existing building. The meeting was facilitated by the City Surveyors team and the company was requested to provide specifications for a series of revisions to the existing building to accommodate and exhibit the original Roman Kiln.
12. Quotations were received in early October for three different options to expand the building with prices starting at £18,000 through to £33,000 for the version offering the greatest space. These costs can now be used to provide detailed evidence to complete and submit the first round of the Heritage Lottery funding application. There are additional costs which need to be factored in involving the installation of a bespoke display cabinet for the kiln and the new display units for the interpretation.

### **Tree management and woodland conservation work**

13. The St Jude's storm event of the 28<sup>th</sup> October has and will remain, the focus of the team's efforts over the coming weeks. Information is still been gathered from the other Open Spaces, but initial indications suggest that Highgate

Wood has one of the highest number of trees damaged with a current total of 120. Fortunately there were relatively few total tree failures, most of the damage being focused on branch failures, nether the less, the photographs below provide evidence of the force of the winds. There is no doubt that this storm event was not of the magnitude of the 1987 Hurricane both in terms of wind speed and duration.



**Figure 1: clearing storm damage operation**



**Figure 2: major limb failure on oak**

14. The clear up operation has focused on pathways and high use areas first and foremost. It was a great relief to see that there were no damage to any of the road side trees on Muswell Hill Road, probably due to the topography and the protection afforded by the woodland to the west. The team have another two to three weeks work ahead of them removing hanging branches and stabilising damaged crowns, before the clear up work can commence. The Hampstead Heath tree team will be assisting with the work when they can break away from priority work addressing the significant tree damage across Hampstead Heath
15. It is really important to recognise that storm events of this scale are part of the natural weather cycles of a maritime climate, and they do have a beneficial impact on closed canopy woodland habitats, opening up gaps in the tree cover and allowing natural regeneration to occur. The oak population unfortunately took the brunt of the storm with over 95 trees damaged but only six of these were total failures. Although there were many damaged branches this event should initiate extensive regrowth on many of the effected trees and the response during next year's growing season will be carefully watched.
16. The Heath hands volunteer sessions got off to a positive start in September with work starting on releasing a number of the oak standards and allowing more light to reach the lower canopy to encourage epicormic development and gradual retrenchment. The trees selected are part of the oak decline study group and they will be monitored to measure and record their response.

## **Oak decline Survey work and results**

17. The survey is now in its fourth year and there have been some changes in the methodology to improve the data collection process and widen the scope of the information collected. All the oak trees in the survey group have now been plotted using GPS and the field data is collected and recorded using a handheld Trimble unit which can then be downloaded back at the office. A large number of photos have been taken to record canopy health, and fungal species have also been recorded growing within the rooting zones of trees. Additional features have also been recorded this year including buttress morphology and epicormic growth.
18. Four years on from the survey's start in the summer of 2010 we are still no closer to understanding the full picture of why the oaks are dying prematurely. However there is now a significant amount of data and this autumn the Ecologist was able to provide information about the changes in the survey group over the four year period. The overall results are interesting showing a trend of overall stability with over 60% of the trees surveyed showing very little change. There is an encouraging sign of improvement in a number of the trees which will be closely monitored. The springs of 2012 and 2013 were both exceptional in their late onset and this had a wide ranging impact on caterpillar and other insect species which rely on oak foliage for larval development. This may be one of the factors why a number of the trees appear to have fuller canopies.
19. The survey's importance cannot be over emphasised; especially as this appears to be one of only a handful being carried out across the whole of the United Kingdom and its validity will increase with time, time being the critical factor when dealing with a tree species that has an average lifespan of 300 years or in many cases much longer.

## **Play area and Recreation**

20. The existing forest bark play surface in the over fives section of the play area is very high maintenance and requires replenishing every two years at a cost of £2,000 excluding the labour costs involved. The total labour costs alone of managing this surface over twelve months is close to £8,000 which involves daily sweeping up displaced bark, and digging over compacted area to ensure that the surface retains its fall absorption properties.
21. With the reduction in staff and the change in role of the two play area attendants there is a need to identify areas where efficiencies can be made and changing the existing surface to a rubberised one would save staff time and improve the safety of the higher units. Quotes are being obtained from play area contractors and the intention is to focus on re-surfacing the area around the space net unit and the chain bridge down to the disabled area. The prices obtained so far range from £27,000 to £33,000. Quotes will also be obtained for re surfacing individual play units which may allow more flexibility for budget spend this financial year.

