

HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE

Monday, 23 November 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)	Graeme Smith (Ex-Officio Member)
Jeremy Simons (Deputy Chairman)	Councillor Melvin Cohen (London Borough of Barnet)
Deputy John Barker	Martyn Foster (RSPB)
Dennis Cotgrove	Councillor Sally Gimson (London Borough of Camden)
Michael Hudson	John Beyer (Heath & Hampstead Society)
Edward Lord	Maija Roberts (Open Spaces Society / Ramblers' Association)
Professor John Lumley	
Barbara Newman	
Alderman Ian Luder (Ex-Officio Member)	

Officers:

David Arnold	- Town Clerk's Department
John Park	- Town Clerk's Department
Nigel Lefton	- Remembrancer's Office
Caroline Al-Beyerty	- Chamberlain's Department
Alison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Declan Gallagher	- Open Spaces Department
Gerry Kiefer	- Open Spaces Department
Jonathan Meares	- Open Spaces Department
Philip Everett	- Ponds Project Director
Will Wright	- City Surveyor's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Karina Dostalova, Revd Dr Martin Dudley, Clare James, and Philip Wright (English Heritage).

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

Councillor Sally Gimson (London Borough of Camden) declared a non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the 1 O'Clock Club as she was Councillor for the Highgate Ward.

3.1 Hampstead Heath. Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee
RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 21 September 2015 be approved.

Matters Arising

City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Bill

The Director of Remembrancer's Affairs advised that the final Bill was due to be printed and submitted to Parliament later this week. Consultees would be written to regarding the final content of the Bill. Some amendments had been made since the last working draft had been circulated to Members, such as the letting of buildings for a maximum of 15 years in most cases with a maximum of 21 years for exceptional circumstances only.

Water House

Members noted that the Comptroller and City Solicitor had investigated the access issues relating to Millfield Lane, N6 and had reported back to the Members concerned.

3.2 Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee

The Committee received the minutes of two recent meetings of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.

RESOLVED – That:-

- a) the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2015 be noted; and
- b) the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2015 be noted.

4. LOCATION OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk regarding the location of Committee meetings. Members were asked to consider whether to hold Committee meetings at a venue at or near Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood or Queen's Park.

The Chairman encouraged Members to attend Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee meetings in the public gallery. A list of upcoming Consultative Committee meeting dates would be circulated by the Town Clerk and Members were advised to inform him in advance of any meeting they wished to attend.

Members discussed the various implications of changing the location and times of the meetings to enable better engagement with local users. The Committee requested that a trial period be entered into in 2016 whereby one meeting be held in the evening at Guildhall and one meeting be held in the evening at Hampstead Heath; the latter preceded by an afternoon walk of the Heath.

RESOLVED – That consideration be given to an evening meeting at Guildhall and an evening meeting at Hampstead Heath, preceded by an afternoon Committee walk, during 2016.

5. **OPERATIONAL PROPERTY**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and the City Surveyor regarding the Operational Property Review. Members were advised that it was an objective of the long-term management plan for the Superintendent's Office to be relocated to or nearer Hampstead Heath.

RESOLVED – That:-

- a) the drivers for undertaking the Operational Property Review be noted; and
- b) the emerging opportunities from this review that impact on the work of this Committee be reported to subsequent meetings.

6. **REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS - 2015/16 & 2016/17**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces that provided Members with an update regarding the latest approved revenue budget for 2015/16 and sought approval to a provisional revenue budget for 2016/17, subject to the subsequent approval of the Finance Committee.

RESOLVED – That:-

- a) the provisional 2016/17 revenue budget be reviewed to ensure that it reflects the Committee's objectives and approved for submission to the Finance Committee;
- b) the Chamberlain be authorised, in consultation with the Director of Open Spaces, to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, departmental reorganisations and other reviews, and changes to the Additional Works Programme. Any changes over £50,000 would be reported to Committee;
- c) if specific service based review proposals included with this budget report are rejected by the Committee, or other Committees request that further proposals are pursued, the substitution of other suitable proposals for a corresponding amount be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the relevant Committee; and
- d) if the substituted saving is not considered to be straight forward in nature, then the Town Clerk be authorised to consult the Chairman and Deputy Chairmen of the Policy and Resources Committee prior to approving an alternative proposal(s).

