



Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee

Date: WEDNESDAY, 30 APRIL 2014

Time: 12.00pm

Venue: HIGHGATE WOOD OFFICES, HIGHGATE WOOD, MUSWELL HILL ROAD, N10 3JN

Members: Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman)
Dennis Cotgrove
Ann Holmes
Barbara Newman

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

The Committee will be preceded by a walk – would committee members please meet at 10:00am outside the Pavilion Café.

Lunch will be served at the conclusion of the Committee.

**John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive**

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 20 November 2013.

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 6)

4. **HIGHGATE WOOD UPDATE - APRIL 2014**

Report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath.

For Discussion
(Pages 7 - 34)

5. **TREE MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath.

For Information
(Pages 35 - 46)

6. **QUESTIONS**

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

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 19 November 2014 at 11:30am in the Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall.

Agenda Item 3

HIGHGATE WOOD JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE Wednesday, 20 November 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 20 November 2013 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman)
Barbara Newman CBE
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)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)

Officers:

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Michael Welbank, Peter Corley, Councillor Bob Hare, Lucy Roots and Alison Watson.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2013 were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

Page 2, paragraph 2 – amend ‘...offset b he fact...’ to ‘...by the fact...’

Page 3, paragraph 4 – amend ‘comment’ to ‘common’.

Page 3, paragraph 7 – amend ‘Chairman’ to ‘Manager’.

Page 4, paragraph 2 – amend ‘...face facility...’ to ‘...facility...’

Matters Arising Highgate Wood Restructure

The Superintendent stated that budgets had been set for 2014/15 and that it was likely that further reductions were possible following the 2015 national elections.

Dogs

The Manager noted that he was in discussion with the café operator to turn part of the terrace area into a dedicated are for dogs and dog owners. The Superintendent added that any proposal would first be submitted to the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee for its views.

In response to an observation from a member regarding the aesthetic value of such an area, the Manager noted that any proposal had to be considered in the context of the overall profitability of the café, given the limitations imposed on its operations by the dated building design and small kitchen. He added that any outdoor terrace area would likely be designed to encourage patrons to use the area outside the café in order to maximise space for service indoors. Furthermore, in terms of its aesthetics the outdoor area would be improved during 2014.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE REPORT

The Highgate Wood Manager introduced the Superintendent's Update report and made the following points:

Background

The Wood had seen another busy year and its best summer since 2006, and the recent St Jude's Day storm on 28 October had a major impact on the Wood.

A draft summary document of the Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan was appended to the report and comments and critique would be welcome up until the document was finalised in the New Year. The Superintendent took the opportunity to note that he would welcome the section outlining the vision to be moved nearer to the start of the document, and the Chairman requested that the maps within the document be made clearer, as at present the borders and other details were poorly defined.

Sustainability

The newly-installed photovoltaic cells in the Wood had generated 300kW since September. They would be less productive during the winter months but it was expected they would go on to produce 36,000kW annually which if achieved would meet half of the current demand for electricity in the Wood. The Manager noted that the City Surveyor's Department had been very supportive throughout the project, and the Superintendent added that the Manager had been instrumental in leading the project from the beginning.

The Manager stated that the Enterprise waste contract had commenced back in January 2013 and was proving unsatisfactory. He noted that overall the contract was working but was proving more expensive than had been anticipated. An issue had arisen over the need to separate dog waste from the overall waste that the Wood produced. The Manager concluded by stating that the waste contract for all three North London Open Spaces sites would be reviewed. In response to a question from the Chairman the Manager confirmed that the public sometimes put dog waste into normal waste bins, and that this was a fact of life. The Superintendent concluded by stating that Highgate Wood was the only site at which dog waste and normal waste was segregated and this was having a serious impact on costs, and therefore it was likely that the waste contract would need to be retendered.

Restructure

The Manager noted that the restructure had been progressing well and that the evaluation stage had been completed. He stated that the staff team would be reduced to six persons from April 2014 and that additional casual cover would be taken on during summer seasons. The Superintendent warned that any further reduction in staff would have a serious impact on the City of London's ability to properly staff the Wood, and that it was no exaggeration to say that with six staff operating a two-shift system it would prove difficult to guarantee the Wood would be properly closed every evening.

In response to a question from the Deputy Chairman the Superintendent replied that casual staff were recruited from a recruitment pool common to the North London Open Spaces division. He warned that casual staff could not be relied upon to the same extent as those on full-time contracts.

The Chairman noted that the restructure should be seen against a background of budgetary pressures affecting the whole of the City of London Corporation, and that this was of particular concern given that 70% of budgetary costs in Open Spaces were staff costs.

A member of the committee noted his concern over the risk posed to public safety arising from any further staff reductions.

The Superintendent concluded by stating that it was positive that the Town Clerk appeared to appreciate the intrinsic value that Open Spaces added to the City of London Corporation and to London as a whole.

Heritage and Roman Kiln Project

The Manager noted that Norwegian Log, the company that constructed the original Education Building in 1996, had been brought in to discuss how the building could be reconfigured to accommodate the Roman kiln. Three differing options had been provided and would provide evidence for a first-round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Tree Management and Woodland Conservation Work

The Manager stated that the St Jude storm on 28 October had caused some major tree failures in the Wood but most of the damage to the oak population

had been to upper branches and crowns, and that it would be interesting to monitor how the Wood responded to the storm damage. He noted that the 1987 hurricane had been worse, and that overall the damage had been significant but not catastrophic.

Oak Decline Survey Work

The Manager noted that the aim over the current year had been to digitally record and plot using GPS all of the oaks in the Wood. It was hoped that this method of data collection would create a system of records that would provide continuity and be readily accessible to any incoming members of staff in the future. He concluded by saying that overall the survey work indicated that the oak population was stable.

Play Area and Recreation

The Manager noted that the current wood chip surface in the Play Area was high maintenance and took up a lot of staff time, as well as costing £8,000 a year to maintain. Therefore quotes were being obtained with a view to replacing the surface with a rubberised material.

The Manager went on to note that the management team at Highgate Wood had assumed responsibility for all sports bookings within the Wood to ensure charging was maintained effectively. Furthermore it was noted there were some issues with the proximity of the pitches to the café given that players were sometimes given to expressing loud expletives.

Community and Events

The Manager noted that staff were keen to build on and improve links with the local community, and that this was reflected in the number of people using the Wood. He noted in particular the excellent and committed work of the volunteers of Heath Hands.

5. QUESTIONS

Roman Kiln - Heritage Lottery Fund Application

In response to a question from a member the Manager confirmed that an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund would have implications on staff-time. He noted that the application was very much in its preliminary, exploratory stages and that consideration would be given to bringing consultant in to deal with the application process.

The Superintendent added that the bid would be match funded with monies from the Local Risk budget, and that this may be phased over two years. Furthermore, he added that it would be worth exploring opening a trading account for the Wood given that it was a charity, as this would allow monies to be carried over from year to year.