22. This year the four cricket teams were exactly the same as previous years. With over 40 games being played between April and September 2012; only three games were cancelled due to a waterlogged pitch. The two Sunday football teams are new as both the old teams were disbanded due to lack of players and financial difficulties. The two new teams are Hornsey & Highgate FC and Lokomotiv Thunder FC. Three teams were interviewed in March 2013 and the two teams above were offered places shortly after.
23. The cricket season finished in September and immediately afterwards a company was contracted in to carry out the renovation work of scarifying the whole square and reseeding and top dressing with new soil in preparation for next season. We will give the square a small covering of Autumn and Winter fertilizer in November to help the new grass set root and hopeful withstand the winter months. The cricket square is now fenced off and the only works carried out now is daily brushing of the grass in the mornings to knock the dew off.
24. The whole field was over seeded at the beginning of October to lay down the foundation for the winter sports programme and ensure good grass coverage throughout the year. We will also carry out an Autumn and Winter fertilize early in November and then a Spring and Summer fertilize in April 2014.
25. It was decided early this year that the management team at Highgate Wood would take full control of applications, bookings, and fixtures for all sports to ensure more effective control of charging. This was decided in June 2013, so we could start the bookings for the forthcoming football season. As a consequence every football team had paid in full their fees before the season commenced ensuring we did not lose this valuable income stream.

### **Community and Events**

26. Highgate Wood received just under 300,000 visitors between April and October with over 30,000 visits recorded to the play area. Heritage Day on the 1<sup>st</sup> September attracted larger crowds than previous years largely due to the warm sunny weather, and we believe that there were well over 600 people attending the event, a significant number of which were children.
27. The statistics of community hours worked by the Highgate Wood team are impressive, with 1,421 logged between April and October. A large part of this is devoted to the maintenance and upkeep of the sports field and preparation for school sports days during the summer period. Heath Hands have held a number of very productive sessions in September and October and to date have carried out 157 hours of voluntary work largely focused on woodland management. Their work will continue through the winter and it is encouraging to see the group growing in size.
28. Many of the team walk talks and community events are focused on children and in the period between April and October there were 1,455 children visits recorded, excluding the children who came along on Heritage Day. Highgate Wood is now hosting two environmental education programmes for children, which commenced last summer and to date have involved over 300 children. The majority of these children are primary school classes from local schools in the surrounding area, but we do have schools coming from further afield.

Highgate Wood provides an invaluable learning resource for many of these kids, giving them an opportunity to experience a woodland environment in an urban setting. This is a community service that the team enjoy providing and is at the very core of the City of London's Community Strategy.



**Figure 3: wild flower meadow and visitors enjoying the warm summer weather**

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

29. The proposal contributes to producing a Clean, Pleasant and Attractive City (Objective CPAC4) and to Conserve and Protect Biodiversity (Goal 15) in the Community Strategy. It will help fulfil the Department's Strategic Goals and Objectives 2 (To adopt sustainable and sensitive working practices, promote biodiversity and protect the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations) and 5 (To ensure that the profile of the Open Spaces is further recognised through working in partnership with others to promote our sites and through influencing policies at a local, regional and national level)

### **Implications**

30. There are no financial implications arising from this report, the operational requirements highlighted in the report will be met from the Superintendents' local risk budget.



