



Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group

Date: WEDNESDAY, 10 JUNE 2015
Time: 12.00 pm
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM, ST ANNE'S & ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, 125 SALUSBURY ROAD, LONDON, NW6 6RG

Members:

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)	Councillor Eleanor Southwood (London Borough of Brent)
Jeremy Simons (Deputy Chairman)	John Blandy (Queen's Park Area Residents' Association)
Karina Dostalova	Helen Durnford (Queen's Park Area Residents' Association)
Ann Holmes	Annalisa Saba (Islamia School)
Barbara Newman	Paul Stratton (Local Schools Liaison)
Councillor James Denselow (London Borough of Brent)	
Councillor Neil Nerva (London Borough of Brent)	

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The meeting will be preceded by a walk starting at 10:15am – would Group members please meet outside the Queen's Park Café from 10:00am.

Lunch will be served at the rising of the meeting.
NB: Part of this meeting could be the subject of audio or video recording

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**
3. **MINUTES**
To agree the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 19 November 2014.

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 6)
4. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE REPORT**
Report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath.

For Information
(Pages 7 - 14)
5. **APPLICATION TO OPERATE MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP CEREMONIES AT THE QUEEN'S PARK BANDSTAND**
Report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath.

For Discussion
(Pages 15 - 20)
6. **UPDATE ON TREE SAFETY MANAGEMENT AT THE NORTH LONDON OPEN SPACES DIVISION**
Report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath.

For Information
(Pages 21 - 30)
7. **THE STATE OF UK PUBLIC PARKS 2014 - RENAISSANCE TO RISK?**
Report of the Director of Open Spaces.

For Information
(Pages 31 - 58)
8. **QUESTIONS**
9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
To note the date of the next meeting to be held on 18 November 2015.

QUEEN'S PARK JOINT CONSULTATIVE GROUP Wednesday, 19 November 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group held at
Committee Room 3 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 19 November
2014 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman)
Ann Holmes
Barbara Newman
John Blandy (Queen's Park Area Residents' Association)
Helen Durnford (Queen's Park Area Residents' Association)
Paul Stratton (Local Schools Liaison)

Officers:

David Arnold	Town Clerk's Department
Bob Warnock	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Richard Gentry	Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Jonathan Meares	Conservation and Trees Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Karina Dostalova and Councillor James Denselow (London Borough of Brent).

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Ann Holmes as a new Member of the Group and noted that Councillor Neil Nerva and Councillor Eleanor Southwood, although not present, would in future both represent the London Borough of Brent.

The Chairman also noted that Kensal Rise Residents' Association and Transition Town Kensal to Kilburn had been invited to observe this meeting, with a view to nominating a representative to become a member of the Group, but were not present. They would continue to be invited to observe meeting(s) and then consideration would be given to their addition to the Group as members.

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

There were none.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the last meeting held on 4 June 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Licensing of Commercial Activities

The Queen's Park Manager advised that legal advice was being sought from the Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department regarding fees for commercial activities, such as football coaching, taking place at the Park. He reported that charges for these activities should come into effect by spring 2015.

The Chairman added that private legislation regarding licensing of all commercial activities across the Open Spaces Department was being considered. The earliest a Private Bill could be deposited would be November 2015.

Recreation

In response to a member's question, the Park Manager advised that there had been a delay to maintenance of the paddling pool due to slower than expected response times from the contractor.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE REPORT

The Consultative Group received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update to Members on management and operational activities in Queen's Park over the past six months.

The Park Manager advised that the Park had been very busy and well-used by the local community; there had been 978,450 visits to the Park between October 2013 and September 2014. This included 194,382 to the playground and 100,136 to the Farm.

Ecology and Environment

Members were advised that a Sustainability Audit was completed in May 2014, which had informed a Local Improvement Plan for the Park. Electric vehicles were being used extensively in the Park to move machinery, supplies and equipment, and the Park had also invested in quieter battery-powered hedge cutters and blowers to benefit park-users, local residents, and the environment. The Park Manager also advised that a compost tumbler had been purchased which had the capacity to compost up to 650 litres of garden waste and would enable the Park to produce as much as 4,000 litres of compost yearly.

A poppy meadow was seeded in the summer of 2014 as part The Centenary Poppy Campaign, a national initiative by the Royal British Legion to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the start of World War I, but the bund at the bottom of the Park had been seeded with limited success.

Sports and Recreation

Members were advised that tennis coaching sessions had attracted 31 participants during summer 2014, compared with 51 participants in 2013. The sessions were well-advertised through banners and posters. Consultation would take place with the tennis coach and the Hampstead Heath Sports and Leisure Manager to maximise income potential in 2015.

The Park Manager advised that he had met with the City Surveyor's Department to discuss maintenance issues on tennis courts five and six, which were currently closed. It was hoped that resurfacing and root barriers could be added to courts five and six in 2015/16. Members were also advised that the height of the hedges around the east, south and western side of the courts would be reduced and the hedge on the northern side would be removed. This would improve visibility of the courts and reduce on-going maintenance.

Members requested that regular users of the tennis courts should be consulted before the northern hedge was removed. It was agreed that all four hedges would be reduced in height by one metre during winter and that consideration of the possibility to remove the hedge on the northern side be postponed until 2015.

The Park Manager also reported that number of suggestions had been made by the local community regarding the installation of outdoor gymnasium equipment in the Park. In response to a member's question, he advised that it would be installed in the current Petanque square as it was an under-used facility. A Member of the Group added that the on-going maintenance costs of this equipment should be considered before its installation.

Conservation and Heritage

Members of the Group congratulated staff at the Park for receiving the Green Heritage Award, which the Park Manager advised would be displayed at the Café.

The Park Manager also advised that a summary document of the Conservation Management Plan was currently being finalised and would be made available to the public in early 2015. This summary document would be presented to the next Group meeting for information.

Children's Play Area

The Park Manager advised that funding opportunities were still being considered to complete the redevelopment of the Play Area. He added that members of the Queen's Park Area Residents' Association had been supportive in moving the project forward. Work still to be completed included repairs the rubber surface in the Play Area and repairs to equipment in the sandpit area.

Landscape Management

The Conservation and Trees Manager advised members that Massaria of Plane and Ash Dieback were still present at the Park due to the high population of Plane Trees and Ash Trees.

Members were advised that a programme of containment and eradication of Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) was launched by the Forestry Commission in summer 2013. There had been further advances by the pest and there was now an infestation at the Regent's Park Zoo. The Conservation and Trees Manager and the Division's Tree Officer were finalising an action plan to deal

with OPM's inevitable arrival at one of the North London Open Spaces. A small number of Oak Trees at the Park would have to be monitored closely.

In response to a member's question, the Conservation and Trees Manager advised that the OPM spray treatment could damage other feeding caterpillar species on treated trees but the threat of OPM was large enough to necessitate this.

The Park Manager also advised that he had worked with the Park Supervisor to develop an Annual Work Programme for the Park, which would pick up on the general maintenance of the Park and a number of projects. Members were asked to contact the Park Manager with feedback after the meeting.

Operational Management

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath advised the Group that the Open Spaces Department was required to find £2.189 million of savings over the next three years. However, there was minimal scope for savings and reductions at the Park other than increasing income from licensable activities, increasing operational efficiency and reducing staffing costs, and increasing turnover at the Café.

It was suggested that weddings and civil ceremonies and marquee receptions could be held at the Bandstand to generate additional income. Ann Holmes noted that cost implications on staff and loss of revenue elsewhere in the Park would have to be carefully considered. The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath advised that he would carry out some business planning to determine the viability of holding weddings and civil ceremonies and receptions at the Bandstand and would submit a report to a future meeting.

It was also suggested that a Beer and Pie Festival could be held at the Park, which members supported as a good way to increase visitor numbers, raise the profile of the Park and to generate additional income. The Park Manager would consider this and would approach Breweries to seek further advice.

Visitors and Community

Members were advised that four outdoor cinema screenings were held at the Park during summer 2014; 2,500 tickets were sold which generated an income of £5,700. Given the success of this year's screenings, the Group agreed that five events should take place in 2015 instead of four.

Queen's Park Day was held on 14th September 2014 and was attended by an estimated 14,800 visitors. The Group thanked volunteers from the Queen's Park Area Residents' Association for the organisation of this successful annual event.

The Park Manager advised that the Queen's Park Community School contacted the Park in the summer and, as a result, a number of sessions with seven Duke of Edinburgh Award students were held. Members were advised that pupils from other local schools in the area were currently planting bulbs in the Park and the Quiet Garden.

The Park Manager reported that the Park Supervisor was working with the Animal Attendant on the purchase and installation of an appropriate donation box for the Children's Farm to be installed by December 2014. Income would help support this facility and its longer term sustainability. In response to members' questions, the Park Manager advised that he would look into the possibility for park-users to sponsor animals and would submit a report to the next Group meeting providing the figures for the amount collected from the donation box.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. **FEES AND CHARGES REPORT**

The Group received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that set out the proposed increase to fees and charges for Petanque, Pitch and Putt, and tennis at Queen's Park in 2015/16. Members were advised that a more fundamental review of fees and charges, including full benchmarking, would be carried out by the end of 2015.

Members were advised that the charges for children's football coaching would not be included in the proposed changes to fees and charges as they would become part of the licensing regime with effect from spring 2015.

RESOLVED – That the proposed fees and charges for 2015/16 be noted

6. **QUESTIONS**

In response to a question from Helen Durnford regarding the financial challenge, the Chairman advised that the annual Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee dinner was an important function to thank all local stakeholders who contributed to the management of the North London Open Spaces over the past year. He and the Deputy Chairman added that discussions were taking place within the Open Spaces Department to assess the appropriate level for such hospitality.

A second question was raised by the same member regarding the financial challenge and the provision of a large lunchtime meal at the winter meeting of the Group.

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

The Chairman thanked members of the Group for their hard work and assistance towards Queen's Park matters over the past three years, as this was his last meeting as Chairman of the Group.

8. **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

RESOLVED – That the date of the next meeting of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group, to be held on Wednesday 10 June 2015, be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

Chairman

**Contact Officer: David Arnold
David.Arnold@cityoflondon.gov.uk**

Committee(s)	Dated:
Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	10 June 2015 20 July 2015
Subject: Superintendent's Update Report Queen's Park – June 2015	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Information

Summary

This report provides an update to members of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group on the operational and management activities, including the achievements and good work of the Queen's Park Team since the last update report in November 2014.

The report provides information and updates on activities in the Park in the following areas: ecology and environment, sport and recreation, conservation and heritage, landscape management, operational management, and visitors and community. It also discusses income generation and cost-saving initiatives, including sustainability in the Park and licensed events.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report.
- That the views of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

Main Report

Background

1. Queen's Park continues to be a well-used and much loved Victorian park. Located within the Queen's Park Ward in the London Borough of Brent (LBB), it provides valuable green space for the enjoyment, leisure and well-being of the local community and London as a whole.
2. During the period from April 2014 to March 2015, the Park received 1,100,000 visits. The Children's Farm received 124,489 visits and the Children's Play Area 232,165 visits.
3. Pedestrian counters continue to be used at the Park gates and at its facilities, to monitor visitor numbers. The figures are collated on a monthly basis by staff, not only allowing the Manager and Supervisor to predict when the busy periods may be but also demonstrating, via its usage, the importance of this Open Space for the health and well-being of the community and wider London.