The Chairman stated that this was an issue the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee could look at, and furthermore that the scope to apply for City Bridge Trust monies should be explored as a back-up option to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Deputy Chairman added that it would be ideal of a dedicated post could be created within the wider Open Spaces Department to apply for funding.

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

St Jude's Storm

The Chairman registered his thanks on behalf of the committee for the hard work of the Manager and his team in the aftermath of St Jude's storm on 28 October. The Manager thanked him for his kind words and emphasised that he felt it was necessary to close the Wood for two days following the storm whilst safety checks were carried out. The Superintendent agreed, noting the fatality that had occurred recently in Kew Gardens that had been caused by branch failure. He concluded by noting the storm damage had challenged staff already stretched by the ongoing tree inspection programme.

Budgets

In response to a question from a member, the Chairman replied that budget reductions and efficiencies were still necessary despite signs the wider economy was improving due to the fact that local government was one of the main sectors that was required to find savings. Moreover, whilst the Open Spaces were financed using private City Cash, the corporate decision to apply budget reductions across the entire organisation had been made.

LiDar Survey

In response to a suggestion from a member, the Manager agreed to look into conducting a LiDar survey of the Wood.

7. **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on 30 April 2014 at 12:00pm in the Highgate Wood Offices, Highgate Wood, Muswell Hill Road, N10 3JN.

The meeting ended at 2.43 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Alistair MacLellan
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Agenda Item 4

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee	For Discussion 30 April 2014
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	For Decision 19 May 2014
Subject: Highgate Wood Update – April 2014	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Decision
Summary <p>This Report provides an update to members of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee on management and operational activities in Highgate Wood over the past six months. The Report describes progress on Management Plan Objectives, sustainability, the staff restructure, Conservation and Woodland Management, infrastructure and facilities, and includes a revised draft of the Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan Summary document. This Report also provides information on a number of community- related projects which the Team has been involved in over the winter and spring months, including Heath Hands volunteers and sport activities.</p>	
Recommendation(s) <p>That the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee notes the content of this report, and approves the revised Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan.</p> <p>That the views of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at their June meeting.</p>	

Main Report

Background

1. The weather since November has presented the Highgate Wood Team with some significant challenges, particularly the continuing Atlantic storm fronts that formed the pattern of weather well into the New Year. There was further damage to trees following the St Jude's Storm over Christmas and the New Year, combined with the very high level of rainfall that left areas of the sports field waterlogged for a number of weeks. Despite these setbacks, the Team has made very good progress on tree and woodland management, and although there were sports booking cancellations, the football teams have

managed to complete their fixtures. The Team restructure is now fully implemented, and there will be a further focus on reducing expenditure and on income generation this year. A good deal of community-based work has been done over the winter and early spring, with additional Heath Hands sessions and well-attended diary events. There have been some important sustainability achievements, with major savings on small fuels and an increasing contribution from the photo-voltaic installation on the machine shed roof. The recent coppicing work carried out in the neighbouring Queen's Wood and in Coldfall Wood has attracted a great deal of interest, and it is planned to adopt the same traditional timber extraction methods for the next conservation area.



Figure 1: Flooding near Onslow Gate

Conservation Management Plan Summary Document update

2. Further revisions have been made to the document that was presented to the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee in November last year. A number of changes were proposed, principally concerning the layout of the draft document and the quality of the maps and images. These changes have been made and the revised draft is included with this report for the approval of the Committee (Appendix 1). Printed paper copies will be circulated to the Committee at the meeting in Highgate Wood on the 30th April.
3. Once approved, the Summary document will be placed on the Highgate Wood pages of the City of London website. Hard copies will be printed out and circulated to local libraries and other community groups.

Progress on Conservation Management Plan Objectives

4. The Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan has now been in place for just over a year, and good progress has already been made in achieving a

number of the objectives. These were divided into short-, medium- and long-term objectives, with short-term agreed as running from 2015 to 2016, medium-term 2016/17 to 2018/19, and long-term from 2018/19 to 2022/23.

5. The Heritage section has a number of objectives focusing on the conservation and interpretation of heritage features within the site. Creating the new 2012 conservation area also involved fencing off an area of 3,300 square meters, including 100 meters of the large earthwork structure which reduced the risk of further erosion and damage to this important feature. During the clearance work, a number of trees were reduced and stabilised along the structure, which will also help reduce the risk of further damage to it. During the spring of last year, Highgate Wood hosted a series of well-attended woodland archaeology walks, several members of the Team attending the sessions and finding them very informative. The tree consultant who led the walks has published an article in the Arboricultural Association's Spring 2014 Newsletter, which mentions Highgate Wood and its archaeological features. He intends to lead further walks this spring for tree professionals and anybody else interested in this subject.
6. Good progress is being made on returning the Roman Kiln to Highgate Wood, which also falls within the Heritage section of the Management Plan. A meeting has been arranged for the 6th May to view the Kiln at Bruce Castle Museum, which will be attended by the consultants who are advising on the interpretation and Heritage Lottery Fund application, as well as by a representative from the Museum of London and a member of the Highgate Wood Team. The intention is to proceed with the Heritage Lottery Fund bid and interpretation plan during 2014, with a view to carrying out the conversion to the education building that will house the artefact and display in 2015. This is an extremely important project for the site and it would be a great shame to miss this opportunity, given all the time and investment that has been expended on it so far.
7. There has also been considerable progress with the objectives that come under the Natural Environment section of the Plan. The most significant work has focused around tree health and, in particular, looking at ways to control and manage future tree health risks. The survey work on oak decline has continued, with a further survey planned for this summer. In January the Highgate Wood Manager gave a presentation on Ancient Woodland Management to the London Tree Officers Association, which focused on the survey work in Highgate Wood, while Haringey's Tree and Conservation Team is meeting with the Highgate Wood Team later this month to discuss how this survey methodology could be used on other Ancient Woodland sites in Haringey.
8. Objectives under the Community and Recreation section have also been the subject of much excellent work. Heath Hands volunteers have contributed more sessions over the past two years: in 2013/14 we recorded over 300 volunteer hours spread over 21 sessions throughout the year. There has also been an increase in the number of people attending volunteer events and public walks, with an overall figure of 940 people during the period April 2013 to March 2014, compared with 599 people for the same period in 2012/13. We have also managed to support a number of other local community groups,

including the Friends of Queen's Wood with marginal planting of their wildlife pond, Japanese knotweed control for the Friends of Parkland Walk, and ecological advice for the Pears National Centre for Autism Education in Woodside Avenue.