## **Conclusion**

31. Despite the reduction in Highgate Wood's staff establishment the level of service provided over the last six months has been of a very high standard. The team have worked through a very challenging period, first having to deal with high visitor numbers during the extended hot summer period then the severity of the recent storm. The team have shown great professionalism and level headedness throughout, and are clearly now thinking of where they can realise efficiencies but at the same time not compromise the level of service that the public have grown to expect.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix One** Highgate Wood Conservation Plan Summary

#### **Jonathan Meares**

Highgate Wood Manager

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# Highgate Wood

Conservation Management Plan

## A Vision for Highgate Wood

2013-2023



Summary Document





# Introduction

Highgate Wood comprises 28 hectares of ancient woodland set within the dense urban surroundings of the London Borough of Haringey in north London. The Wood is owned and managed by the City of London and has a long history of occupation and use dating back to Roman times. Its long history combined with the rich and diverse woodland habitat and facilities such as the playground, sport pitch and café ensures that the Wood is a much loved resource for the surrounding community and beyond.

## Why produce a Conservation Management Plan for Highgate Wood?

Conservation Management Plans help landowners and managers to identify and understand what is important about a site and provides a long-term strategy to ensure these features are protected, repaired or enhanced as appropriate.

The Conservation Management Plan for Highgate Wood considers the themes of heritage, 'natural' environment, community and recreation, and built environment to record the character and features of this popular site. These themes are also used to assess the relative values and significances of the site and to identify key issues, vulnerabilities and opportunities. The results of this investigation and analysis work are then taken forward to inform the development of a vision and management policies which will be used to guide the future conservation and enhancement of Highgate Wood.

## How the Conservation Management Plan for Highgate Wood has been produced?

The Conservation Management Plan has been developed through consultation with the Highgate Wood Advisory Group (which includes representatives of local community groups/ organisations and members of the Highgate Wood management team) and wider public consultation at Highgate Wood.

Visitors to Highgate Wood were given the opportunity to comment on the proposals for the conservation and management of the Woods during two public consultation events. The responses from these events were very positive with the results revealing that the majority of respondents were supportive the proposals for Highgate Wood.



Aerial photograph of Highgate Wood

## The character of Highgate Wood

Highgate Wood enjoys a long history extending back to the pre-Norman period and was also the centre of a first Century AD small scale pottery industry. The woodland is made up of predominantly hornbeam with oak standards but also contains an assortment of other species notably a number of Wild Service trees (*Sorbus torminalis*) which is an indicator of ancient woodland.

Highgate Wood was an important woodland resource for many centuries and was once an important part of the Bishop of London's hunting park which is described in greater detail in the Heritage Assessment. The first historical reference to the wood appears in the Domesday Book of 1087, where it is described as part of the Hornsey Woods.

Highgate Wood together with Queen's Wood has been identified as a potential Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) by the London Geodiversity Partnership, and is mentioned in 'London's Foundations: Protecting the Geodiversity of the Capital', London 2012, Mayor of London.

The majority of the wood is underlain by Claygate Beds, which are sandy clay soils and at Highgate Wood, often results in erosion and run-off during periods of flooding. The sandy clay is interspersed with pockets of flint gravels, and the western edge of the wood has been disturbed by gravel digging in the past.

The rich diversity of wildlife in the wood has been well researched and documented over the years. To date, over 900 invertebrate species, 338 moth species, 353 fungi species, 70 bird species, and seven bat species have been recorded. Many of these species are reliant on very particular niches found only in ancient woodlands, with their well-developed and complex ecosystems.

In addition, Highgate Wood is an important leisure and amenity resource providing an opportunity for many people to visit a woodland site that has retained much of its historic fabric as well as gaining access to an open space that offers leisure and recreation in a built up area of London.

The site offers visitors a number of recreational facilities, including a playing field, trim trail, cricket nets, a large children's playground, a café, and an information centre with booklets, newsletters and trail guides. There is also a football and a cricket pitch which are maintained for regular weekend league clubs.

## Legal Framework and Partnership

Concerned that access to the countryside was being threatened, the City of London Corporation (CoL) promoted two Acts of Parliament in the 1870s. The Epping Forest Act and the City of London (Open Spaces) Act were passed in 1878. These enabled the CoL to acquire and protect threatened open spaces. Highgate Wood was publicly declared "open for the use and recreation of the public forever" on October 30 1886, by the Lord Mayor of the time, Sir John Staples.