Current Position

Budget – Progress on the Service Based Review

4. By the 2017/18 Financial Year, the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces Department will be required to find £2.2m of savings, with £332,000 of savings identified across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park in 2015/16.
5. Savings and transformed changes are being addressed through eleven programmes that focus on the following areas: learning, sports, the Ponds Project, Various Powers Bill, promotion of services, energy efficiency, fleet and equipment, wayleaves, commercial rent of lodges, car parks, and cafés. Project Boards have now been set up for each of these programmes.
6. The Queen's Park Manager is involved with a number of the projects and has provided Opportunity Outlines for the learning, sports, and café programmes. An Opportunity Outline is used to scope out new ideas and highlight issues, so that it's clear what the proposal opportunity or problem to be solved. This enables the Senior Leadership Team to take an informed decision as to whether to commit to further development of the opportunity.
7. The Manager is making progress with the licensing of commercial activities in the Park, discussions and meetings having taken place with the Comptroller & City Solicitor and the City Surveyors Departments. Meetings will shortly commence with those groups that either currently operate commercial activities in the Park, or wish to do so.
8. Licensed events – for example, 'The Nomad' outdoor cinema – provide useful additional income. The management of licensed events needs to be handled appropriately, taking into consideration the impact they may have on the Park and its users.
9. There has been a focus on how we can share our resources and use the resources of others across the Division/Department. For example, our Animal Attendant has been providing additional support to the staff at the Golders Hill Park Zoo and our grass-cutting machinery has been shared with another site in the Division, while the skills and knowledge of a colleague from Hampstead Heath continue to guide our turf maintenance in the Quiet Garden and Pitch & Putt course. We have placed particular emphasis on identifying ways of improving the service by working proactively with other Teams on projects across the Division.
10. The Team has had to make changes in the way it works and this will bring some significant challenges, such as providing adequate staffing cover while making significant reductions in the Division's overtime and additional staffing costs. In principle, with the planned use of casual staff, the Team should be able to provide sufficient staffing cover, although arrangements will occasionally have to be made at very short notice, due to unplanned absence.

11. The coming summer season will present new challenges to the Team. The key factor is to plan ahead and try to anticipate as far in advance as possible the periods of high visitor numbers and the need for a larger staff resource. It is important to realise also that the other Divisional Teams will be going through the same exercise of reducing costs, which will require careful prioritisation.

Ecology and Environment

12. The Open Spaces Department has recently launched its Sustainability Improvement Plan 2015-2017, which focusses on three actions: an increased focus on driving down energy and water usage, a Department-wide review and rationalisation of vehicle and machinery use, and a programme of delivering further Solar Power Projects or other sustainable energy technologies.

13. The London Borough of Brent (LBB) is no longer in a position to remove green waste from Queen's Park, having reduced the number of vehicles in their fleet that managed this operation. The Park Supervisor is working with colleagues to review the removal of green waste from Queen's Park. Consideration will be given to the most environmentally sustainable, cost-effective and efficient process to achieve this. The service offered by the LBB was at no cost to the City of London.

14. One of the Hampstead Heath ecologists has taught two members of the Queen's Park Team the technique of hedge laying. Under the ecologist's guidance, Queen's Park staff completed a section of hedge laying in the Woodland Walk.

15. Hedge laying is a traditional method of hedge management and has been practised for hundreds of years. It involves cutting nearly all the way through the base of the stems, then laying them over at an angle of about 35 degrees. The cut stems, called pleachers, are tucked tightly together, staked vertically and bound horizontally for strength to produce a strong hedge. The hedge layer uses an array of axes and billhooks, and will normally stake and bind the hedge with hazel. The benefits of using this time-honoured method is to help rejuvenate an ageing hedgerow by encouraging it to put on new growth, as well as helping to improve its overall structure and strength, guarding against soil erosion, and providing a valuable wildlife habitat and corridor.

16. General waste continues to be removed from Queen's Park by the City of London Corporation's preferred contractor (Amey). When removed from site, it is taken to Walbrook Wharf in the City, then shipped along the Thames and taken for incineration at Belvedere in Bexley, where the material is burnt for energy.

Sports and Recreation

17. The hedge to the north of the tennis courts was reduced by one metre, a task that was carried out by Queen's Park staff. During the autumn/winter of 2015, a contractor will be used to reduce the height of the hedges on the remaining three sides of the tennis courts. This contractor will also be used to assist with other maintenance tasks that cannot be carried out by staff on site.

18. All six tennis courts were cleaned with a jet wash and treated for moss/weeds in the spring of 2015, as was the perimeter of the paddling pool. One court (court 6) is currently out of use, due to its poor state of repair. The City Surveyors are using currently external contractor, who is currently surveying the condition of all six courts, after which the Surveyors Department will obtain quotations for the necessary repairs and maintenance of all six courts.
19. From March 2014 to April 2015, gross income from the tennis courts was £22,000 and £24,946 came from the Pitch & Putt course, giving a combined gross income of £46,946. During this period, 7,500 games of tennis were sold and 6,388 games of Pitch & Putt.
20. To promote the City of London tennis coaching courses on offer, banners have been placed in and around the tennis courts. Information about the booking of courses has also been made available on the Queen's Park web page www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/queenspark.
21. The Park Manager will be meeting with a representative from Brent Council in June 2015 to consider the possibility of installing outdoor gym equipment in Queen's Park. This proposal would be dependent upon available funding. Should we decide to proceed with this, consideration will also be given to the maintenance and upkeep of this equipment. At its meeting on 18 May 2015 the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee noted the resolution of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee that decisions on equipment funding offers should be made by the respective Management Committee, based on the principle that any offer should be self-funding for the lifetime of the equipment.

Conservation and Heritage

22. The Green Flag/Green Heritage judging will take place on 28 May 2015. In preparation for this, we are continuing to maintain the Park and its facilities to a high standard.
23. The Park has entered the London in Bloom Awards. Judging for this event will take place in June/July 2015 (date TBC). London in Bloom celebrates and recognises the passion Londoners have for greening our capital city.

Children's Play Area

24. Repairs have been carried out to items of play equipment in the sandpit area. The works have included staff giving items of equipment a new coat of paint and repairs being completed by a contractor.
25. A project will be undertaken this year to repair or replace the wet-pour surface around the perimeter of the sandpit. Some areas of this surface are in a poor state of repair and this has been identified by a RoSPA inspection as a medium risk.

Landscape Management

26. The Hampstead Heath Arboricultural Team is currently checking the oak trees within the Park each week for the presence of Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) caterpillar. The caterpillars would potentially be feeding on the young oak foliage, until they build nests before pupating in late July. To our knowledge, there are so far no OPMs in the Park.
27. Massaria continues to be a significant issue on the London plane trees across the Park. Recently the Arboricultural Team removed seven dead branches affected by the disease from three mature trees.
28. The Team will shortly be removing a declining Horse Chestnut on the western edge of the main field. This tree is affected by Horse Chestnut leaf miner (*Cameraria ohridella*) and Horse Chestnut bleeding canker. Between them, this pest and disease are shutting down the tree's vascular system, which will sadly lead to the demise of the tree.

Operational Management

29. A separate report has been submitted to this Committee, proposing that the Queen's Park Bandstand be used for Weddings and Civil Partnership Ceremonies. Informal requests have already been made to the Park for this structure to be used for such Ceremonies.
30. The Bandstand continues to be used for parties, mainly for children. In 2014 we took 27 confirmed bookings, which generated a gross income of £1,485.00. We continue to charge £55.00 for a two-hour slot, either in the morning or the afternoon. We provide a number of tables and chairs for these events.
31. A donation post has been installed in the Children's Farm, which to date has raised in excess of £500.00. Consideration is being given to the installation of a donation post in the Children's Play Area, close to the paddling pool entrance.
32. New bins have been installed in the Park (21 in total). These bins are a traditional Victoriana style and are made from a polymer material, which requires little maintenance. They are larger in capacity (100 litres) than the previous cast iron bins, which have now been removed from site. We will review the usage of the new bins over the summer period and, if necessary, we will consider adding additional bins to support the collection of waste in the Park. The recycling of the cast iron bins will generate an income, which can be reinvested in the Park.
33. Seven granite bases have been installed opposite the Bandstand. These have been designed to complement the commemorative benches that sit upon them and to reduce the erosion beneath the benches, which was due to their location on the edge of the turf. These works were carried out by an external contractor and funded from the Local Risk Budget.

34. The Park has supported a number of work experience pupils in recent months. The students come from the Westminster College and have assisted members of the Team with low-level tasks, such as leaf and weed clearance in the Quiet Garden and the Children's Farm. They will continue to attend the Park until the end of the summer term.
35. The Park has supported a local student who has completed an element of her Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. She assisted in the Children's Farm for a ten-week period.
36. During the winter of 2014, 240 children from the Malorees School assisted staff with the planting of 5,000 daffodil bulbs in the Park, mainly across the bunds at the southern end of the main field. The planting of the bulbs has led to numerous positive comments from Park users about the wonderful colour displayed in the spring of 2015.
37. Two new wooden planters have been placed outside the Café in the Park. The planters were obtained, at no cost to the Park, from Parliament Hill as they were unwanted there. Each has been planted with ornamental willow and will be replanted with summer bedding at the end of May 2015.
38. New turf has been laid in the Children's Farm in the goat enclosure and rabbit pens. A new planting scheme has also been introduced in the Children's Farm around the pond. We propose to use two of the central enclosures in the Farm to create a new exhibit. One of the enclosures is currently empty and the other houses chickens, which can be moved to another enclosure within the Farm. We will then remove the dividing fence to create one large enclosure, which will house some ouessant sheep –, these are the smallest breed of sheep, with fully grown males being 19 inches from foot to shoulder fully grown and females being slightly smaller. As sheep are a domesticated breed, they will not change our status or require a zoo licence. We will just need to add them to our current CPH no. (County Parish Holding) number with DEFRA, which we already have for the goats. We have been advised that the proposed enclosure is big enough to house two females and one male initially, with scope to breed for a couple of seasons while keeping the offspring and then, if we continue to breed, moving the offspring on to other collections. The ouessant sheep will be a great addition to the Farm, creating more of a farm feel, and will develop more opportunities for education. The Animal Attendant has spoken with other collections, who have confirmed and it has been made clear that the sheep are low maintenance to keep. As and as there are no other collections with them in or around London, they are I'm sure they will be popular with visitors.
39. To reduce the cost of employing an external contractor, the staff have completed minor painting tasks, including painting in the Lych Gate, toilet doors, interior fencing, and the bases of the finger posts.
40. As part of the Additional Works Programme, exterior fencing panels were painted along Kingswood Avenue in the autumn of 2014. Repair works are currently being carried out on the notice boards at the entrances to the Park.

Visitors and Community

41. Discussions had started with a member of the local community, to support the development of a volunteer group in Queen's Park. Unfortunately this individual has now moved away from the area. An objective during 2015 will be to develop a volunteer group that can support the Team with maintenance and projects in the Park.
42. Queen's Park Day will take place on 13 September 2015. The Park Manager will work closely with the event organisers, the Queen's Park Area Residents' Association, to ensure this event continues to be a successful community event.
43. The Park will facilitate four outdoor film screenings in August and September, which will take place on the following dates;
 - 15 August 2015 – Labyrinth
 - 22 August 2015 – The Princess Bride
 - 19 September 2015 – Little Miss Sunshine
 - 26 September 2015 – Withnail and I
44. The Park Manager is in discussion with the 'The Nomad' outdoor cinema to support an event at Christmas in the Park. This event may include showing a film in the Park under cover.
45. In 2013 Queen's Park Area Residents' Association celebrated their 40th anniversary by planting a commemorative tree in Queen's Park. Although the group is now 42 years old, they took the opportunity to plant the wild service tree in the Park, marking their achievement with a plaque.
46. Over the Whitsun Bank Holiday weekend, there will be a small number of children's fairground rides on the main field. These rides will be open from 11am to 6pm from Friday 22 May until Tuesday 26 May.
47. A variety of bands will be performing on the Bandstand during the year. We currently pay for most of the bands to perform there, although we do seek local groups to come and perform free of charge. We have had a number of enquiries from local groups keen to perform, which are currently being followed up.
48. A variation to the entertainment licence will be applied for, which will allow the sale and consumption of alcohol in the Park at events exceeding the attendance limit of a Temporary Event Notice (the limit of a TEN including staff is 499).
49. Ten entertainment shows for children have been arranged and will take place during August 2015. These shows will occur on Wednesdays and Fridays, and will continue to take place in the Field of Hope, at no cost to our visitors. Flyers and posters will be produced promoting these events.
50. Transition Towns, Kensal to Kilburn continue to maintain the vegetable garden at the rear of the café. In March 2015, they supported the 'Big Dig' event and had twelve volunteers preparing the vegetable garden for the new growing season.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

51. This report will help fulfil the City of London Corporation's Corporate Plan 2015-19; *to provide valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure, to London and the nation.* The report also meets the Department's Strategic Goals and Objectives; *Protect and conserve the ecology, biodiversity and heritage of our sites, Embed financial sustainability across our activities by delivering identified programmes and projects, Enrich the lives of Londoners by providing high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities, Improve the health and wellbeing of community through access to green space and recreation.* The report also contributes to the Departmental values of *quality, inclusion, environment, promotion and people.*

Implications

52. **Financial** – There are no financial implications arising from this report. The operational requirements highlighted in this report would come from the Queen's Park Local Risk Budget.