Progress with Highgate Wood Restructure

9. The Team restructure is now fully implemented, with no need this year for the financial subsidy from City Bridge Trust that has supplemented the staffing budget for the past three years. A letter was circulated to the Team in February, confirming that the roster which has undergone a further revision will run until July this year, then be adopted as the operational roster for the site. The letter also noted that the job evaluation process had confirmed that the two new Keeper positions that had replaced the Play Area Attendant positions would remain at the same grade.
10. The restructure places more emphasis on multi-tasking, with all six members of staff on a single roster and everyone taking an equal share of the core operational work, from cleaning the toilets and litter picking to marking out the sports pitches and assisting with tree work. There are still specialist roles centred around Tree Management that are carried out by the four Woodkeepers, and also some for fine turf maintenance. The entire Team now takes it in turns to carry out routine maintenance on the Play Area.
11. The real challenge will come later, in the height of the summer, when the opening hours are at their longest and the Team will be booking in annual leave. Casual staff were drafted in last summer to cover for those on holiday and the same arrangements will be made this year. It is hoped that the Heath Constabulary will be able to provide additional support during busy periods, provided of course it is able to deploy adequate cover for Hampstead Heath at the same time. The regular presence of the Constabulary is a welcome sight for both the staff and the public, and the Highgate Wood Team hopes that this support can be maintained.

Budget - identifying cost saving and increasing income

12. In March, the Court of Common Council agreed our budget for the year ahead. The City Corporation has worked hard to ensure the financial position is stable. However, like other organisations we continue to face serious financial challenges over the next few years, for which we must be prepared. These include a sizeable reduction in our grant from central government which will result in an overall shortfall of around £13m from 2017/18 onwards. Because of the recent work we have done to implement changes and improve efficiency across the organisation, we now have a stable budget for the next two financial years. This puts us in the fortunate position of having the opportunity to plan ways to close this financial gap. In June, Chief Officers will give Members a broad range of options, over and above that figure of £13m, which will look at ways to eliminate duplication of effort, and examine how to simplify and standardise processes and operations. This may mean delivering our services in very different ways and making better use of our assets.

13. The focus of the Management Team will be on identifying potential areas of reducing expenditure and generating more income. The current annual budget for Highgate Wood is £366,000 of which salaries account for £314,000. There are a number of areas where the Highgate Wood Team could achieve savings, and plans are already underway to deliver £30,000's-worth of work on the Play Area to convert the existing bark safety surface to a low-maintenance and safer rubberised surface. This was mentioned in the previous report to the Committee in November, and it was hoped that a proportion of this work could have been achieved before the end of March 2014, but it was decided to postpone the works until after the Easter holidays. The benefit of this spend will be a significant reduction of staff time and no further requirement for annual topping up of the loose bark surface, which currently costs up to £4,000 each year.
14. Other potential areas to consider will involve reviewing sports booking fees and the Department is working with the Comptroller & City Solicitor to review the opportunity to licence a broader range of activities which could help to manage their impact on the Woods and generate additional income. The sports pitch generates an annual income of around £4,000 in football and cricket bookings. There is the potential to introduce weekly bookings, but this would mean additional maintenance work. The annual cost of labour and ground renovation far exceeds the income generated, with the Team spending over 1,500 hours in total on sports field maintenance, but the sports facilities are extremely popular with both cricket and football users, and the quality of turf care and maintenance is of a very high standard.
15. The many community and educational activities that take place on the site is another area that places a very high demand on staff time. This is a core part of the service that the Team offers and has increasing resonance with the City of London's Community Strategy and the 'London Offer'. Our challenge comes from trying to balance the requirement for providing a highly regarded service to the local community with the forthcoming financial constraints.



Figure 2: Football match in progress on the sports field

Sustainability

16. The partnership with Amey and the City of London's Cleansing Team has improved over the past three months and will be continued. Dog waste still remains an issue but we are hoping that, with continued education and support from the Constabulary, dog owners will continue to clean up after their pets. The Constabulary is focusing on dog control this year and dog awareness drop-in sessions are planned for Highgate Wood over the next few months.
17. The Photo-Voltaic System on the southern section of the machine shed roof is performing well. The system has been operating at a minimum over the winter months, due to the low light levels and the wet weather. However, over the past month there has been a marked change, with the overall energy generation since commissioning last September now well over 1,000kw/hours, with daily ratings of 20kw/hrs. The predicted annual output of 6,400 kilowatt hours looks achievable and with the current output, the system is already meeting half the machine shed's energy requirement, which should increase with longer daylight hours and increased luminosity. The last piece of work to be done is to apply for the Feed-In Tariff, which is being arranged through Carbon Plan. This will enable us to start selling excess energy back into the main network.
18. Utilities use has been variable this year, the main saving being on gas consumption, which was down by 23% due to the mild winter. We have achieved an 18.4% reduction in small fuels over the winter, largely by using battery-powered leaf blowers to clear the paths and Play Area. We have also purchased two new battery-powered chain saws, which we will be testing over the next few months. There are multiple benefits of using electrically powered machinery; reduced noise and vibration for the operator, zero emissions and the units' battery packs can be recharged by the Photo-Voltaic System. They are also often more reliable and therefore cheaper to maintain.

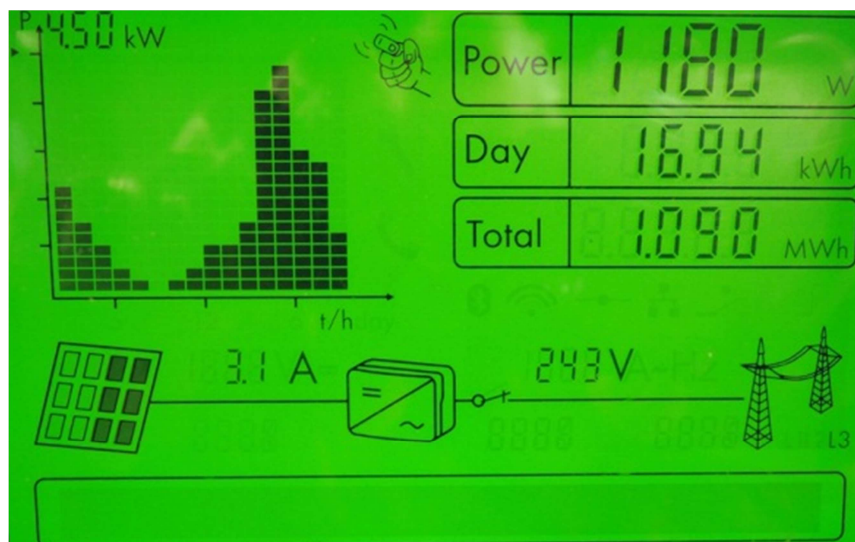


Figure 3: Photo-Voltaic display showing output to date

Update on the damage caused by storms and the resulting Tree Management

19. The Woodkeeper Team has carried out a huge amount of tree work over the past five months, first dealing with the aftermath of the St Jude's Storm then having additional work as a result of the storms over Christmas and the New Year. The wet weather continued through into early February and has only really improved during the past month, finally allowing the ground to dry out and the Team to reach some of the areas that were waterlogged for weeks during the winter. The work has finally been completed, with over 70 trees requiring the attention of the Team and more than 130 hours spent over the course of the past five months, in between attending to other work. Staff from Hampstead Heath assisted the Team on a number of occasions (figure 4), but the majority of the tree work was managed internally.