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update on management and operational activities across the Heath since September 2015. Members noted and considered the following matters:

Planning

Water House

The London Borough of Camden (LBC) was due to consider the planning application in December 2015. Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood staff had scrutinised reports regarding the construction on Millfield Lane and its impact on trees and would provide feedback on the Planning Officers' report once it was available. In response to a question from the Deputy Chairman, the Superintendent advised that there would be large-scale Heavy Goods Vehicle movement on Millfield Lane so pedestrians and cyclists would be diverted onto City Corporation land. A Member (LBC) noted that she and other LBC Councillors would be meeting with Planning Officers and local residents this week to discuss the planning application.

Athlone House

The appeal had not been upheld at Judicial Review.

2-3 Heath Passage

An application to de-designate as Metropolitan Open Land had been objected by local residents and the City Corporation but a date had not yet been set for the application to be considered by LBC.

Learning Programme

The Superintendent had received a petition against the proposed changes to the One O'clock Club and Adventure Playground that had received 905 signatures and 2,213 messages of support on Social Media. Following a useful discussion with the petition organiser, it has been decided to provide two hour sessions all year round at the One O'Clock Club for a modest charge. The Club would be led by a permanent full-time Project and Learning Officer and a permanent part-time Play Leader. Sessions would engage children with natural and historical aspects of the Heath, as per the objectives of the Learning Programme.

A revised programme was to be provided at the Adventure Playground. It had proved less effective in winter due to a lack of light during after-school hours so the programme would include specific seasonal events as well as a reconfiguration of the Playground. The Parliament Hill Programme would remain open and the Paddling Pool would be managed by the Lido Team in future.

Golders Hill Park

The size of the Zoo would be reduced to incorporate a smaller number of species relevant to the wildlife of the Heath. In response to a Member's question, the Superintendent added that this was expected to produce a saving of £50,000.

Constabulary

Six Officers would be on duty and the landscape restoration works at Kite Hill would be protected by a secure fence on New Year's Eve.

RESOLVED – That the Superintendent's Update be noted.

8. HEDGEHOGS ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH - TRIAL MONITORING

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath detailing a trial hedgehog monitoring scheme that took place in Golders Hill Park during September 2015.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9. HAMPSTEAD HEATH PONDS PROJECT UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update on the progress of the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project.

The Project Director advised that more space was required in relation to the works to Model Boating Pond (MBP) and the proposals for this would be presented to the Ponds Project Community Working Group later that day. He added that planning permission for these ancillary works would not be required. Members were also advised that a plan was being formulated to deal with reinstatement issues to pathway edges caused by vehicle movement.

In response to a Member's question regarding delays, the Project Director advised that the large-scale works at MBP were currently 12 weeks behind but they remained on course to be completed before the planned Project end date. The Superintendent added that a site visit would be arranged for Committee Members in due course.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. UPDATE ON OAK PROCESSIONARY MOTH (OPM) AT THE NORTH LONDON OPEN SPACES DIVISION

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update on the OPM population and its management at the North London Open Spaces, following the discovery of caterpillars and nests at Queen's Park and Hampstead Heath in June 2015. Members were advised that the total spend on inspections, admin time and nest removals in 2015 had been £9,480 and this figure was expected to rise year on year as more nests were found and more treatment required.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. REVIEW OF ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2015

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that reviewed the management operations and activities carried out on the Heath as part of the 2015 Annual Work Programme and sought approval to the

new 2016 Annual Work Programme. A Member noted that the Heath and Hampstead Society would provide their feedback on the proposed new Programme as soon as possible.

RESOLVED – That the 2016 Annual Work Programme be approved.

12. **LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT WORKS AT THE SWAIN'S LANE ENTRANCE INTO PARLIAMENT HILL FIELDS**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that sought approval to the proposed landscape improvement works at the Swain's Lane entrance to Parliament Hill Fields.

RESOLVED – That the proposed landscape improvement works at the Swain's Lane entrance to Parliament Hill Fields be approved.

13. **LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT WORKS AT THE MILLFIELD LANE ENTRANCE ONTO HAMPSTEAD HEATH**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that sought approval to the proposed landscape improvement works at the Millfield Lane entrance onto the Heath.