53. **Legal** – There are no legal risks associated with this report.

54. **HR** – There are no HR implications associated with this report.

55. **Property** – There are no property implications associated with this report.

Conclusion

56. Challenges will be faced over the coming year by the Queen's Park Team. Staff will need to work with the Divisional and Departmental Management Teams to ensure they achieve the identified savings, promote the services offered, and seek to work differently, continuing to deliver high quality services and facilities in Queen's Park. Projects delivered under the Service-Based Review present an ambitious programme of change, during which we will continue to deliver our Divisional and Departmental objectives, efficiently and effectively ensuring the services offered by Queen's Park and the Open Spaces Department remain sustainable.

Appendices

None

Richard G Gentry

Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager/ Open Spaces

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group – For Discussion Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee – For decision	10 June 2015 20 July 2015
Subject: Application to operate Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies at the Queen's Park Bandstand	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Discussion

Summary

This report outlines the opportunity to generate future income by permitting the use of the Queen's Park Bandstand for Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies, licensed under the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005. The significant heritage of this listed structure and the idyllic surroundings of Queen's Park make it very desirable as a venue for such Ceremonies.

Queen's Park currently hosts a number of musical events on the Bandstand during the summer months and also makes the structure available for hire for children's parties, providing cover from inclement weather. With support from within the North London Open Spaces Division, there is the potential for the Queen's Park Team to host Ceremonies at this desirable venue, while still providing daily access to public visitors by restricting the number of Ceremonies and carefully managing the booking process.

In order to use Queen's Park Bandstand as a venue for these Ceremonies, a licence must be granted by the local authority, in this case the London Borough of Brent (LBB). The cost of a three-year licence (allowing up to 50 attendees per Ceremony) is £600, together with £1,100 for the necessary public advertising (payable in year one).

The estimated net income over the three-year period (2015 – 2018) is £12,702.40.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report.
- Endorse the use of the Queen's Park Bandstand for Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies for the initial licence period of 36 months, for subsequent approval by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

Main Report

Background

1. Queen's Park is a well-used and much loved Victorian park that receives an estimated 1,000,000 visits per annum. Located within the Queen's Park Ward, within the London Borough of Brent, it provides valuable green space for the enjoyment, leisure and well-being of the local community and wider London.
2. Members of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group (QPJCG) have previously suggested there is an opportunity to use the Bandstand in Queen's Park for Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies.
3. Informal enquiries have been received from members of the public in recent years, hoping to use this structure for Ceremonies.

Current Position

4. In February 2015, the Queen's Park Manager met with a representative from the LBB to explore the possibility of using the Queen's Park Bandstand as a venue for Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies.
5. There are currently fourteen venues in the LBB that are licensed for such Ceremonies, none of which is an Open Space.
6. This informal meeting with the LBB confirmed that the Queen's Park Bandstand would be a suitable venue for Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies, should the City of London Corporation wish to submit an application for venue approval.
7. A licence would provide an opportunity to generate income from the use of the structure, contributing to the budgetary savings required by the Open Spaces Department, while also supporting the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of Queen's Park and its facilities.

Options

8. **Option 1 (recommended)** – To approve the outlined proposal to apply for a licence and, subject to approval by the LBB, to use the Queen's Park Bandstand as a venue for Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies, presenting a new opportunity for income generation for Queen's Park.
9. **Option 2 (not recommended)** – Not to approve the proposal to apply for a licence to use the Queen's Park Bandstand as a venue for Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies, thereby preventing further income to be generated for Queen's Park.

Proposals

10. Option 1 seeks to gain the approval of this Committee to endorse the use of the Queen's Park Bandstand for onward approval by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.
11. If granted, the licence would be for an initial period of three years (36 months).
12. All Ceremonies would take place on the Bandstand structure in Queen's Park.
13. Access to the structure would be across mown amenity grass and up a number of steps on to the Bandstand. It is likely that some alterations would have to be considered, to facilitate access by disabled persons or wheelchair users.
14. The nearest toilet facilities are located at the café building a few hundred metres from the Bandstand. Additional toilets are located by the Children's Play Area.
15. As a condition of the formal application process, the City of London must satisfy the LBB that the structure meets current health and safety provisions and has sufficient fire precautions.
16. Due to the size of the structure, it is recommended that Ceremonies do not exceed 25 attendees.
17. Each Ceremony should not last longer than two hours; which would allow enough time for attendees to arrive, the Marriage/Civil Partnership vows to be exchanged, and for post-Ceremony refreshments and photography to take place in agreed locations within the Park.
18. Staff would be required to handle the set-up and strike down of the event and to support the smooth running of the Ceremony.
19. A non-refundable deposit of 20% would be required for each booking, which will dissuade people from cancelling booked dates. As well as preventing any unnecessary inconveniencing of public visitors to the Park, it would avoid the loss of income from another potential hirer on that date. Bookings will only be confirmed once the deposit has been received and the Terms & Conditions agreed by both the hirer and the City of London.
20. There will be no vehicular access to the venue and on-site car parking would not be provided. There is sufficient on-street parking nearby and good access to public transport.
21. The three-year Wedding and Civil Partnership Venue licence fee is £600.00.
22. The LBB requires that public notice of the application will be given by advertisement in a local newspaper, with a period of three weeks for any objections. This cost would be £1,100.

23. In Year One, a 2-hour exclusive hire ceremony package would be priced at £720.00 (incl VAT) for weekday bookings and £960.00 (incl VAT) for weekend bookings. Charges in the first year would be considered introductory and would be reviewed at the end of the first year. Should the popularity of these ceremonies increase, consideration can be given to increasing the charges following the annual review.

24. Staffing cost is estimated at £177.40 per Ceremony, based on two Keepers working 2 hours and one Manager working 3 hours.

25. In Year One, it is suggested that a maximum of six Ceremonies be held on the Bandstand. Three Ceremonies could be held during the week (Monday to Friday) and three Ceremonies held on either a Saturday or Sunday. On this basis Year One projected net income is £775.60. Projections for Years One, Two and Three are shown in the table below. Figures are based on static venue hire costs over a three-year period.

	Estimated number of ceremonies	Estimated venue hire income	Estimated staff costs	Estimated expenditure (licence fee, advert and setup costs)	Net income generated
Year 1	6	£5,040.00	£1,064.40	£3,200.00	£775.60
Year 2	8	£6,720.00	£1,419.20	£0.00	£5,300.80
Year 3	10	£8,400.00	£1,774.00	£0.00	£6,626.00
	TOTAL				£12,702.40

Table 1 - Income Projections

26. It will be the responsibility of the couple to arrange the legal formalities of the occasion, including the hire of a Registrar to conduct the Ceremony. Therefore this element would not be included in the venue hire.

27. Booking fees and venue capacity will be reviewed annually by this Committee and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

28. A detailed policy, together with the booking Terms & Conditions would be discussed with each couple making a booking, to ensure there is a clear understanding by all parties of what will be provided.

29. Ceremonies will take place during Park opening hours and will be concluded at least one hour before the Park closes.

30. There will be no refreshments offered as part of the package. The couple will be able to celebrate their civil partnership post-ceremony with an alcoholic drink. These refreshments will be provided by the couple. The erection of any structure including a gazebo or similar would not be permitted.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

31. This proposal links to the Open Spaces Business Plan strategic objective (2014/15) to generate income; *“improving our use of resources through increased income generation and improved procurement.”*

Implications

32. **Financial** - an initial outlay of £1,700 will be required for the licence application and the associated advertising costs. Spend for this will be taken from the Superintendent’s Local Risk Budget. In Year One a budget of £1,500 would be utilised from the Local Risk Budget to purchase furniture and ancillary items for the Ceremonies.

33. **Legal** – The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 allow Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies to take place in premises that are a seemly and dignified venue for the proceedings.

34. The hosting of Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies at Queen’s Park must not negatively impact on its primary purpose as a public open space for exercise and recreation.

35. **HR** – Resource would be utilised from the Queen’s Park Team to support the set-up and smooth running of the Ceremonies. Casual staff could be used, which would reduce the staff costs associated with these events.

36. **Property** – An increase in usage of this structure may see an increase in wear and tear. This will require monitoring with the support of the City Surveyors Department. Any additional maintenance costs arising could be met from the extra income generated from the Ceremonies.

Conclusion

37. Queen’s Park is a desirable venue for Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies, and the use of the Bandstand offers the opportunity to generate additional income from them.

38. Measures will be needed to ensure the City of London has a robust booking procedure in place.

39. Careful management of the Ceremonies on the Bandstand will avoid conflict with new and existing Park users.

40. There has been a steady demand for children’s parties on the Bandstand over the previous two years. It is envisaged that the demand for Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremonies on the Bandstand will steadily grow. By offering this service to the community and wider London, we will promote the use of the City of London’s Open Spaces as a whole.

Appendices
None

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group	9 March 2015 23 March 2015 22 April 2015 10 June 2015
Subject: Update on Tree Safety Management at the North London Open Spaces Division	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Information

Summary

This report provides an update on Tree Safety Management across the North London Opens Spaces Division. In March 2014 a report was presented to the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee on Tree Management, and the Committee made a request for an additional report to be presented focussing on tree safety. This report provides information on tree risk management guidance, the tree inspections process, tree incident reporting, tree health, and external review. In addition, the report provides information on the current practices the Tree Team employs to manage the tree stock across the Division, specialist training and information gathering.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note this report.

Main Report

Tree Inspection process and Industry Guidelines

1. The total Divisional tree stock across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park is approximately 25,000 trees. It would not be practicable to inspect every single one of these trees, as there is not sufficient resource to do this. The Health and Safety Executive advise adopting a zoning approach for those landowners who manage a large number of trees. In 2007 a Section Minute was released into the public domain by the HSE that prescribed using a two-tier or two-zone system, which would simply divide those trees into high-target areas, such as highways and close to buildings, and low-target trees growing in less-frequented areas such as woodlands. This approach has now been adopted widely by organisations such as the Royal Parks Agency and the National Trust, and by the City of London. The two-zone system should be considered the minimum, and most practitioners adopt a three- to five-zone system.
2. Part of the problem that Tree Managers face is the absence of any form of clear industry guidance or standard. Other than the Health and Safety Executive's

Section Minute mentioned above, there is no accepted guidance document that establishes a standard for all to follow. In 2007 the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) was established to investigate the feasibility of drafting a British Standard in Tree Risk Management. This would follow a number of other Tree Management British Standard (BS) documents, including BS:5837 and BS:3998 which deal with trees and development and with arboricultural operations respectively. The NTSG spent considerable time and effort in producing a draft standard known as BS:8516, and a specialist separate BS group was set up to draft a document that was sent out for consultation in 2008. The document was widely commented on but met with extensive criticism and ended up being dropped.