Figure 4: Hampstead Heath Tree Team assisting with tree work

20. The Woodkeeper Team also had to spend a significant amount of extra time carrying out tree inspections, as each major storm requires additional inspections, especially of those trees located along the Muswell Hill Road and other high-use areas such as the Play Area. The tree inspection process now follows the methodology used by the Hampstead Heath Team, with walkover inspections zone-prioritised in order of overall risk. Trees that are identified as requiring work are then placed on a list and allocated a priority rating.
21. As mentioned in the November Committee report, there will actually be a long-term benefit from the St Jude's Storm, as several of the larger trees that were blown over have created substantial breaks in the woodland canopy, which will allow a degree of regeneration depending on the situation of the site. We are also anticipating a burst of new cambial growth over the coming years in many of the oaks that sustained branch damage.



Figure 5: Fallen beech near field edge

22. The oak decline survey will be carried out again this summer. As mentioned above, the survey featured in a presentation to the London Tree Officers Association and there are plans to adopt the same methodology in other Ancient Woodland sites in Haringey.

Woodland Management and recent work in Queen's Wood and Coldfall Wood

23. In January and February 2014 some extensive coppicing work was carried out in both Queen's Wood and Coldfall Wood. At both sites, areas of approximately an acre (or 4,000 square metres) were coppiced and the impact has been spectacular, especially at Coldfall Wood. Coldfall has the benefit of having hornbeam coppice of a more recent age class, which is therefore more likely to regenerate successfully.
24. On both sites the traditional method of horse extraction was used to move the cut timber, which has the great advantage of creating less ground damage by reducing compaction (figure 6). This enabled the extraction work to be done in the very wet conditions around the New Year. Coldfall Wood has a very poor ground flora, and the coppicing should open up a large area to regeneration through the dormant seed bank, and also to other colonising plants.
25. The next Conservation Area in Highgate Wood is due to be created in 2017, in three years' time, and we are hoping that we will be able to use the same timber extraction methods. This would provide an excellent educational and promotional opportunity for the site, and will also be a chance to re-evaluate the effectiveness of the Conservation Areas created over the past ten years in encouraging natural regeneration.



Figure 6: Suffolk Punch heavy horse working in Queen's Wood

Play Area and Recreation

26. As previously mentioned in paragraph 13, the Play Area will be the focus of a significant investment this financial year, with the installation of a rubberised safety surface. The project will be financed from Highgate Wood's operational budget. There are some minor maintenance issues that are in the process of being resolved, principally around fencing and reducing compaction around trees. The tree sculpture that was reduced just over a year ago and featured in the April 2013 Committee report is continuing to be monitored. It is likely that a further reduction will be required during the next eighteen months.
27. During the winter months, the sports field became so waterlogged that regular maintenance proved impossible. A large part of the western edge of the field was virtually impassable, even when wearing wellington boots, and an extensive area of mud spread out onto the football field, due to people trying to avoid the standing water. Because of the poor field and weather conditions, the Team had to impose a break in the season, which all the teams accepted and were very accommodating about. The last game before the bad weather settled in was played on 29th December 2013, and the first game back there was played on 1st March 2014. Fortunately with the drier and warmer weather, the situation has improved and sports fixtures have once again been able to take place, with all the teams managing to complete their matches.
28. The two new Sunday teams have settled in well and all teams now pay the season's booking fees in advance and in full, which allows for easy administration of payments. This season we have taken a more controlling approach to the bookings and applications for all sports played here in the Wood. All applications and fixtures are now directed to the Highgate Wood Team, which then notifies the Support Services Team which in turn arranges invoicing and payment.
29. The cricket season is due to begin on the weekend of the 26th April, a week after the football season finishes, and hopefully the weather will improve for

the forthcoming season. The Team has already started the necessary preparation work for the first matches. The four Cricket Teams are the same as last season and all have paid their booking fees in full for the forthcoming season.

30. The logger system provided some interesting data for the period from April 2013 to March 2014. According to the data collected, a total of 854,916 people visited the site during that period, with 74,903 of them visiting the Play Area. This is considerably more than the previous estimates of 600,000. There were several missed readings at several gates, so we believe the actual figure could be in excess of 900,000 visitors.

Community and Events

31. Between the beginning of April 2013 and the end of March 2014 the Highgate Wood Team contributed a total of 1,993 hours of their time towards a wide variety of community- and education-based activities. This number is actually down on 2012/13, due to the two-month period during January and February when virtually no work could be done on the sports field because of the wet conditions. The past twelve months have seen the total number of people attending events and other organised activities increase to 2,387, from 2,270 during the same period in 2012/13. The attendance of educational walks and volunteer events has also increased over the 2013/14 period to 940, from the previous year's 599.
32. As already mentioned, Heath Hands sessions remain very popular and well attended, with over 20 sessions scheduled for the 2013/14 period. There was a slight drop in the number of hours over the same period, probably due to cancellations following the St Jude's Storm and the very wet weather. The work that the volunteers carry out has become an integral part of the Woodland Management and we hope to sustain and nurture this service.
33. In February the Conservation Team from Hampstead Heath helped with planting up the Round Pond in Queen's Wood with marginals brought over from the Heath. They also provided some guidance on management of the Pond and its future maintenance. Last summer the Conservation Team also carried out several days of Japanese Knotweed control along sections of the Parkland Walk Local Nature Reserve, which has proved very effective.

Proposed changes at the Pavilion Café

34. The Café Manager has put forward several proposals to increase income potential and improve customer satisfaction at this facility. A plan (Appendix 2) has been included with this Report, showing the two areas that could be reconfigured. The Café catering and serving area presents a number of challenges, due its limited size, and proposals focus on offering customers a faster take-away service, which should increase income. The Café Manager has been asked to undertake a survey of visitors to Highgate Wood to seek their views on what the Café should provide in terms of catering, customer service and quality.

35. The proposal is to build a stand-alone kiosk structure next to the existing brick kiosk for selling snacks, hot drinks and ice creams. This would alleviate the pressure on the main serving area inside the Café and allow customers who do not want a table service meal to buy food and drink to take away. The Café owner is currently assembling a planning application for the kiosk, with a view to opening this facility later this summer. The City Surveyors and the Highgate Wood Management Team will provide guidance on the design and layout of the structure.
36. It is also proposed to create a new outdoor seating area within the existing external paved terrace, where dog owners could sit with their dogs tethered nearby and out of the way of other customers using the main external terrace. The existing arrangement is not satisfactory, as dogs tethered on the fence next to the entrance gate often impede the access into the Café – it also means that dogs are separated from their owners, can become agitated and then start to bark, disturbing other customers sitting in the immediate vicinity.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

37. 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

38. There are no financial implications arising from this Report. The operational requirements highlighted in the Report will be met from the Superintendent's local risk budget.