The Open Spaces Committee determines the overall departmental policy, considers strategic and corporate issues and is responsible for matters relating to the City Gardens. The Open Spaces Committee meets six times a year (February, April, June, July, October and December).

The management of each CoL Open Space is overseen by several City Committees, as required by various Acts of Parliament. Matters concerning Highgate Wood are discussed by the Highgate Wood Consultative Committee, and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Committee.

### Issues and proposals for managing Highgate Wood

The next section of this Summary Document, outlines the findings of the analysis and research carried out in the preparation of the Conservation Management Plan and presents the overarching site wide policies organised under the following four themes:

- heritage
- natural environment
- community and recreation
- built environment

The overall vision and masterplan proposals are displayed at the end of this document.

# Site Plan



## Key

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|  Site Boundary                           |  Existing footpath network                           |  The Hollies (bird sanctuary) |
|  Grass                                   |  Mature wild service tree                            |  Existing compartment areas   |
|  Area where bluebells thrive             |  Wood bank/ woodbanks or site of historic importance |  Existing conservation areas  |
|  Site of ancient pottery kilns AD 50-150 |  Existing vehicular route                            |  |

# Heritage

Highgate Wood has a long history of use and development. Its heritage values include the range of archaeological features including earthworks; ancient and veteran trees as a key features of the landscape; developments during the Victorian period and the use of the Wood during wartime.

The extensive historic records of Highgate Wood reach back to the Roman period. There are also records charting Highgate Wood through the early medieval period. Flints from the early Mesolithic period have also been uncovered on the site, suggesting early human settlement.

Whilst there is little evidence of occupation during the Roman period, archaeological records suggest that 10 kilns existed in Highgate Wood and pottery was made from AD 43 through to approximately AD 160. Part of the roman kiln discovered through the archaeological excavation is now in display in the education buildings in Highgate Wood.

Highgate Wood was managed over many centuries for the commercial production of fuel wood obtained by cyclical cutting of the hornbeam stock. It is likely the Oak standards were planted for a longer term investment and for eventual use for the shipbuilding and construction industry, but their bark may also have served as a lucrative secondary commercial crop for the tanning industry.

There are good sources of information from the period prior to the site's transfer over to the CoL's ownership in the late 19th century which indicates the rapid decline of the Wood's use as a fuel resource with the growing coal availability. The ancient coppice stools and mature oak standards provide engaging and attractive visible evidence of the former use and management of the woodland.

In February 1885, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners offered the Wood to the Corporation of London as a gift and this was accepted in 1886 under the Highgate and Kilburn Open Spaces Act 1886. On 30th October 1886 the Wood was opened to the public.

During the Second World War the site was used to station barrage balloons which helped to defend London from low-level aircraft. The balloons were anchored to concrete blocks which can be seen in the sport pitch during periods of dry weather.