3. Fortunately the NTSG continued as a group and produced instead a guidance document 'Common Sense Risk Management of Trees', which following public consultation was released in December 2011. This publication was widely praised by the industry, and also sanctioned by the HSE. Published by the Forestry Commission, the document has now been adopted by many organisations across the Tree Management Sector. In June 2014 the City of London produced its own Tree Safety Policy, which refers directly to the NTSG guidance. This document was adopted by the Open Spaces Committee in June 2014. The NTSG guidance is founded on five key principles:

- Trees provide a wide variety of benefits to Society.
- Trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fall.
- The overall risk to human safety is extremely low.
- Tree owners have a legal duty of care.
- Tree owners should take a balanced and proportionate approach to Tree Safety Management.

4. The NTSG guidance document is made up of five chapters, with key sections on the risks from trees, legal requirements, reasonable and balanced tree management, and how to apply the guidance. The document is aimed at all levels of tree ownership, from large organisations right down to small landowners.

Tree risk quantified

5. The key message to convey to all our visitors and staff is that the risk posed by trees shedding branches or collapsing is very low. The Health and Safety Executive website publishes statistics on injuries and fatalities attributable to trees, in both the Forestry and Arboricultural sectors. The generally accepted average figure for related deaths remains at six occurrences per year, although this does fluctuate. It is significant that the number of fatalities of arboricultural workers is also around six occurrences every year, which gives an indication of the level of focus on tree management.

6. The HSE suggest a threshold of risk management of 1:10,000, where any risk above this level is regarded as unacceptable and must be addressed. The 'Tolerable Risk' region extends from 1:10,000 to 1:1,000,000. The risk from trees is calculated to 1:10,000,000 and is therefore considered to be very low. This

calculation was carried out by the Centre for Decision Analysis and Risk Management at Middlesex University, who were commissioned by the NTSG.

Tree safety and the Law

7. Under both the civil law and criminal law, an owner of land on which a tree stands has responsibilities for the Health and Safety of those on or near the land and has potential liabilities arising from the falling of a tree or branch. The civil law gives rise to duties and potential liabilities to pay damages in the event of a breach of those duties. The criminal law gives rise to the risk of prosecution in the event of an infringement of the relevant provisions.

The civil law

8. Common law: The owner of the land on which a tree stands, together with any party who has control over the tree's management, owes a duty of care at common law to all people who might be injured by the tree. The duty of care is to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that cause a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury to persons or property. If a person is injured by a falling/fallen tree or branch, potential causes of action arise against the tree owner in negligence for a breach of the duty of care, and/or in nuisance (where the tree or branch falls on neighbouring land). The courts have endeavoured to provide a definition of what amounts to reasonable care in the context of tree safety, and have stated that the standard of care is that of the reasonable and prudent landowner. The tree owner is not, however, expected to guarantee that the tree is safe.
9. Occupiers Liability Act 1957: This imposes a statutory duty of care on an occupier of premises to take such care as in all the circumstances of the case is reasonable to see that the visitor will be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purposes for which he is invited or permitted by the occupier to be there. The duty of care under the Act is effectively the same as that at common law in respect of the torts of negligence or nuisance.
10. Occupiers Liability Act 1984: This provides for an occupier's liability to people other than visitors, in particular trespassers. However no duty will arise under this Act in respect of risk resulting from any natural feature of the landscape (which will include a tree) providing that the occupier does not intentionally or recklessly create the risk.
11. Highways Act 1980: Under section 154(2) of the Act a highway authority has the power to require trees growing on land adjacent to the highway that are dead, diseased, damaged or insecurely rooted to be removed by those responsible for the trees and, in default of removal, to take action itself to have the trees removed. This legislation is relevant to all three sites within the Division, as between them they have responsibility for 10 kilometres of roadside trees, Hampstead Heath being the main site with 8 kilometres. The roadside trees located around and across the Heath represent the largest number at 1,300 and these are inspected annually.

12. Some Regulations under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 may also give rise to liability under the civil law as well as under the criminal law.

The criminal law

13. Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974: Sections 2 and 3 of the Act place a duty on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that in the course of conducting their undertaking, employees and members of the public are not put at risk. The acts of felling or lopping a tree clearly falls within the scope of this duty. It is also likely that the growing and management of trees on land falls within the scope of the duty where – as with the City’s management of the Open Spaces – such operations fall within the employer’s undertaking. The proviso “so far as is reasonably practicable” requires an employer to address the practical and proportionate precautions which can be taken to reduce a risk. The courts have indicated that this requires a computation to be made by the employer in which the amount of risk is placed on one scale and the sacrifice involved in the measures necessary for averting the risk, whether in terms of money, time or trouble, or the benefits of conducting the activity, are placed in the other.

14. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: Regulation 3 requires every employer to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the Health and Safety of his employees whilst at work, and to other persons arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking. This necessarily requires an employer to undertake a risk assessment of the tree stock on the land which forms part of the undertaking, and to operate an inspection system which focuses available resources on tree stock in high-use, high-target areas. The HSE Section Minute referred to above suggests a zoning process as the most practicable method of complying with this legal duty.

Tree Risk management at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen’s Park.

15. The three sites that make up the North London Open Spaces Division have exercised a risk zoning process since 2006. This has proved very effective and allows the tree inspection process to be undertaken internally, using the skills and experience of arboricultural staff, all of whom have the LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection Qualification. This is recognised nationally as the required level for those carrying out tree inspections as a regular part of their work, and assessing trees in areas of high use.

16. In order to make the recording of the inspection process easier, we use a tree management database called Arbortrack, widely used by other organisations and landowners, including other City of London Open Spaces. Of the 25,000 trees across the Division, 7,280 are recorded on Arbortrack, which equates to just under 30% of the total estimated tree stock. The majority of these trees are within the high-risk zone containing roads, facilities and surrounding property.

17. In 2012 the zoning system was modified following advice from a Tree Risk Management Consultant, who also carries out annual tree management audits for the Division. This recommendation followed various discussions about the

efficacy and precision of the system that was used at the time, and the lengthy process of inspecting every single tree and recording findings. The proposal was to carry out the annual inspection as a 'walk over' process using the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) protocol, and only recording individual trees that required works. The high, medium, and low zoning system would be retained but the individual zones would themselves be categorised according to perceived risk. This can be mostly easily explained by taking the example of highways and traffic flows, where classification depends on whether the road is a busy arterial road with high numbers of vehicles or mainly used for access only. By 'sequencing' each risk category, it was possible to identify more effectively where the inspection operation could be focused.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH & QUEENS PARK - RISK SEQUENCING AREAS										Date of Inspection	Who	Duration (people hrs)	Number of trees	Tree works required	Post weather event walk over																															
Group	Sub Group	Target Type	Target Use	Area & description	Priority No																																									
High 1																																														
1	A1	Major external road	Very high volume vehicular traffic	North End Way (both sides) - A road	20		07/02/2014	DH/NH	3 hrs	98	5			12-Dec	15-Jan																															
1	A2	Over ground train line	Frequent rail passage	Gospel Train Line (including play facilities)	20		11/02/2014	CD/NH	1.5 mins	46	2			Y	Y																															
1	A3	Major external road	Very high volume vehicular traffic	Spaniards Road (both sides & Hampstead Lane orchard section) - B road	20		06/03/2014	CD/NH	4.5 hrs	224	4			Y	Y																															
1	B1	Major external road	High to moderate volume vehicular traffic	East Heath Road (incl Voth road, & Whitestone gdn) - Classified unnumbered road	19		10/04/2014	DH/NH		213				Y	Y																															
1	B2	Major external road	High to moderate volume vehicular traffic	Southend Green (inc Keats House, Willow road & Heathside) - Classified unnumbered	19		12/03/2014	CD/NH	2 hrs	75	30			Y	Y																															
1	B3	Major external road	High to moderate volume vehicular traffic	Highgate Road - Classified unnumbered road	19		15/04/2014	NH	30 mins	27				Y	Y																															
1	C1	Major external road	Moderate volume vehicular traffic	Queens Park (external road) - Classified unnumbered & B road	18		23/06/2014	CD/DH	4hrs	194	9			Y	Y																															
1	C2	Major external road	Moderate volume vehicular traffic	West Heath Road (including Branch Hill & Judges Walk)	18		30/06/2014	DH	1.5hrs	138	3			Y	Y																															
1	C3	Major external road	Moderate volume vehicular traffic	Hampstead Way/Wildwood Road - Classified unnumbered road	18		03/07/2014	DH/CD/PC	4.5hrs	225	4			Y	Y																															
1	C4	Major external road	Moderate volume vehicular traffic	West Heath Avenue - Classified unnumbered road links to A road	18		20/06/2014	DH/JM	1hr	15				Y	Y																															
1	D1	Major external road	Moderate to low volume vehicular traffic	Millfield Lane - Classified unnumbered road links to B road	17		04/07/2014	CD	1hr	60				Y	Y																															
High 2																																														
2	A	Focus/formal areas	High public invited access area	Dams - Water safety management area	16			MS	4 hrs	76				Y	Y																															
2	B1	Focus/formal areas	High public invited access area	Queens Park - High local residency	15		15/09/2014	CD/MS	5hrs	374	13			Y	Y																															
2	B2	Focus/formal areas	High public invited access area	Golders Hill Park - Moderate - high local residency	15		12/11/2014	DH/CD/MS	6hrs	1499	13			Y	Y																															
2	C	Focus/formal areas	High public invited access area	Play & education areas - inc FH, EH, Vale, GH, Ext & KW	14		18/11/2014	CD/MS	6hrs	105	9			Y	Y																															
2	D	Focus/formal areas	High public invited access area	Swimming Ponds - Amenity usage	13		08/11/2014	CD/MS	6hrs		3			Y	Y																															
Medium																																														
3	A1	Paths/tracks	High to moderate pedestrian use	Parliament Hill below Kyte Hill - Surfaced footpath/pavement	12		26/1/2015	DH/CD/AN/MS	2.5hrs	?	9			Y	Y																															
3	A2	Property boundary	High to moderate pedestrian use	Various (see map)	12		23/12/2014	AN	5hrs	?	3			Y	Y																															
3	A3	Paths/tracks	High to moderate pedestrian use	Cycle Tracks - Surfaced footpath/pavement	12		06/02/2015	CD AN MS		?				Y	Y																															
3	B	Paths/tracks	Moderate to high pedestrian use	Hampstead Gate - Chubb path - South Meadow tarmac path	11		14/01/2015	MS/AN	3hrs					Y	Y																															
3	C	Paths/tracks	Moderate to high pedestrian use	Hill Garden & outside the main entrance - Surfaced footpath/pavement	10		15/12/2014	DH/CD/AN	3hrs	57	1			Y	Y																															
3	D	Paths/tracks	Moderate to high pedestrian use	Lime Avenue - Surfaced footpath/pavement	9		22/12/2014	AN	1hr		1			Y	Y																															
3	E	Paths/tracks	Moderate to high pedestrian use	West Heath Main paths - Surfaced footpath/pavement	8									Y	Y																															
3	F	Paths/tracks	Moderate to high pedestrian use	Extension internal paths - Surfaced footpath/pavement	7									Y	Y																															
3	G	Paths/tracks	Moderate to high pedestrian use	Pond Beat - Surfaced footpath/pavement	6									Y	Y																															
3	H1	Paths/tracks	Moderate pedestrian use	Athlone garden - Surfaced footpath/pavement	5									Y	Y																															
3	H2	Paths/tracks	Moderate pedestrian use	Sandy heath internal paths - Surfaced footpath/pavement	5									Y	Y																															
Low 1																																														
4	A	Bridal Paths	Moderate to low horse & pedestrian use	Horse Rides Ext, Sandy, West Heath South Meadow - Bridal path (designatec	4																																									
4	B1	Paths/tracks	Moderate to low pedestrian use	Vale foot paths - Broad trodden track, pedestrian use	3																																									
4	B2	Paths/tracks	Moderate to low pedestrian use	Cohens Field - Broad trodden track, pedestrian use	3																																									
4	C	Desire paths	Moderate to low pedestrian use	Various Heath wide desire paths - Narrow single file trodden footpath	2																																									
Low 2																																														
5	A	Restricted/fenced off areas	Low pedestrian use	Bird sanctuaries & fenced ponds - Only authorised personnel enjoy access	1																																									
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Figure 1: Tree inspection schedule for 2014

18. The Risk Sequencing System (RSS) has been very successful, allowing the Team to inspect trees more effectively and achieve higher inspection numbers. The success of the system is highly dependent on the competence and training of the inspector. The trees that are being re-inspected are well known to the Inspection Team, and are each already recorded with their individual history on the Arbortrack database. Trees that require work are recorded and then allocated a priority on a separate works list, which is regularly updated by the Tree Management Officer. Tree inspection progress is reviewed at regular meetings between the Tree Manager and the Tree Management Officer. All tree incidents are recorded on a separate database that has been maintained since 2008.