Conclusion

39. The weather has once again put the Team's professionalism and skills to the test, but they have dealt with the various challenges extremely well, especially the post-St Jude's Storm period where there was such a large number of damaged trees to deal with. The restructured Team is settling in well and adopting a positive attitude towards the future challenges posed by the SBR and the anticipated budget reductions. The focus will be on identifying areas of work where efficiencies can be made and savings realised. Good progress has been made over the past year on meeting a number of the short-term objectives contained in the Conservation Management Plan, including important projects such as the Roman Kiln and the installation of the Photo-Voltaic System. There has also been a focus on increasing community involvement and, when possible, supporting local community groups.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Conservation Management Plan Summary

Appendix 2 – Café proposal plan

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Highgate Wood

Conservation Management Plan

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.



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 | | |

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 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).



Existing features		Proposed features	
Site Boundary	Existing vehicular route	Meadow area	Diversify the woodland edge to enhance the ecological value and to address safety concerns.
Grass	Mature wild service tree	Next phase conservation areas	Re-configure the layout of the existing cafe building to improve kitchen facilities and to increase the capacity for indoor dining.
Area where bluebells thrive	Woodbank/ woodbanks or site of historic importance	Pedestrian priority zones	
Site of ancient pottery kilns AD 50-150	Existing compartment areas	Consider upgrading desire line to create new footpath	
Existing footpath network	The Hollies (bird sanctuary)	Option for alternative small car park for visitors with mobility difficulties	
	Existing conservation areas		

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



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 or by contacting the Open Spaces Directorate on **020 7606 3030**.

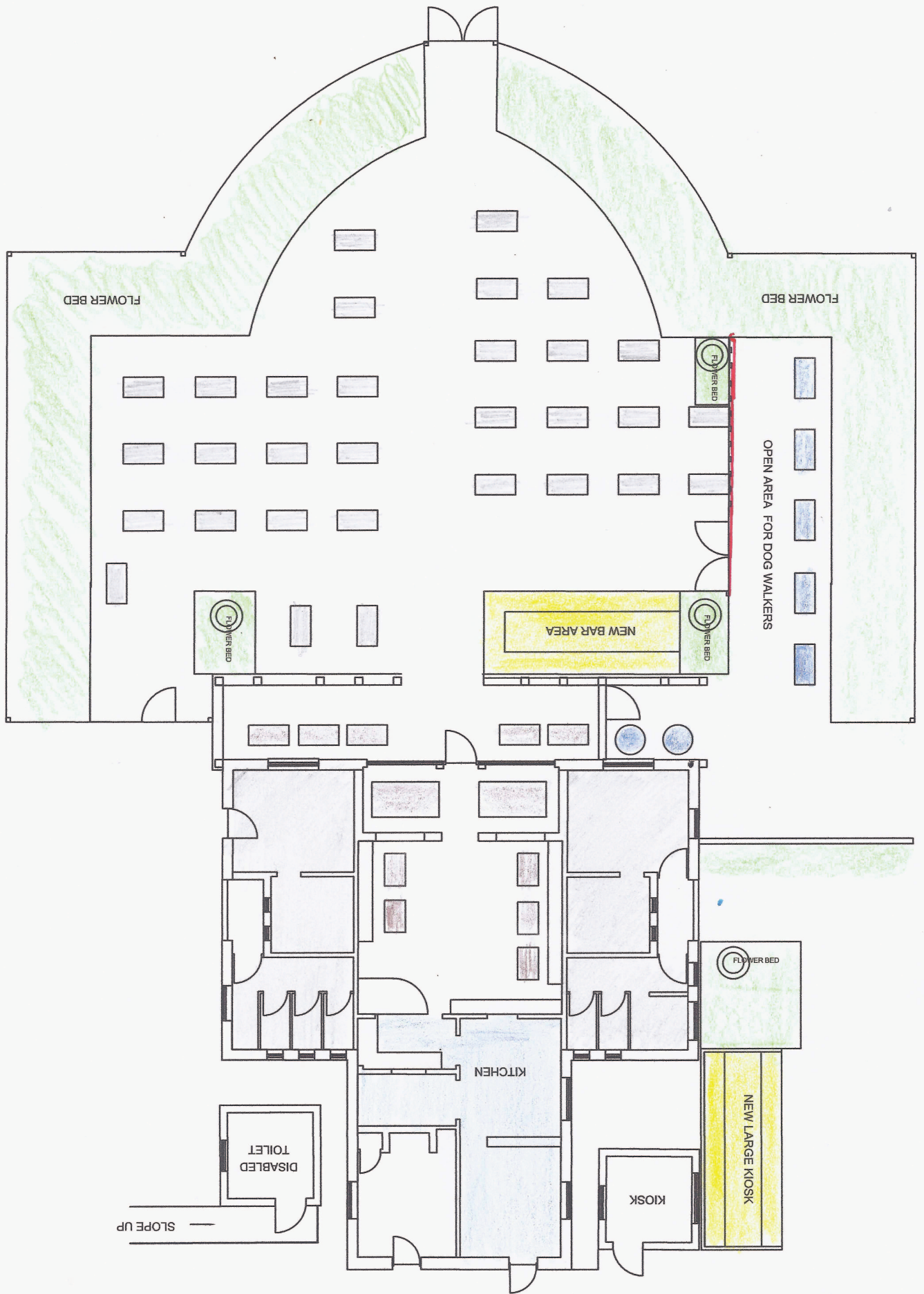


For further information please contact:

The Manager (or any of the woodkeepers)

Highgate Wood, Muswell Hill Road, London N10 3JN

Tel: 0208 444 6129 Fax: 0208 883 9815



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Committee(s):		Date(s):
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	For Information	7 April 2014
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	For Information	14 April 2014
Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee	For Information	30 April 2014
Subject:		Public
Tree Management Update Report		
Report of:		For Information
Superintendent of Hampstead Heath		
<p>Summary</p> <p>This report provides an update on significant emerging challenges facing the Tree Management Team on Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park. The report outlines the significance of the tree stock at all three sites, and also presents some of the new technology available to evaluate the environmental and economic value of this natural resource, against the background of growing concern for the natural environment and tree health.</p> <p>The report provides information on the current working arrangements and staff resource deployed to manage the tree stock across the Division, and then outlines the principal challenges facing the Tree Management Team, including tree disease and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events. It also includes proposed options for re-configuring the Tree Management resource to meet these new challenges.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>That the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee notes the information provided in this report.</p>		

Main Report

Background and the tree stock

1. Trees and woodland are an essential component of the natural fabric of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park. In landscape terms alone, these Open Spaces would be virtual deserts without tree cover. The presence of the treescape provides valuable habitat, incalculable amenity value, and recounts the history and heritage of the landscape. The recent proliferation of tree diseases and the huge public interest in this issue has precipitated a series of important changes, both in government policy and the manner in which the natural environment is valued, including trees and woodlands.