Reconstruction of one of the kilns found at Highgate Wood



Highgate Wood Lodge constructed in 1886

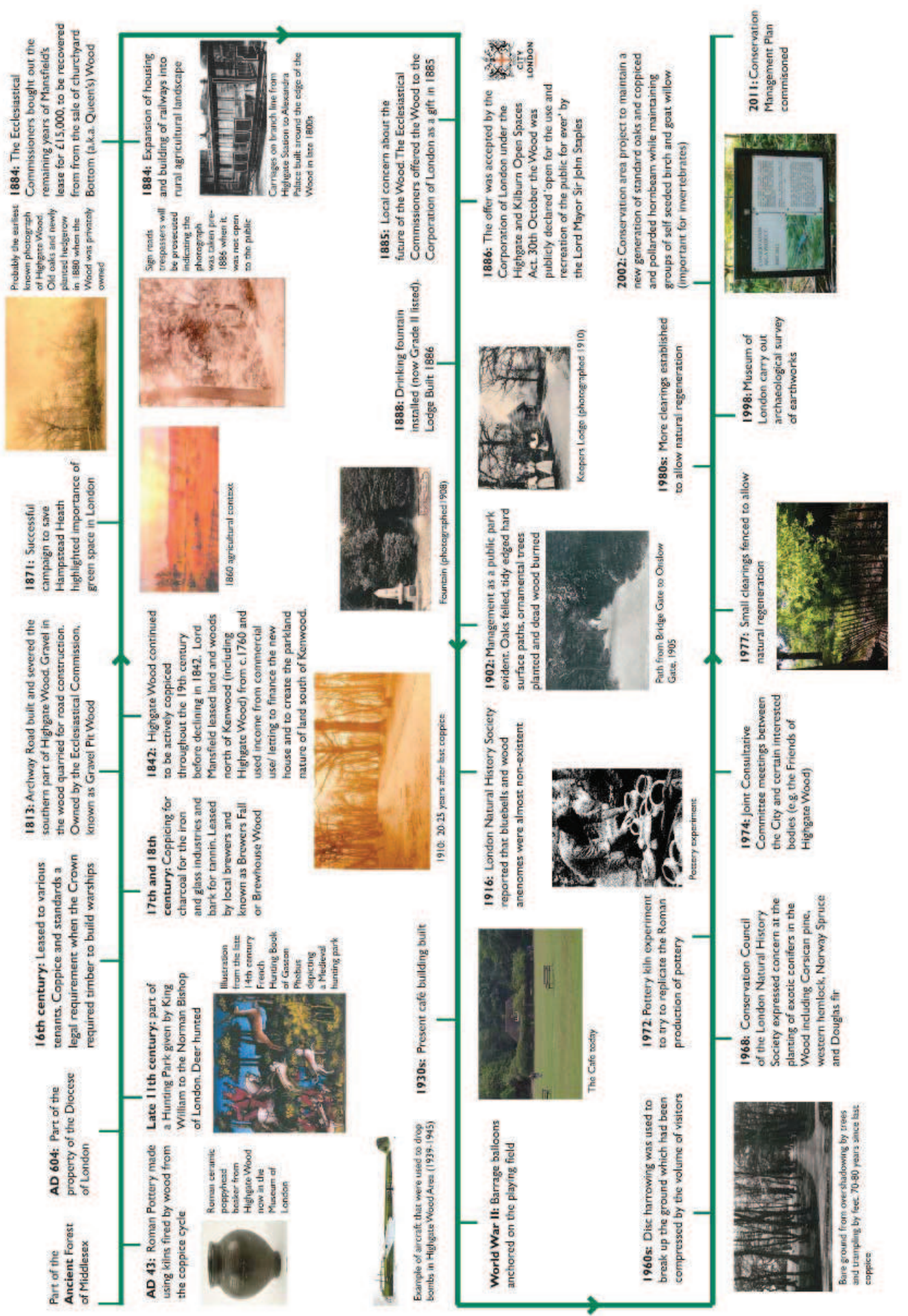
## Overarching policy 1:

The valuable heritage resource including the earthworks and ancient woodland fabric, the Roman Kiln site, selected developments during the Victorian period and evidence of the use of the Wood during wartime will be conserved, managed and interpreted.

## Supporting actions:

- Conserve and maintain all earthworks.
- Provide relevant education and training to management staff on archaeological features.
- Seek to extend the education centre for historical exhibits.
- Explore further opportunities for a heritage themed programme of events, interpretation and education.
- Strengthen links with English Heritage and the Museum of London to explore avenues for future projects e.g. selective excavation and dating of earthworks.





# Natural environment

Highgate Wood is designated as semi-natural ancient woodland forms part of a group of important woodland sites in North London. Semi-natural ancient woodland supports a large number of species, many of which are listed as vulnerable, particularly these species which require stable unchanging conditions in order to survive.

The woodland contains many niche habitats which support a range of protected and UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species including bats, birds, fungi and moths. The rich diversity of woodland within the wood has been well researched and to date the following species have been identified:

- over 900 invertebrate species
- 338 moth species
- 353 fungi species
- 70 bird species
- 7 bat species

As a result, Highgate Wood is designated as a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation and considered to be of London-wide significance for nature conservation.