Specialist tree inspection work

19. Members of the Tree Team have developed their skills and experience in carrying out detailed tree assessment over the past six years, and can now employ a variety of technical investigatory procedures that can determine structural integrity and the extent of decay in older or damaged trees. They can employ a micro drilling device called a Resistograph, which provides an instantaneous visual display of the internal structure of the branch or stem being assessed. This device allows the Team to determine the 'residual wall' strength of the tree and make decisions on whether the tree requires a crown reduction or other suitable management. The acceptable rule of 30% of the known radius of the tree's main stem is considered to be the optimum wall thickness, but there are exceptions to this guidance, depending on age and species.



Figure 2: Resistograph being used to test for internal decay

20. The Tree Team has also started to carry out more root inspection work when possible, often on trees where there are evident fruiting fungal bodies, or where the root zone is compacted. The Team uses a compressor-powered air lance or air spade to carry out the excavation work, which prevents damage to the larger, more significant lateral and supportive roots. This equipment has been used to great effect on a number of trees where root damage has been suspected and allowed construction design to be altered to avoid further damage. Air spading has proven very effective at reducing compaction around veteran trees on the busier, more frequented areas of Hampstead Heath. The image below is from a recent investigation in Highgate Wood on one of the larger oaks near Muswell Hill Road. The tree was previously damaged in the 1987 storm and it was discovered that the main stem has a significant crack that has now occluded over but can still be detected using the Resistograph.



Figure 3: Oak tree root investigation at Highgate Wood

Other technical skills including lifting and lowering operations.



Figure 4: Veteran oak crown reduction



Figure 5: Dismantling of a field boundary oak

21. Figures 4 and 5 above show lifting and lowering operations undertaken by the Tree Team over the past twelve months. Figure 4 involved a light crown reduction on a veteran oak at the bottom of the Tumulus Field, using the Highgate Wood hydraulic work platform. Figure 5 shows the Team working on an old field boundary oak in Golders Hill Park, which required dismantling using a 'spider' crane. The Team has started to use both types of equipment with greater

frequency, developing their skills and expertise on technically challenging operations that would have previously required bringing in external contractors.

22. The significance of this changing approach to tree management is reflected more widely within the industry, with a greater emphasis on saving trees that would have previously simply been removed. Over the past ten to fifteen years, there has been an 'awakening' in the arboricultural world, with increased scientific understanding of the biomechanical properties of trees and their biology, and equally importantly how they interact with their surrounding environment. Arboriculturists can now employ an in-depth understanding of the 'body language' of trees, their complex relationship with the soil environment and other species, notably fungi. Equipped with this greater understanding of how trees grow and adapt to a suite of varying factors, the tree inspector can make more-informed decisions on how trees can be safely managed without major interventions.

Pest and Disease threats and the impact on tree safety

23. The Tree Team actively inspects populations of oak, London plane, ash and horse chestnuts for the presence of Oak Processionary Moth, Massaria, ash dieback, and horse chestnut bleeding canker. Records are kept of findings and then transferred to a series of maps that plot the extent of each respective disease. Trees that are sited in the high and medium zones are numerically prioritised and are subject to annual walk-over inspection by the Tree Team. Massaria of Plane remains a significant operational focus for the Tree Team, with established infection sites at South End Green and Queen's Park.



Figure 6: Branches with Massaria

24. Both the Divisional Tree Manager and the Tree Officer are involved with the London Tree Officers Association (LTOA) in the management of tree disease. The Tree Manager is a member of the LTOA's Biosecurity Working Party, which

meets quarterly, and the Tree Officer has been significantly involved in the LTOA's guidance on managing Massaria. The importance of working with other organisations such as the Arboricultural Association and the Forestry Commission is critical in the ongoing control of tree disease.

25. The Tree Team works closely with partners in the Forestry Commission to track male Oak Processionary Moths (OPM), using pheromone traps across the site which feeds back into a London-wide mapping strategy. Last year 27 male moths were discovered in the traps across the Division. As yet, there have been no egg-carrying females discovered but there are known nests at the Zoo in Regent's Park, just over two kilometres to the south of the Heath. There have also been nests found at an Open Space in the Borough of Brent, which is within two kilometres of Queen's Park. This year there has been an additional winter survey carried out which has provided accurate information on the insect's current distribution in the London area. A number of further nests have been discovered in Regent's Park which is significant for the Heath. One of the potential concerns about the caterpillar when it is discovered on site is the impact this will have on the Tree Team's ability to work on the trees that have been colonised. The arrival of OPM will impact not only on public access and safety but also on existing tree management operations, and will need to be carefully considered.

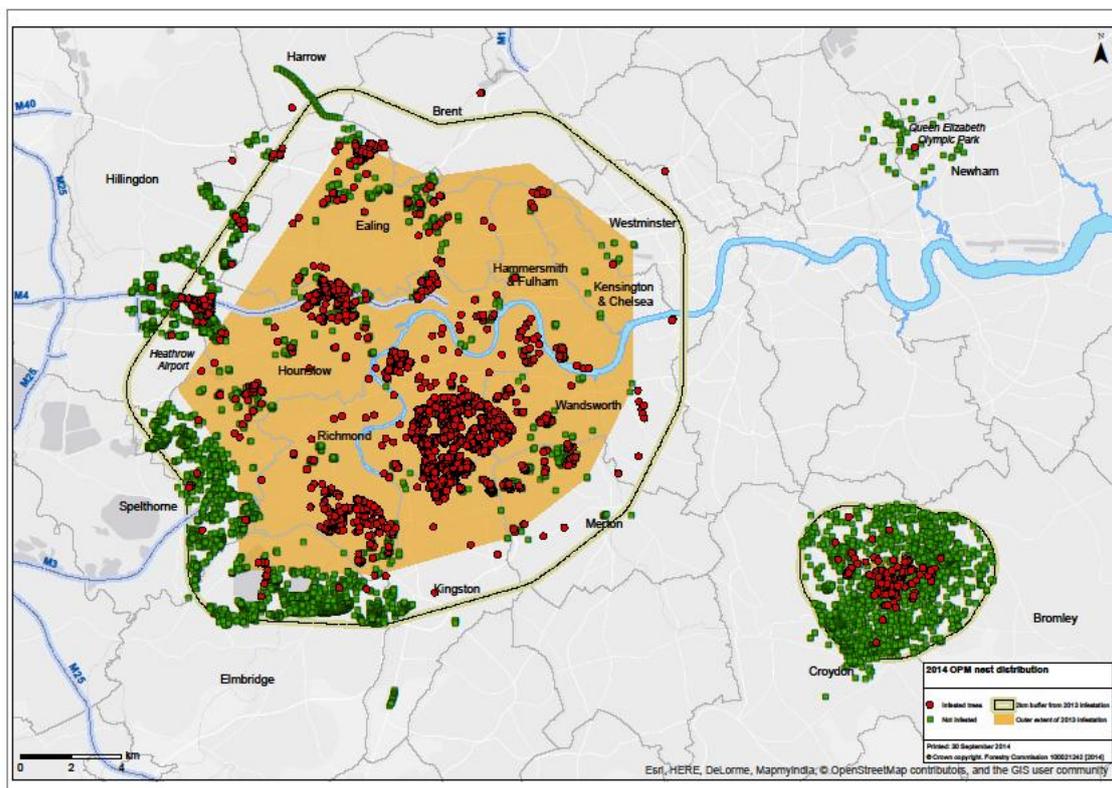


Figure 7: Oak Processionary Moth spread 2014

Increased frequency of extreme weather events

26. The St Jude's Storm in October 2013 caused a huge increase in the tree incident records at both Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood. The final total for 2013 was over 300 recorded incidents, a fourfold increase on the annual average. The impact of this was that the Tree Team's operational work was severely disrupted

and other teams had to provide support for the process of making the many damaged trees safe and clearing debris. A storm of this magnitude is commonplace in other parts of the world but in the UK it is relatively rare, though this trend is changing. This winter we have experienced a number of strong westerly weather systems, bringing high winds and heavy rain, but fortunately the predictions from the Meteorological Office proved to be incorrect and the damage this year has so far been very low.

27. In Highgate Wood, Golders Hill Park and Queen's Park, an early warning system has been introduced, using the Meteorological Office's messaging service. Storm warnings are generally issued three to four days beforehand, and this allows Management to issue instructions to staff to install signage warning of a possible site closure due to high winds. The system has been employed twice over the past three months but closures were not necessary, due to lower than predicted wind speeds.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

28. 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

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

30. The legal implications are contained within the body of this report.

Conclusion

31. The Tree Safety Management process at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park has developed in line with industry changes and a new, more scientifically based approach to managing trees. This new approach still has to operate within the parameters of the relevant legal requirements and Health and Safety considerations. The increasing frequency of severe weather events and the added requirement to manage the impact of tree disease is creating challenges for the Tree Management Team. Developing knowledge and technology, and the sharing of expertise and support from other organisations involved in the sector, will be critical in continuing to deliver a high-quality Tree Safety Management service.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – 'Managing Tree Safety' City of London Open Spaces Department June 2014

Background Papers

- National Tree Safety Group guidance document 'Common Sense Risk Management of Trees'. Available to view or download from:
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/publications>.

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Committee(s):	Date(s):
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee (For Decision)	20 January 2015
Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee (For Information)	22 April 2015
Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group (For Information)	10 June 2015
Subject: The State of UK Public Parks 2014	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information
<p>Summary</p> <p>The recent Heritage Lottery Fund report 'The State of UK Public Parks 2014 – Renaissance to Risk?' provides an important insight into the current state of Parks in the UK. This report summarises the key findings and considers the issues that are particular relevant to the City of London; both in managing green spaces across London and in supporting the wider green space agenda across London.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report; and • Consider the following:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. appoint the Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee as the Park Champion in recognition of his/her role working with stakeholders at each open space; or ii. seek to appoint those Members of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee, the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee, and the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group who are elected local Councillors as Park Champions for Hampstead Heath, Golders Hill Park, the Hampstead Heath Extension, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park; or iii. approve a 'do nothing' approach on the basis that the City of London Corporation already has comprehensive consultative and partnership arrangements in place for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park. 	