2. Hampstead Heath has a tree stock of approximately 20,000 trees, including 800 veterans and in excess of 100 hectares of secondary woodland, which has largely developed over the past 100 years. There are just over seven kilometres of hedgerows across the Heath and Heath Extension with many fine hedgerow trees, including a number of exceptional wild service trees. Much of the woodland trees are native oak, beech, willow and ash, but there are many other non-native species including the ubiquitous sycamore and turkey oak. Amongst all this woodland cover can be found previous planting schemes from various periods and many historically important landscape trees.
3. Highgate Wood has an estimated 5,000 trees within the woodland, and as an Ancient Woodland site contains many exceptional veteran hornbeams and standard oaks. Highgate Wood is one of a cluster of significant woodland sites in the Hornsey and Highgate area, and is a surviving fragment of the Bishop of London's Hunting Park that once extended to over 1,000 acres. Ancient Woodland experienced a period of decline following the Second World War, when many sites were partially clear-felled and then replanted with coniferous timber species. This followed what had already been a period of gradual land use change starting in the mid nineteenth century, during which woodland products were replaced with coal and steel.
4. Queen's Park has an interesting tree collection dating from the early Mackenzie planting of the late 1880's through to more recent native planting in the last five years. Unfortunately the site's principal tree species is the London plane closely followed by native ash, both being at the top of the current tree disease list. There are a number of other species, which provides some resilience, but there will be a need to plan for a long-term replacement programme if the current diseases threatening the London plane and the ash become well-established in the London area.

Evaluation of the tree and woodland resource

5. The past four years have seen an increasing focus on the Natural Environment, with growing concern about habitat degradation and the consequent decline in ecologically significant species. The massive opposition towards the planned selling of 250,000 hectares of publically owned woodland in February 2011 led to more than 500,000 people signing a petition opposing the proposal, together with a successful counter-campaign led by the Woodland Trust, resulting in the scrapping of the scheme. This coincided with the Government's 'Natural Environment' White Paper and subsequent policy document 'The Natural Choice' published in June 2011, which had been informed by the UK National Ecosystem Assessment. The UKNEA was the first assessment of its kind and highlighted not only the value of the natural environment in economic terms but also its vulnerability.
6. These milestone policy documents have been followed by others, notably the 'State of Nature' report collated by the UK Wildlife Trusts and released in the spring of 2013. This report identifies an overall decline of 60% of many wildlife species with associated decline in habitats. The report focuses on a number of principal habitats including woodland and identifies the decline in woodland management as a significant factor in falling numbers of insect and vertebrates species associated with this habitat. The report also refers to continuing degradation of hedgerow habitat on farmland and the loss of large hedgerow trees.

7. These national issues are reflected in the value and fragility of the natural fabric of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park, especially as these are sites completely embedded within the urban development of London. The combined tree stock at the three sites has an incalculable value both in landscape and environmental terms. Measuring this value is a complex and technologically challenging task, but there are various emerging technologies now available to measure and quantify the benefits of woodland and tree cover, both in an urban and a rural setting.
8. The system that appears to be attracting the most interest is a software package called 'i-Tree', which originated as a Forestry Service tool in the United States of America but has now been used extensively in the UK to produce detailed assessments of the 'ecological services' provided by urban forest environments. There are a number of different applications available from i-Tree, including a package to measure canopy cover and others for landscape design, but to date the most widely used application here in the UK is i-Tree Eco, which provides data on carbon sequestration, pollutant capture, and a capital asset value.
9. In 2011 a pilot study in Torbay in Devon used the i-Tree system to survey over 800,000 trees in the Borough and calculated that the Torbay 'urban forest' – a combination of park, woodland, street and privately owned trees – was worth a structural value of £280 million. This value represented the cost of replacing the entire treescape across the Borough. Other values provided by the survey were that the Borough's trees stored nearly 100,000 tonnes of carbon and sequestered 3,320 tonnes of carbon annually.
10. During the summer of 2014 an ambitious project co-ordinated by the RE-LEAF partnership will survey London's urban forest, using the i-Tree Eco package and a group of 200 trained volunteers. Having been processed in the USA, the collected field data will form part of a report to be published in 2015. This will be the first attempt to evaluate the ecological service benefit of London's tree cover, and will be a ground-breaking project which it is hoped the City of London can be part of. The London-wide survey will lead to more detailed Borough-wide assessments, and it is anticipated that the methodology will be applied extensively in the future to justify funding for tree and woodland management.
11. The London Tree Officers Association launched its own tree evaluation scheme in 2007: named Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT), it hit the headlines with the £750,000 London plane in Berkely Square. The system has been used to great effect by London Tree Managers for countering insurance claims and compensation payments for tree damage. The Tree Management Team on Hampstead Heath has used the CAVAT system to calculate the value of individual landscape trees: a conservative valuation of the site's 400 London plane trees exceeds four million pounds.

The veteran tree stock

12. Hampstead Heath's stock of veteran-status trees has an asset value that is very difficult to calculate using any of the systems mentioned above. For such a concentration of trees of this age class and conservation value to have survived the urban expansion and development of the past 150 years is extraordinary in its own right. They are a collective living monument in central London to a lost rural landscape, and have an inestimable value for that reason alone. They are also an important reminder to current and future generations of the thousands of trees that were lost during the urban

expansion of the Victorian period in the surrounding area. In addition, their special conservation value for a suite of important wildlife species (including insects, bats, and fungi) means that their management and conservation remains a priority for the Tree Management Team. Veteran trees are particularly vulnerable to environmental changes, including soil compaction. Root zone protection and halo release are two of several minimal intervention methods the Tree Team employs to conserve these important trees.



Figure 1: Line of veteran trees near Spaniards Road

13. Highgate Wood also contains a fine collection of veteran coppice hornbeams, a number of which have never been accurately dated but could possibly be traced back to the late Medieval period. Highgate Wood also escaped Victorian development and provides a fascinating insight into the pre-Industrial Revolution landscape. Veteran trees require specialist management and carefully considered conservation techniques, with an emphasis on minimal intervention wherever possible and long-term planning. Fortunately this is an area of tree management that the UK, including the City of London, is notable for and for which it has acquired an international reputation as a leader in the field.

The arboricultural skills resource across the three sites

14. The four persons in the Tree Team are the only full-time arborists within the Division and offer a range of skills, from carrying out detailed tree inspections, and report writing to performing complex dismantling operations on large trees. The team has moved away from the traditional interventionist approach of previous tree-management practice to a more scientific method, which focuses on interpreting tree biology and understanding the pathology of fungi and their associated decay strategies. Central to its work is a founding principle of not felling trees unless absolutely necessary. The team has developed a particular specialism in veteran tree management which they are now exporting to other sites when they have the time, including Burnham Beeches. This move towards a more ecologically focused arboriculture fits

well with the other conservation and ecological work being carried out on the Heath and Highgate Wood.