RESOLVED – That the proposed landscape improvement works at the Millfield Lane entrance onto Hampstead Heath be approved.

14. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH EVENTS PROGRAMME, JANUARY - SEPTEMBER 2015**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that detailed the success of the Hampstead Heath Events Programme 2015.

RESOLVED – That the continued success of the Hampstead Heath Events Programme in engaging with audiences, attracting new visitors to the Heath, and working with partners to provide a valuable service for the local community and beyond, be noted.

15. **FEES AND CHARGES 2016/17**

At this point, the Chairman welcomed Michael Hudson to his first meeting as a new Member of the Committee.

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that sought approval to the proposed fees and charges for a range of facilities and services provided at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park in 2016/17. Members were advised that a separate charge of £65 would be introduced for customers who required tables and chairs at the Bandstand in Queen's Park. The charge without tables and chairs would remain at £55. These proposals were supported by the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group.

The Superintendent then advised Members of the concerns outlined in a letter from the Hampstead Rugby Club, which had been circulated to the Committee prior the meeting. He added that the Heath previously undercharged for the

provision of many of its sports facilities. The proposed new fees and charges were now at a mid-point level compared with other local authorities, following a benchmarking exercise. In relation to the provision of rugby facilities, only 28% of costs were recovered as 72% was subsidised. A discount had also been provided for use of the changing rooms at the start of the recent rugby season due to the standard of the facilities.

Members suggested the reintroduction of 2:00pm kick off times alongside 1:00pm, with a higher charge for the later kick off time due to increase staff overtime costs at the end of the day. The Superintendent agreed that a report detailing the overtime costs to ensure they were recovered for 2:00pm kick offs could be submitted to the next Committee meeting.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Open Spaces advised that future consideration would be given to increase to concessionary over 60s age year on year to take into account the increasing retirement age.

RESOLVED – That the proposed fees and charges for 2016/17 be approved, including the introduction of a two-tiered charge for the provision of rugby facilities at 1:00pm and 2:00pm.

16. HIGHGATE WOOD - SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE NOVEMBER 2015

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update regarding management and operational activities in Highgate Wood over the past six months.

The Chairman advised Members that the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee were supportive of the proposed changes to closing times during the summer months, with a preference for 9:15pm. Members agreed to this proposed change. The Chairman added that the Consultative Committee were also supportive of implementing squirrel control at the Wood in future if necessary. The Highgate Wood Manager advised that the type of control would be based on advice from the Forestry Commission, which would probably involve a trap and release method. The Wood Team would consult with colleagues at Burnham Beeches, where squirrel control was currently being implemented.

RESOLVED – That:-

- a) the Superintendent's Update be noted;
- b) the closing time during the summer months be changed to 9:15pm.

17. QUEEN'S PARK - SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE NOVEMBER 2015

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update on the operational work, accomplishments and successes of the Queen's Park Team in delivering an award winning Park since June 2015.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

18. PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE ZIPPOS CIRCUS TO QUEEN'S PARK

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath regarding a proposal to introduce Zippos Circus to Queen's Park.

Members were advised of the negative feedback received at the recent Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group and noted objections from the Queen's Park Area Residents' Association (QPARA). The Director of Open Spaces added that further consultation with local residents and user groups may be required to develop other options for income-generating events. Some Members noted that other income-generating events could be held in addition to the Circus rather than as an alternative, so they would be inclined to support the option to permit a licence for one year with a review after one event.

The Chairman explained that the already good relationship with QPARA and their track-record of providing successful events at the Park could be improved further if additional consultation was carried out and if QPARA were engaged with to generate more income-generating events. The Committee then agreed to defer the proposal for 2017 whilst further consultation was carried out with local residents and user groups, including QPARA, to develop alternative income-generating events.

RESOLVED – That the proposal to introduce Zippos Circus to Queen's Park be deferred for one year whilst Officers carry out further consultation with local residents and user groups regarding the provision of income-generating events at Queen's Park.

19. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were none.

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

There was none.

21. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

22. **REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS**

The Committee received the Department of Open Spaces Budget Reduction Programme as part of the Service Based Review, in relation to item 6 of the public agenda (Revenue and Capital Budgets 2015/16 and 2016/17).

23. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were none.

24. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was none.

25. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2015 be approved.

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm

Chairman

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