Main Report

Background

1. On June 3rd 2014, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) published a report entitled 'The State of UK Public Parks 2014 – Renaissance to risk?' a copy is attached at Appendix 1. HLF commissioned three surveys and compared results with pre-existing data to identify current issues and challenges.
2. The independent surveys sought views from:-
 - Local Authority Park Managers
 - Park Friends and User groups
 - Public Opinion by Ipsos MORI

Current Position

3. The HLF report demonstrates that the condition of parks across the UK has improved significantly since 2001. However, the surveys show that the future for parks is very uncertain. With government funding reducing by 20% in real terms in the last four years and future reductions expected, parks as a non-statutory service are highly vulnerable. The decline in spending is likely to be greater than public parks faced in the 1970 and 1980's; a period of chronic decline for UK parks. Unlike built facilities where closure is immediately clear, the reduction in park maintenance may go unnoticed until neglect results in a spiral of decline and sites are abandoned by the public. The report suggests that by 2020, some local authority's Parks Services may no longer be viable.
4. The cost to users. Most local authorities have increased fees for the use of facilities in the last 3 years and expect to continue this trend. The report highlights that charges need to be balanced against the provision of accessible services, to as wide a range of people as possible. At the very time when the need to tackle obesity and poor health is essential, the cost of sports facilities and activity is increasing. Further, 19% of local authorities surveyed mentioned disposing of parks and 45% are considering the disposal of some open spaces.
5. Loss of staff and skills. The survey results identify that 77% of councils have reduced frontline staff and 81% park managers. The loss of skills and staff results in less ability to support community groups, innovate or share management skills. The report highlights the importance of volunteers receiving training from motivated, skilled staff.
6. Regional inequalities. The largest proportion of good parks is found in London and the East Midlands, with the parks currently most in decline in Scotland, Wales and the North West. Urban metropolitan and unitary authorities, where the use of parks is greatest, received a higher proportion of cuts and staff losses in the last three years.

7. Communities. The number of Friends and user groups has increased by 30% in the last three years and membership by 47%. There are some 5,000 groups across the UK raising a significant £30million each year.
8. Quality of Life. User's value parks with 68% considering them important or essential to their quality of life; in urban areas this increases to 71% for family's and over 81% for those with children under five years old. The report summarises why parks matter under the headings of:
 - Family life
 - Supporting health and happiness
 - Improving social cohesion
 - Promoting local economic development
 - Delivering environment services
9. Call to action. The HLF report concludes that the research provides an early warning of the potential risk facing the UK's parks and sets out five key challenges for the future, calling on government, local authorities, business, the voluntary sector, academic institutions and the public, to take urgent action.

In summary, the challenges include:-

- Local authority commitment – ongoing and renewed commitment to fund staff and manage parks. Local authorities are asked to appoint an elected member as their Parks Champion, to report annually on the spend per resident in caring for parks and to commit to the provision of good accessible parks and a green space strategy.
- New partnerships – opportunities to diversify resourcing and establish long term viable partnerships require skills, commitment and resources. Consider opportunities to create innovative new partnerships to fund and manage parks and develop business management skills for staff.
- Getting communities more involved – expand the use of volunteers, with training and motivation to encourage their work; consider using existing national campaigns to support this work
- Collecting and sharing data – comparable data is essential to ensure consistency in park provision. HLF will support a pilot project to help the UK's top 20 cities to compare the quantity, condition and funding of their parks. Government, the Local Government Association and academic organisations are asked to facilitate the collection of comparable data for local authorities.
- New finance models and rethinking delivery – the future of parks will depend on developing new business models. A mix of public and private resource and expertise need to stimulate innovation, develop skills and share ideas.

Considerations for the City of London's Open Spaces

10. The Committee may consider the five HLF challenges from two perspectives; firstly, as the authority responsible for the green spaces in the Square Mile and secondly, as the provider of strategic green space across London. A commentary on some of the issues raised in the report is provided at Appendix 2.
11. Challenge one - Local authority commitment. The Corporation provides the core funding for both City Gardens and the strategic green spaces across London, demonstrating a substantial on-going commitment. The regular satisfaction survey undertaken for City Gardens and reported to your Committee, demonstrates a high level of public satisfaction. We do not receive information from London Borough satisfaction surveys; where our strategic green spaces are located within or adjacent to a Borough, for example West Ham Park and Newham , Queens Park and Brent. Each site does undertake a varying range of user and non-user surveys, as well as participating in Green Flag and Heritage Green Flag judging.
12. The Open Spaces Act of 1878 and the various site specific statutes, afford protection, preventing open spaces use other than specific, defined activities, which addresses the HLF concerns but is not afforded to all public parks. The Committee at its last meeting on 2nd June, approved for public consultation, the City of London Open Spaces Strategy Supplementary Planning document. The HLF report calls for the appointment of Parks Champions and regular reporting of the spend per resident, used to care for parks. With Chairmen for each open space committee, Members views are sought on whether this provides a suitable level of Champion. The current budget for each Committee is a public document but we do not provide a link between spend and users. For City Gardens, this would need to demonstrate the use by City workers, as well as residents. The cost per resident would not be readily identifiable for the strategic spaces.
13. Challenge two – New Partnerships. The charitable trust model used by the Corporation to manage the strategic green spaces is considered an exemplar within the sector. However, relatively few similar examples exist e.g. Milton Keynes, because of the inability of local authorities to resource core property based, ring-fenced investment funding. Many Leisure Trusts rely on annual revenue grants from their local authorities, which are at risk as and when local authority budgets are reduced. For our strategic spaces, the statutory protection of the sites has limited the opportunity to develop some new partnerships. It is hoped that this can be addressed in the coming years. The challenges of delivering the savings required by the service based review, will provide the opportunity to review our current service delivery and should create the incentive to consider innovative new partnerships, as well as renewing and reinvigorating existing partnerships.
14. Challenge three – Getting Communities more involved. The HLF report recognises the importance of training and motivating volunteers and the value

of supporting them through skilled, experience staff. The City is able to exemplify the commitment it has to volunteering, a report on last year's achievements is included on the same agenda. City Gardens have supported the newly formed Friends of City Gardens, who are already achieving new sources of grant support; likewise the Friends of Kenley Common have been essential to achieving the HLF grant for Kenley Airfield. We support both existing and newly forming Friends groups and will need to decide how to support the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces. In London, the London Parks and Green Spaces Forum (LPGSF), which has recently achieved independent charitable status, provides information, advice and training for Friends. The challenge for Open Spaces will be to ensure the support for volunteers and Friends groups remains an important priority following the outcomes of the service based review. The Love Parks Week, is included in events programmes; although not yet heavily promoted across the sector it is hoped in time can achieve the level of recognition of Green Flags.

15. Challenge four – Collecting and sharing data. The HLF demand for national recognition of the need for collection of consistent and comparable data is important. There will always be a challenge for us with both City Gardens and strategic green spaces, being different from other local authority provision; for example, within the City the use by City workers as well as residents and strategic green spaces, providing more nature conservation objectives than the norm. The HLF offer to develop a pilot project to help the UK's top 20 cities compare the quantity, condition and funding of city parks is welcome.
16. Challenge five - New Finance Models and rethinking delivery. As part of the service based review we will recognise the need to rethink some service delivery and the Committee will have the opportunity to consider this further later this year. We also expect to need to develop new skills amongst our staff, as part of this work. With our links to LPGSF, the Parks Alliance and contacts with other key service providers, we are in a strong position to share ideas and innovation. It could be suggested that the biggest challenge facing all local authorities with responsibility for parks is, how to develop self help and support from communities to a substantial degree and continue to deliver the core funding needed to ensure parks have a sustainable future.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. The HLF report considers the future management of Parks. The City Together Strategy theme 'A World Class City which protects, promotes and enhances our environment, recognises the importance of Parks and green spaces. Likewise the Open Spaces Strategy aim is to 'Provide safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces and services for the benefit of London and the nation.

Implications

18. **Financial, Legal and Property and HR**– there are no direct implications in considering and responding to this report. However, the department will be preparing budget proposals for the Committee's consideration as part of the service based review; this will provide an opportunity to address some of the issues e.g. new partnerships and innovation, mentioned in the report.

Conclusion

19. The recently published Heritage Lottery Fund report 'The State of UK Public Parks 2014 – Renaissance to Risk?' provides an important insight into the current state of Parks in the UK. Although Parks have nationally improved since 2001, there are significant concerns about the next six years. This report has considered the issues that are particularly relevant to the City of London; both in managing green spaces across London and in supporting the wider green space agenda across London; to ensure they will remain widely accessible and sustainable.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Heritage Lottery Fund State of UK Public Parks 2014 Renaissance to risk?
- Appendix 2 – The State of UK Parks commentary.

Background Papers:

Green Spaces: The Benefits for London by BOP Consulting, July 2013

Sue Ireland

Director of Open Spaces

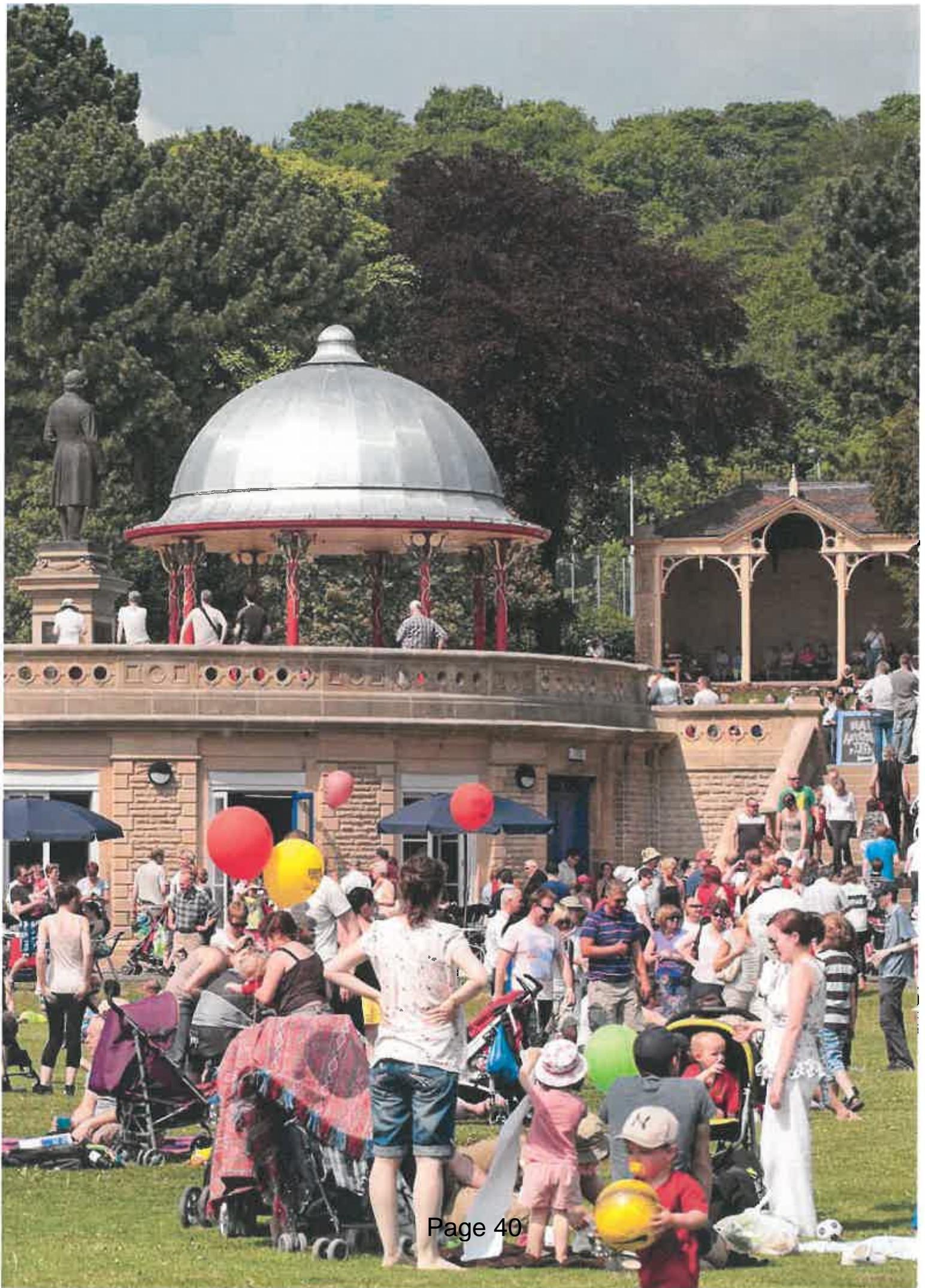
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State of UK Public Parks 2014

Renaissance
to risk?