15. Aside from the Tree Team, there are a number of staff who have arboricultural experience and are certificated to work with chainsaws. Most of these are members of the Conservation Team, who carry out a degree of ground-based tree work within their programmed conservation work. There are also three Wood Keepers within the Highgate Wood Team who undertake regular tree work within Highgate Wood, including climbing and Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) operations. There is the additional resource of the Heath Ranger Team, which has four experienced staff with arboricultural experience who can provide an emergency service at weekends and out of hours.
16. Queen's Park has no arboriculturally certificated staff, so is reliant on the full-time Tree Team carrying out tree inspections and tree safety works. There are a number of staff who have received basic tree-inspection training and have been very proactive in passing on information about potential tree problems.

Planned inspections and tree safety work

17. The Tree Team's core role is to survey and inspect trees at Hampstead Heath and Queen's Park, specifically in the high-risk areas such as highways, facilities, and neighbouring properties. These inspections are part of a tree management system, which the City of London has a legal requirement to have in place and implement as duty holders. The Tree Team now has three LANTRA-qualified inspectors, who provide a rolling programme of regular inspections covering some 3,400 trees within the most highly used areas on the Heath.



Figure 2: Vehicle traffic on Spaniards Road

18. These safety inspections require a high level of skill and a practised eye, and can only be carried out by suitably qualified staff. One of the advantages of using City of London staff for this work is that they often have a detailed and historical understanding of many of the trees and can put this to very effective use when carrying out annual inspections. This was well demonstrated in

August 2013 when a patrolling Heath Ranger (who also has the LANTRA tree inspection qualification and had previously worked for many years in the Tree Team) identified a structural fault on a roadside oak tree. The area was rapidly cordoned off and cars and public were excluded from the fall zone, preventing serious injury when part of the tree collapsed and fell into the road shortly afterwards.

19. The cyclical inspection work is recorded on a tree management database called Arbortrack, and trees identified for safety work are then listed according to priority and worked on by the team. In 2013 alone, the team worked on 120 individual trees, including veteran trees. The schedule of trees requiring work is growing progressively longer as additional works are added due to storm events and emergency work.

The growing threat of tree disease and impact on workload

20. The current and continuing proliferation of tree diseases is causing a great deal of concern across the tree-management industry, with the additional separate issue of imported insect pests. Currently the diseases and pathogenic insects causing greatest concern are Ash Dieback, Oak Processionary Moth, and Massaria of Plane. In addition there are well-established diseases that have already reduced the tree stock significantly, specifically Horse Chestnut Bacterial Canker at Queen's Park and Chronic Oak Decline at Highgate Wood. Sadly most of these diseases have been introduced by human activity and it seems that despite all the plant import legislation and controls on movements, the diseases have moved throughout the UK.
21. When it comes to spreading plant pathogens, the rapidity of the spread of Ash Dieback in the autumn and winter of 2012 demonstrated just how effective we are at doing Nature's job for her. There has been a great deal of discussion about the way the Ash Dieback outbreak was dealt with in 2012, and how we should learn from the mistakes that were made in the 1970s and 1980s with Dutch Elm Disease. Although Ash Dieback was not discovered in the London area in 2013, it is expected to arrive in the next two years and the disease will have a major impact if it becomes established at Hampstead Heath and Queen's Park, where there are significant populations of ash trees.
22. In the spring of 2012 the fungal disease Massaria was discovered in Queen's Park, then identified shortly afterwards in various locations on Hampstead Heath, including high footfall areas such as South End Green and along the London Overground line boundary to the north of the Lido. It was very quickly realised that this issue needed to be given the highest priority and, with guidance from other tree managers in Royal Parks and neighbouring Boroughs, measures were put into place to manage the risk, including identification and removal of infected tree limbs and a raised frequency of inspection.
23. The immediate impact of this increased inspection frequency is the Tree Team has had to reschedule a significant amount of its time for carrying out essential safety work on the London planes. Inspections are carried out twice a year, as the pathology of the fungi involved can cause a rapid degenerative decay leading to branch failure within a short time. Once suspected branches are identified, the trees in question have to be climbed and the affected limbs removed. Because many of these trees are large 100-year-old landscape trees with high canopies exceeding 20 metres, the climbing operations involved are time consuming.

24. Between Hampstead Heath and Queen's Park the Tree Team is now having to deliver additional inspections of some 500 London planes, which is taking up a significant amount of their operational working time. The London Tree Officers Association has now released a comprehensive guidance document on managing Massaria on urban plane trees and this document will be adopted for future management of the disease.
25. Oak Processionary Moth is a pest that was introduced with imported oak trees from mainland Europe in 2006. Since then it has become well-established in South West London and has spread progressively every year. The caterpillars colonise oak trees, feeding on the leaves and, following a series of life cycle stages, build silken nests to pupate in. There is a major public health issue with Oak Processionary Moth, as the larval caterpillars produce microscopic allergenic hairs that can produce rashes and respiratory problems in humans and animals. The caterpillars can also cause significant damage to host trees, especially those already under stress, and young trees.
26. Oak Processionary Moth has been the target of a concerted programme of eradication financed by central government through the Forestry Commission, with the objective of stopping the pest from spreading further out into other parts of London. Last summer 150 known sites in and around London were treated with insecticide, and the operation has been considered to have had a significant impact. The Tree Management Team is working closely with the Forestry Commission and other organisations such as the London Tree Officers Association, in order to obtain the best advice and support in controlling this pest in the event of an infestation.
27. Should an infestation occur on any of the sites, the Tree Manger will seek advice from the Forestry Commission control team and then contract one of the designated specialist firms to carry out pesticide spraying. If the infestation is over a wide area, it is possible the public may have to be excluded for significant periods. Oak Processionary Moth is a notifiable pest and must be reported to the Forestry Commission and DEFRA. Latest news from the Forestry Commission suggests that the caterpillars progress eastwards has slowed, and instead is heading in a south-westerly direction – this hopefully means the danger is less imminent but nevertheless we have to be prepared. The Tree Management Team is continuing to carry out biosecurity measures by monitoring trees for signs of infestation.
28. Working with other organisations to share and exchange information on tree disease is essential, and the Conservation and Trees Manager is now part of a Pest and Disease Working Group, a small group of tree professionals that has been set up by the London Tree Officers Association who will meet regularly to discuss current issues. Information arising from these meetings can then be circulated to the City of London's Departmental Tree Disease Working Group. The Tree Management Officer is also attending a small specialist working group focusing on Massaria.

Storm damage and increasing extreme weather events

29. The Tree Team has maintained a simple database of tree incidents since the beginning of 2008, and the entries are an interesting indication of the impact of extreme weather events. The table below sets out the reported tree incidents and those that were storm-related. There is an interesting 'quiet' period between 2010 and 2011, which has added to the perceived impression of a sudden significant increase in tree incidents.