Current management operations aim to conserve the diversity of the woodland through creation of individual conservation areas whilst monitoring for pests and diseases such as Chronic Oak Decline and Oak Processionary Moth.



Three legged flower beetle



Mining bee

## Overarching policy 2:

The coppice with standards structure will be conserved with new conservation areas created and managed. The oak population will be conserved and its age class extended; species diversity will be maintained and enhanced. A programme of survey and monitoring will be implemented to inform future review of the CMP.

## Supporting actions:

- Develop a management strategy for the oak and hornbeam population.
- Work closely with tree health organisations to plan and protect against tree disease threats.
- Promote research opportunities with students or post graduates with a focus on vulnerabilities of woodland species.
- Strengthen links with the London Borough of Haringey and consider opportunities to create and enhance 'green corridors' and coordinate habitat management across local ancient woodland sites and raise awareness of this vulnerable habitat.
- Manage and expand the existing coppice areas and seek opportunities to create new areas.
- Monitor the oak standard population as a keystone species, prolong its longevity and continue restocking operations.
- Encourage the Conservation and Arboricultural Staff on Hampstead Heath to become involved in the management of the Wood and explore the possibilities of learning from other CoL sites.

# Community and recreation

Highgate Wood is an easily accessible green open space with a special atmosphere. It provides a safe environment with good facilities as well as educational and recreational activities for all ages.

The Wood is a very important resource for the surrounding community and provides a variety of options for precious periods of relaxation from the pressures and demands of urban life. The Highgate Wood team have been able to foster long standing relationships with local residents, which help nurture a welcoming environment where people feel safe and secure. The site has several distinct groups of people enjoying the natural environment from early morning joggers, to young children with their parents exploring the woodland, to dog walkers and power walker groups. The café is very popular with families with young children and it acts as an essential hub for the site where people are able to sit down for a coffee or meal.

The sport field within a natural woodland setting is a popular facility for both football and cricket teams throughout the year. The cricket practice nets are the only free nets in the London Borough of Haringey and are well used throughout the season. The sport field is also very popular for summer sports days.



The sport field is popular with local football teams

Local primary schools frequently visit Highgate Wood as a learning resource making use of the natural outdoor setting for curriculum subjects such as natural history and the environment. Children and young people are able to have a real outdoor rural experience within walking distance of their school. Staff are also available to provide walk and talk sessions on nature and woodland species.



The sport field is often used for community events

## Overarching policy 3:

The wide range of recreational facilities and uses of Highgate Wood will continue to be provided, actively promoted and enhanced. The City of London will continue to engage with schools, interest groups (e.g. London Wildlife Trust) and the general public to ensure that the Wood's importance and range of facilities is fully understood and used.

## Supporting actions:

- Build on existing relationships with the local community and stakeholders to form a dedicated Friends of Highgate Wood group.
- Improve links with young people and youth community groups.
- Explore opportunities to host events that raise the awareness of the UK's woodland heritage and its vulnerability.
- Develop a health and well-being programme and investigate Natural England's Greenspace Walking Scheme.
- Explore options to resolve conflicts between sports people and those enjoying the field area on weekends.
- Explore all avenues for marketing and income generation.
- Promote public access but ensure careful monitoring of visitor numbers to avoid disturbance to sensitive areas.
- Increase knowledge of and links to Queen's Wood through use of signage, websites, leaflets, maps and electronic information.

# Built environment

Buildings appeared at Highgate Wood shortly after the Ecclesiastical Commission transferred ownership of the Wood to the City of London Corporation in 1886. Highgate Wood Lodge was the first building to be constructed and was designed by Sir Horace Jones who was also responsible for the designs of Leadenhall Market and Old Billingsgate Market. A Grade II listed drinking fountain sculpted from Pink Peterhead granite was added to the Wood in 1888.

Today Highgate Wood contains six staff lodges, a café and changing rooms, education centre and a playground. One of the staff lodges currently contains the site office.

A network of footpaths enables accessible routes around the site whilst the playground and education centre provide popular focal points for informal recreation and relaxation. The café is a very popular and well used facility although there are suggested improvements for its commercial use.