Renaissance to risk?

As a result of the philanthropy and vision of our Victorian forebears, the UK is fortunate to have some of the world's greatest public parks, which 34 million of us visit regularly each year. Some of our earliest childhood memories are of visits to a local park to feed the ducks, enjoy the playground or picnic with friends. For our increasingly urban population the park is often the only green space where people can meet, play, relax and come close to nature.

But all is not well with the UK's public parks. Most are owned and maintained by local authorities, and increasing competition for council funding means that many face an uncertain future.

Parks have always been a priority for the Heritage Lottery Fund. We first started to invest in them in 1996 and have awarded over £620million across the UK, with the Big Lottery Fund joining us to invest a further £80million in England. Our funding has been matched with time and money from councils and community groups, collectively delivering a renaissance in the fortune of many parks. But our research shows that this investment, as well as thousands of parks and green spaces, may now be at risk.

This study, based on new research, establishes a benchmark on the current condition of the UK's public parks whilst also looking at how the quality and nature of parks might change in the future. It makes suggestions for action and better ways of working, including commitments from us here at the Heritage Lottery Fund.

We care passionately that everyone should have access to good-quality and exciting parks. We want this report to inspire all those who own, manage and use public parks to appreciate their importance and the critical role they have in modern life. Parks are vital community assets, essential to the local economy, to public health and wellbeing, to tourism, to social cohesion and to nature. We must keep them in good heart.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Abramsky', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dame Jenny Abramsky
Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund

The state of parks at a glance

The UK invented the municipal park movement, an enduring legacy of the industrial revolution that has been admired and imitated across the world. Every park has its own story, from Birkenhead Park in the Wirral, which opened in 1847 and provided the model for New York's Central Park, to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, created for the London 2012 Games.

We greatly value our public parks but as a national resource they are not represented by any national body, nor is there any statutory requirement governing their upkeep.

Since 1996, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has led a parks renaissance through its investment, and has developed knowledge and expertise through the projects that have been funded. This research report is in part prompted by the need to protect and sustain this investment in over 700 individual public parks. In addition, we are also keen to support everyone who uses and manages parks right across the UK, to ensure that every community has access to and can enjoy a good-quality local public park.

Our research

To establish a national picture of the state of UK parks we commissioned three new UK-wide surveys: a survey of local authority park managers, a survey of park friends and user groups, and a public opinion survey undertaken by Ipsos MORI. We have also drawn on other pre-existing data to assess how the condition of parks has changed over time, and to cross-check our results. Here we present the key findings. A fuller research report is available on www.hlf.org.uk/StateOfUKParks

Why we need to act now

After two decades of investment and improvement, the UK's parks are in a good state. However, they are at serious risk of slipping back into decline, as they did in the 1970s and 1980s. Without adequate maintenance, parks become underused, neglected and vandalised. Their immense social and environmental value is quickly eroded and they become a costly liability for those who manage them.

Our research shows that maintenance budgets are being reduced, capital will be less available for improvements, park facilities are becoming more expensive to use, management and maintenance skills are being lost, and some parks and green spaces may be sold or transferred to others to maintain.

However we know that people care passionately about their parks. We know that good parks are vital for our health and wellbeing, they support economic growth and tourism, and they play a significant part in addressing climate change in our cities.

At the end of this report you will find five key areas for action. For each we set out how HLF is intending to respond but we also call on others to work collaboratively to address this emerging risk. Our calls to action include:

- renewed local authority commitment;
- establishing new partnerships;
- getting communities more involved;
- collecting and sharing data; and
- developing new finance models and rethinking delivery.

Together we can avert this return to the past, but it will require the concerted effort of all those who use, own, manage, work in or have an interest in parks. We must also develop new ways of working, raise awareness of the hugely important role parks have, and continue to invest in their future.

2.6bn

estimated visits are made to the UK's parks each year

£30m

estimated to be raised each year by park friends and user groups

83%

of households with children aged five and under visit their local park at least once a month

70%

of park managers have recorded increased visitor numbers to their principal parks over the last year

47%

of park friends and user groups say membership numbers have increased over the last three years

Parks are valued and in good heart...

Key findings

We predict that the quality and condition of many parks will dramatically decline if action is not taken now to address this emerging risk.

86%

of park managers report cuts to revenue budgets since 2010 and they expect the trend to continue for the next three years

71%

of households with children under 10 are concerned that reductions in council budgets could have a negative impact on the condition of their local park

...but the future may not be so bright

81%

of council parks departments have lost skilled management staff since 2010, and 77% have lost front-line staff.

45%

of local authorities are considering either selling parks and green spaces or transferring their management to others

Park managers report higher visitor satisfaction, but many people are concerned budget cuts could have a negative impact on their local park.



What we found

About this report

We commissioned three new surveys for this report:

- a survey of local authority park managers;
- a survey of park friends and user groups; and
- a public opinion survey from Ipsos MORI.

CFP Consultants undertook an online survey of park managers. This targeted all local authorities in Great Britain and Northern Ireland alongside trusts which manage green space. The survey ran from 29 August to 8 October 2013.

A total of 178 local authorities completed the survey, representing 41% of UK local authorities, along with six responses from other organisations. These authorities collectively manage parks and green spaces for more than 31 million people, almost half the UK population.

CFP also undertook an online survey of park friends and user groups, to which 436 groups responded, representing a membership of 27,802 people. The survey was conducted between

29 August and 27 September 2013. It was promoted by CFP regional forums, the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, and GreenSpace Scotland.

Ipsos MORI surveyed a representative sample of 1,037 adults aged 15 and over living in the UK. The survey ran between 11 and 17 October 2013. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in-home using the Ipsos MORI Capibus. Data has been weighted to the known population profile for the UK.

The changing condition of parks

Our surveys show that the condition of parks across the UK has improved significantly since 2001. However this picture is about to change.

We found that 59% of park managers, as well as 50% of friends groups and the park-going public, considered their parks to be in good condition. In 2001 only 18% of park managers considered their parks to be in good condition. The improvement in parks is reflected in the number of Green Flag Awards (the voluntary, nationally recognised quality accreditation scheme for parks and green spaces). In 2001 Green Flags were awarded to only 81 parks in England. By 2010 this had risen to 905, and by 2013 there were 1,116 awards.

We also recorded increases in visitor satisfaction and numbers. 50% of managers said that visitor satisfaction had increased over the last three years, and 47% reported that visitor numbers had risen over the last year. For principal parks (the main parks a council manages) 70% of park managers said that visitor numbers had risen over the last year.

Turning to the condition of parks over the coming three years, we found that only 21% of managers and 32% of friends groups

anticipate that their parks will still be improving, while 37% of managers and 34% of friends groups anticipate that their parks will be declining.

Evidence suggests that the renaissance of our public parks that has been underway for the past 15 years is fast coming to an end. Our Ipsos MORI survey found that 63% of the park-going public are either 'fairly concerned' or 'very concerned' that reduced council budgets could have a negative impact on the condition of their local park. This level of concern increases to 74% for those who also say that their local park is currently in poor condition. And 71% of households with children under 10 are concerned that reductions in council budgets could have a negative impact on the condition of their local park.

“Parks and open spaces have been an easy hit for council savings. The provision and maintenance of open space is not a statutory requirement.”

Park manager

Pressure on budgets

The Audit Commission¹ reports that Government funding to local authorities reduced by an average of almost 20% in real terms between 2010-11 and 2013-14. Some of the poorest councils in the most deprived areas of England have experienced cumulative cuts that will average 25% by 2016². Council budgets are expected to continue falling for the rest of the decade.

As parks are a non-statutory service, their budgets are highly vulnerable. We found that:

- most parks budgets have been cut since 2010, many above the 20% average reported by the Audit Commission;
- 86% of park managers report that revenue budgets for day-to-day maintenance have been cut;
- over half of park managers report that capital budgets for investing in fabric and facilities, such as play areas, toilets and paths, have been cut.

This situation is likely to worsen. The Local Government Association³ warns that, for England, funding for services other than social care and waste disposal will drop by 46% by 2020. Our survey shows that over the next three years:

- 87% of park managers expect further cuts to revenue budgets;
- 63% of managers also face further cuts to capital budgets.

“Floral features removed, no budget for infrastructure maintenance. We have substantially increased park charges to compensate.”

Park manager

This decline in spending is potentially greater and more rapid than that faced by public parks in the 1970s and 1980s, a time of chronic decline in the state of the UK's parks.

To give an example of the scale of cuts, Liverpool City Council's parks department budget of £10million will be cut by 50% over the next three years⁴.

Unlike some cuts to services, such as closing a leisure centre or library, reductions in park maintenance may go unnoticed before a tipping point is reached. The reduction of management tasks such as grass cutting, weeding beds or repairing seats may initially result in few complaints, but eventually the build-up of neglect may lead to the abandonment of the park by the public. A spiral of decline quickly follows.

Those working in parks voice concern that by 2020 some local authority park services will no longer be viable. A report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁵ suggests that local government may cease to provide some services altogether, transferring responsibilities to other agencies, sectors and partnerships.

The cost to park users

Over the last three years most local authorities have increased charges for facilities in parks.

- 83% of managers reported increasing fees for facilities such as sports pitches, car parks, allotments and the hire of grounds or buildings for private events;
- 85% of managers intend to increase fees in the next three years.

While revenue generation needs to be part of the mixed economy that will support parks in future, charges need to be balanced against provision of accessible services to as wide a range of people as possible. The cost of hiring sports facilities is increasing at a time when there is urgent need to promote active lifestyles to tackle obesity and poor health.

Sale of parks and green spaces

A significant number of authorities are considering selling or transferring management of their parks and green spaces over the next three years.

- 45% of local authorities are considering disposing of some green spaces;
- 19% of local authorities specifically mentioned disposing of parks as opposed to other green spaces.



Buildings in parks are at risk of being sold, and parks decline where there is a lack of investment.

“Our park ranger service took a 50% cut – the rangers have gone from a team of 32 to 10 in the last three years.”

Park manager

Loss of staff and skills

The staffing of parks has fallen in line with the decline in funding over the last three years.

- 77% of councils have reduced frontline parks staff; and
- 81% of councils have cut park management staff.

The loss of park management staff means that local authorities will be much less able to support the work of community groups, promote innovation or assist the process of transferring or sharing management with local organisations and partners.

Evidence from Lottery-funded projects shows that volunteering plays a critical part in creating vibrant community parks. If, however, groups are not developed, trained and motivated by skilled staff, volunteer numbers quickly dwindle.

Regional inequalities

Our survey of park managers highlights that there are differences in the condition and funding of parks across the UK.

- The largest proportion of good parks is in London and the East Midlands.
- The largest proportion of parks reported to have improved over the last three years is in London and the East of England.
- The largest proportion of parks declining is in Scotland, Wales and the North West of England.

In terms of funding and staffing, park managers in the North West of England are reporting the highest proportion of cuts to revenue over the last three years and are also expecting the highest cuts to both revenue and capital over the next three years. They also reported the highest loss of frontline and management staff over the last three years.

The North East and Yorkshire and the Humber expect high levels of budget cuts and staff loss over the next three years, but the limited number of survey returns from these particular regions precludes firm conclusions.

Our research suggests a proportionately higher level of budget cuts and staff losses in the north of England. Furthermore, the urban metropolitan and unitary authorities, where the use of parks is greatest, received a higher proportion of cuts and staff losses in the last three years. This trend is expected to continue.

The power of communities

Community groups have an increasing role in championing and supporting local parks. In the last three years:

- managers have seen an increase of over 30% in the number of friends and user groups, and over half of managers expect this to continue;
- 47% of groups have seen an increase in membership.