Year	No of Tree Incidents	Storm related
2008	66	0
2009	75	6
2010	50	0
2011	58	0
2012	80	37
2013	300	225

30. The St Jude's storm event was probably the worst extreme weather event that the Tree Management Team has had to deal with in the past twenty years, the previous severe storms being the 1987 and 1990 events that caused extensive damage across the southern part of the UK. The storm on the 28th October 2013 was not comparable to the ferocity and scale of the 1987 Hurricane but still caused extensive damage. Hampstead Heath was left with over 100 damaged trees, of which 40 were too badly damaged to save.
31. The immediate priority works that followed the St Jude's storm meant that the Tree Team was committed to almost a month of extra work, resulting in some disruption of their normal work schedule. Fortunately both the Heath Ranger Team and the Conservation Team were able to provide a professional and highly effective auxiliary task force, which focused on felling those trees too badly damaged to be retained as well as removing and processing all the fallen branch debris. This allowed the Tree Team to focus on the more technically difficult dismantling operations and those that required climbing work.
32. Highgate Wood appeared to have the highest number of damaged trees at 120, but this was mostly canopy damage. The large number of damaged but still suspended branches necessitated closing the site for two days for public safety reasons, which allowed the Highgate Wood Team to focus on making safe the pathways and more frequently used areas. The Tree Team and the Conservation Team provided additional support in Highgate Wood for a number of days to tackle several of the more challenging jobs.
33. In total the St Jude's storm deflected sixteen staff away from their programmed work for a period approaching six weeks. We are incredibly fortunate to have the additional resource of fourteen staff with arboricultural experience and certification. The fact that there was no requirement to bring in any external resources, other than a hydraulic work platform, proves the professionalism and combined experience of the staff and Management Team.

The Ponds Project and impact on trees on or near dams

34. For the past two years there has been an ongoing programme of tree management on the principal dams in both the Highgate and Hampstead chains. These works have focused around the recommendations made by the Reservoir Engineer, and have largely been carried out by the Conservation Team. However there are several trees that have also been worked on by the Tree Team, and there is now an additional requirement to ensure that all the significant trees located on the dams are inspected annually, in order to ensure that structural issues are identified before these trees can cause any damage to the dam and causeway structures.



Figure 3: Plane trees at Hampstead No.2 pond

35. There is also the important consideration that with the progress of the Ponds Project and the inevitability of some degree of tree loss when the works take place, there will be some requirement for the City of London's Tree Team to carry out some of the more sensitive work. It will also be required to handle any works to veteran trees in the construction areas, and ensure that tree protection measures are adhered to.

Successional issues within the arborist resource

36. Despite the number of available staff with arboricultural training and experience, there is a developing issue with climbing fitness and increasing age within the climbers group. Of the fourteen climbers across the Highgate Wood, Conservation and Trees Section, there are a number who are infrequent climbers, while some are approaching an age where climbing fitness and agility are diminishing. Climbing requires a high degree of physical fitness and regular practise. Despite the new ascending systems and cross-over from rock climbing technology, the work still requires fitness and stamina. Climbing arborists are also more susceptible to musculo-skeletal injuries, due to the nature of the work, and such injuries often mean long periods off work recovering, which then disrupts programmed work and service delivery.
37. There was a very well-received physiotherapy course run at Epping Forest in the summer of 2012 specifically for arborists across the Open Spaces Department. Everyone who attended had an individual assessment and the feedback was very positive. What really struck those who attended was the attention to detail, the recognition that the job of being a climbing arborist is very physically demanding and that as a group, they merit additional support. Unfortunately this service is longer provided by Occupational Health.
38. There is a growing need to replenish the climbing group with new, younger staff in order to maintain a reasonable level of fitness, and thus allow the older members of the group to focus on less physically demanding tasks, such as inspections and working off a hydraulic platform. There is currently no

apprenticeship scheme in place at Hampstead Heath, though the feasibility of employing an arboricultural apprentice is under investigation.

Making more effective use of the arboricultural skills across the Division

39. The events of the last two years have led the Tree Management Team to reconsider the existing model for arboricultural services in this Division. Previously the solution to the problem would have been to contract in additional resource, whether that was to assist with the tree inspection work or to carry out works on trees, particularly those on highways. Due to the increasing constraints on budgets, this option is becoming more difficult to justify, especially when we have a significant arboricultural resource on-site.
40. The Management Team is now looking at a more flexible lateral approach to delivering an effective and professional arboricultural service, much of which has to some extent already been tested during the recent season of storms. This new model will involve making more effective use of the high level of expertise and knowledge that exists within the Conservation and Ranger Teams. Both these teams have a number of staff who previously worked on the Tree Team and have a wide range of arboricultural skills, from mechanical winch operators to professional tree inspection.
41. Plans are now underway to deploy some of these staff to work alongside the Tree Team, either as a separate unit to work on specific trees that suit their particular skill sets, particularly large fallen trees, or to provide additional support for the Tree Team when they require skilled ground staff. Clearly this new model of working will require careful consideration, as it will impact on other areas of service delivery, so timing and deployment planning are critical.
42. The Tree Team currently operates as a single unit using one vehicle. In order to maximise their effectiveness, they require another vehicle that can be used by the tree inspection group, but could also be used by a small secondary team. In partnership with the Department of the Built Environment, a Land Rover 110 Pickup used for gritting and highway inspections during the winter months will be available to the Tree Team from April to October. The cost to the Superintendent is fuel and a six-month service at the end of the loan period, which will be met from the local risk budget.
43. It is vitally important to continue the work maintaining and conserving Hampstead Heath's population of veteran trees. The Tree Team and the Conservation Team have been able to carry out some significant work on a number of veteran trees over the course of the past year, but due to the storm events have understandably had to divert their attention to safety work. With the new working arrangements to be implemented from April onwards, there will be a schedule of veteran tree work to be carried out in 2014, which the Teams will strive to complete.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

44. Tree Management 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 also help fulfil the Department's Strategic Goals and Objectives: **No. 2.** To adopt sustainable and sensitive working practices, promote biodiversity and protect the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations, and **No. 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

45. There are no anticipated financial implications resulting from this report.

Conclusion

46. The tree management resource at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park is taking on a heightened role following the challenges outlined above. Tree Managers have had to deploy available resources away from other important areas of work, such as the ongoing programme of conserving veteran trees, in order to focus on essential Duty of Care requirements. Unfortunately the threat of tree disease is likely to continue, with new pathogens being introduced and released into the environment requiring increased biosecurity measures. The recent spate of major storm events has caused disruption to programmed work and meant that all available arboricultural resources have been focused on public safety considerations. However it is important to remember that these are challenges faced across the rest of the country, with the same decisions having to be made by other Tree Management professionals everywhere. The City of London is in the unusual position of having a well-resourced internal arboricultural service. At North London Open Spaces, the focus over the next few months will be the re-evaluation of the available arboricultural resource within the Division and the reconfiguration of the existing teams to meet these pressures.

Appendices

- None

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