## Overarching policy 4:

The condition and appearance of existing buildings will be maintained and the setting of key heritage features such as the Fountain and the Lodge will be enhanced. Infrastructure and site furniture will be maintained and rationalised where possible and high quality design and materials appropriate to the woodland setting will be used throughout. There will be a general assumption against further built development unless it is deemed to have no negative impact upon the heritage, ecology or enjoyment of the site and it is of outstanding architectural design or the benefits it delivers are of sufficient merit.



The café at Highgate Wood located within the former cricket pavilion



New staff office adjacent to the café

## Supporting actions:

- Investigate options to create a small car park for visitors with mobility difficulties close to Onslow Gate.
- Re-configure the layout of the existing café building to improve kitchen facilities and to increase the capacity for indoor dining.
- Rationalise vehicle deliveries and restrict vehicle movements throughout the site.
- Promote access for all and ensure existing provision is DDA compliant.
- Improve environmental performance of buildings throughout the wood e.g. insulation of lodges, updating heating systems and photovoltaic installation.
- Increase the range of play equipment to cater for children in the 7 – 10 age group.



The play area is a highly valued feature of Highgate Wood

# Vision

Highgate Wood's significance is defined by its evolved character as managed ancient woodland still retaining the distinct fabric of hornbeam coppice with oak standards. The inherent beauty of the Wood, its time depth value, the rich diversity of habitats and species and its use by the community are all related to this character and form of management.

The Vision for the Highgate Wood is therefore:

To ensure the continuity of Highgate Wood as a managed ancient woodland site, whilst maintaining its reputation as a safe environment for relaxation, recreation and education. This special character, combining with heritage features, and conservation value will be conserved and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.

The vision for Highgate Wood describes the future direction for the Highgate Wood team to follow and is supported by each of the overarching and actions as highlighted in this document.

The actions have been illustrated in a masterplan, which can be seen on the following page. The delivery of the actions will be co-ordinated by the CoL team led by the Highgate Wood Manager. Each of the actions will be prioritised as follows:

Short term: 2015/16

Medium term: 2016/17 to 2018/19

Long term: 2018/19 to 2022/23

Any risk to features of heritage or biodiversity value will need to be considered fully prior to delivery of the actions. Delivery will also be dependent on funding and receiving any applicable permissions or agreements.

This document provides a summary of the Conservation Management Plan prepared for Highgate Wood. To view the full document visit [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/highgate-wood](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/highgate-wood) or contact the Highgate Wood Manager on 0208 883 9815.



Late 19th century photograph of Highgate Wood showing a footpath lined by coppiced hornbeam.



Heritage day to demonstrate the woodland crafts using timber produced through managed coppiced woodland



Highgate Wood staff lead educational walks (photo courtesy of Sue Czapska).

# Masterplan



## Key - Existing

-  Site Boundary
-  Grass
-  Area where bluebells thrive
-  Site of ancient pottery kilns AD 50-150
-  Existing footpath network

-  Existing vehicular route
-  Mature wild service tree
-  Wood bank/ woodbanks or site of historic importance
-  Existing compartment areas
-  The Hollies (bird sanctuary)
-  Existing conservation areas

## Key - Proposed

-  Meadow area
-  Option for alternative small car park for visitors with mobility difficulties
-  Next phase conservation areas
-  Pedestrian priority zones
-  Consider upgrading desire line to create new footpath
-  Re-configure the layout of the existing cafe building to improve kitchen facilities and to increase the capacity for indoor dining.
-  Diversify the woodland edge to enhance the ecological value and to address safety concerns.





## Highgate Wood

Highgate Wood is one of a number of open spaces, parks and gardens in and around London, owned and managed by the City of London as part of its commitment to sustaining a world class city. Each open space is a unique resource managed for the use and enjoyment of the public and for the conservation of wildlife and historic landscapes.

A full list of sites and visitor information can be found on our website at [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/openspaces](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/openspaces) or by contacting the Open Spaces Directorate on **020 7606 3030**.



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