There are an estimated 5,000 friends groups or park user groups across the UK. Each group raises on average £6,900 per year, representing over £30million raised for parks annually.

Impact on quality of life

Those who use parks value them highly. Some 68% of park users consider spending time in their local park important or essential to their quality of life. This rises to 71% for park users in urban areas, and over 81% for households with children under 10.

The highest percentage of park users are those households with children. 83% of households with children aged five and under visit their local park at least once a month. In the UK it is astonishing that almost 600 million visits are estimated to be made by households with children under the age of 16 each year. In total 2.6 billion visits are estimated to be made to the UK's parks each year.



Parks provide a range of volunteering opportunities, and make a real difference to family life.

Skilled staff are needed to maintain horticulture in historic parks.



Local urban parks are often the only green spaces where people can meet, play and relax.



Why parks matter

Central to family life

Some of our earliest childhood memories include visits to local parks. Socially, parks offer opportunities to rest and meet friends, for children and young people to play, to hold events, to pass through on the way to work, to exercise and take time out from the pressures of everyday life.

Other reports also acknowledge the importance of parks to children. *Making Britain Great for Children and Families*⁶ – a manifesto launched by 4Children, the national charity working towards a more integrated approach to children's services – includes better provision of parks in its list of ways to create good places for children to grow up in.



Supporting health and happiness

Parks have a positive effect on people's wellbeing and the health of their neighbourhoods. Evidence from the University of Exeter's European Centre for Environment and Human Health, published by the Association for Psychological Science⁷, reveals that people who live in greener urban areas report greater wellbeing and lower levels of mental stress than city dwellers without nearby parks and gardens.

An increase in visitor numbers, particularly in urban parks, was recorded by Natural England in their annual Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) surveys⁸. In 2012-13 there were fewer visits to the countryside and a significant increase in visits to green spaces in towns and cities. This points to the growing importance of parks as the only place some people encounter nature.

The *State of the Nation's Waistline* report⁹, published by the National Obesity Forum, states that over 25% of adults in England are considered obese. By 2050 the figure is expected to rise to 50%. Parks provide vital health resources that help to support healthy populations. Their value to public health is emphasised in *Public Health and Landscape*, a recent position statement by the Landscape Institute¹⁰, which demonstrates parks are a key ingredient in creating healthy places.

"Parks are particularly important as for many people they provide their back garden."

HLF Parks for People programme evaluation¹¹



Parks are great biodiversity hotspots and a place where children can learn about nature. They also provide opportunities for local businesses such as cafés, and help to support local economies.



Improving social cohesion

Recent research highlights that “there is good evidence suggesting that the natural environment contributes to social cohesion. This appears to be particularly the case for well-maintained green spaces”¹². An example from Chicago suggests that parks can actively promote “inter-community relations in a way which is almost unique in urban life”¹³. A Joseph Rowntree report¹⁴ notes that, as communities across the UK become increasingly mixed and diverse, local social amenities will become more and more important. Public parks offer one of the most important social spaces in a neighbourhood, but, as interviews in the research highlight, their condition is a key issue, as poor-quality parks can have a detrimental effect on cohesion.

Promoting local economic development

Public parks have been used throughout history to promote investment and growth. Developers frequently use the proximity of parks to attract investors. A study on improving the competitiveness of England’s core cities¹⁵ notes that “soft location factors are an increasingly important part of economic decision-making”. Good-quality parks and public spaces contribute to these factors, which help to attract and retain skilled workers and their families.

Forward-looking cities with a good environment and easy access to natural amenities are working at preserving and improving them. They know that for skilled employees “the quality of life for themselves and their families is an increasingly important factor”¹⁶ of location. Recent research from Natural England¹⁷ draws together a growing evidence base on ways the natural environment, including parks, can enhance the economic competitiveness of a particular region and increase employee productivity.

Good parks also boost the tourist economy. Visit Britain¹⁸ has found that, of the 31 million tourists visiting Britain, over a third enjoy visiting a park or garden, making it one of the most popular activities (ranking above visiting a museum, castle, historic house or art gallery). Cilsold Park, a local neighbourhood park in the London Borough of Hackney, receives the same number of annual visitors as London’s National Portrait Gallery, and more than St Paul’s Cathedral (2.1 million, 2.1 million and 1.8 million visitors respectively).

Investing in parks is a recognised way of helping to regenerate and re-vitalise an area. There are economic indicators to show this works, and strong evidence of the impact of parks in protecting and enhancing land and property values. The presence of a well-maintained park has been shown through research by CABE Space¹⁹ to add on average a 5% to 7% premium on house prices. Equally, a declining park has the opposite effect.

“Open space provides habitats and green corridors for safe species movement. (It) should be valued for its potential to mitigate climate change.”

Park manager

Delivering environmental services

Parks are a key component of the ‘green infrastructure’ of towns and cities, complementing the heavily engineered and costly ‘grey infrastructure’ of roads, utilities and sewerage systems. Properly planned, attractive green networks of parks, green spaces and river corridors provide natural systems and ecological services that collect and clean water, improve air quality and reduce peak summer temperatures. There is increasing interest in parks’ ability to improve the resilience of neighbourhoods to the impacts of climate change.

Parks also provide biodiversity hotspots. The qualities of an ecologically rich functional landscape were built into London’s Olympic Park at the outset. As the UK’s newest large public park, it not only provided an attractive and dramatic setting for the London 2012 Games but also continues to reduce flood risk, store surface water, and accommodate a rich diversity of plant and animal species.

A call to action

Our research provides an early warning of the potential risk facing the UK's parks. It is a risk that can be averted if action is taken in time.

Here we set out five key challenges for the future. For each we state how HLF intends to respond, together with calls on Government, local authorities, business, the voluntary sector, academic institutions and the public to take urgent action.

1 Local authority commitment

Local authorities' ongoing and renewed commitment to fund, staff and manage parks is essential. There is a strong link between people's satisfaction with their local parks and their satisfaction with their neighbourhood and council. Parks are one of the most heavily used public services, particularly by families, and are therefore a priority for voters.

2 New partnerships

The transfer of park management from local authorities to other organisations is expected to almost double by 2016. Whilst this can help diversify funding and resourcing, establishing long-term, financially viable, locally based partnerships requires commitment and resources. Budget cuts and the loss of skilled senior managers are hindering and adding risk to this process.

3 Getting communities more involved

Park user groups contribute valuable volunteer time and funding to local parks. There are more than 5,000 such groups in the UK estimated to provide almost a million volunteer days and generating over £30million per year through fundraising. However, they need more support to expand this work. When groups are trained and motivated, they are better able to support park management, and their efforts will be sustained.

4 Collecting and sharing data

To ensure consistency in the provision of good parks across the UK it is essential to collect and compare data between individual cities and local authorities, as in the USA. Regular collection of comparable data between core cities, for example, would highlight poor provision and allow local authorities to benchmark standards and resources.

5 New finance models and rethinking delivery

The future of many parks depends on developing new business and finance models. Time, resources and skills are needed to develop new ideas, test and deliver them. Public and private resources and expertise need to be pooled to stimulate innovation, develop skills and share ideas.

Action

HLF will actively monitor and champion parks projects we have funded to ensure standards are maintained, and will evaluate projects to demonstrate the value of investing in public parks.

HLF will invest up to £24million per annum in public parks and cemeteries until the end of our current strategic framework period in 2018, with the Big Lottery Fund investing an additional £10million per annum in England until the end of 2015.

We call on all local authorities to appoint an elected member to be their parks champion, to report annually how much they spend per resident in caring for their parks, and to commit to the provision of good, accessible parks by adopting an up-to-date parks, green space or green infrastructure strategy.

Action

HLF will use our Parks for People, Start-Up Grants and Rethinking Parks programmes (see 5 below) to support a greater diversity of organisations in managing public parks.

We call on the public, private and voluntary sectors to create innovative new partnerships to fund and manage parks, and provide opportunities for park managers to develop new business skills. Good practice examples are needed to avoid duplicating effort and negotiating poor deals for the public.

We call on Government and local authorities to provide the support, resources and skills development needed by park friends and user groups who are considering entering into new partnerships to jointly manage parks.

Action

HLF will support people to take a more active role in the parks projects we fund through investing in training, resources and activities to encourage and promote volunteering.

We invite the public and business to support Groundwork's X Marks The Spot campaign and Keep Britain Tidy's Love Parks Week to get more people actively involved through volunteering and fundraising, and making the case for parks in modern life.

We recommend that those using, managing and championing parks actively support the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, a national forum for park friends and user groups, to help them provide a central hub of information and advice for park groups.

Action

HLF will encourage the development of a pilot project to help the UK's top 20 cities compare the quantity, condition and funding of their city parks.

HLF will commission and publish a second *State of UK Public Parks* study in 2016 to monitor changes in the condition, quality and resourcing of the UK's public parks.

We call on Government, the Local Government Association, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and academic organisations to encourage and facilitate the central collection of consistent and comparable data on parks across all local authorities.

Action

HLF, the Big Lottery Fund and Nesta will invest up to £1million through our Rethinking Parks programme to encourage innovation. The funding will support projects to develop creative new approaches to financing and managing parks.

We call on Government to focus their support for innovation and community rights on the delivery and funding of good quality public parks and green spaces.

We encourage innovators considering new ideas and solutions to evaluate and share their ideas so others can learn from their experiences.

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Acknowledgements

Research supporting this report was undertaken for HLF by Peter Neal Consulting and Community First Partnership in association with Peter Hamik from the Centre for City Park Excellence in Washington DC, Ben Hurley Communications, Dr Edward Hobson and Ipsos MORI.

HLF is particularly grateful to all the local authority park managers, friends of parks and park user groups who gave their time to complete the surveys providing the evidence for this study. We also wish to acknowledge the support for this study from:

Association of Public Service Excellence

Birmingham Open Spaces Forum

Green Connect

Greenspace Scotland

Greenspace South East

Greenspace Wales

Groundwork UK

Keep Britain Tidy and the Green Flag Award Scheme

London Parks Benchmarking Group

London Parks and Green Spaces Forum

National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces

Natural England

Newcastle Parks Forum

West Midlands Parks Forum

Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, HLF sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF was set up in 1994 and is the only heritage body that operates across the whole of the UK. It is administered by the trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

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Heritage Lottery Fund
a national charity of the
National Lottery for
cultural heritage
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Topic	Remarks
Changing condition of parks	The HLF report provides evidence to support concerns being expressed within the sector.
Budget pressures	Both City Gardens and Open Spaces have been subject to financial pressures over the last five years; in line with other City of London services. However, during the last 15-20 years unlike local authorities, these spaces had not had to cope with sustained budget reductions. Currently, as part of the service based review, we will be considering proposals for some 15% reduction over the next four years. This is a significant challenge for all services, doing more with less and finding different ways to provide services.
Charges for services	Historically, local authority sport provision has been subsidised; including football, cricket, tennis, bowls and swimming. Any changes to charging policy have to take account of other local providers, as well as meeting the challenge of ensuring facilities are accessible. There are inconsistencies in our approach, for example, on car parking, where increased charges are warranted.
Staff and skills	We have evidence of the impact of reduced local authority management, having recently struggled to achieve strong short-lists for several middle management posts. Many of the potential middle managers have either moved into the consultancy field or left the sector. With changing requirements, new skills need to be developed. To provide appropriate support and development for volunteers, it is important to use the knowledge, skill, enthusiasm and experience of staff. We are developing volunteers who can supervise and/ or lead teams but the need for experience remains a key factor

	in ensuring volunteering is sustainable.
Community groups	Our City gardens and Open Spaces are supported by a wide ranging network of support from local communities; including Consultative Committees, user groups, volunteers and Friends. We can demonstrate that these are growing, for example the new Friends of City Gardens and Kenley Common.
Quality of Life	The City of London report published in July 2013 "Green Spaces: The Benefits for London" recognised the environmental, physical, mental health, social and economic benefits of green space in London.