

HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE
Monday, 18 July 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 18 July 2016 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)	Barbara Newman
Karina Dostalova (Deputy Chairman)	Jeremy Simons
Deputy John Barker	John Beyer (Heath and Hampstead Society)
Keith Bottomley	Maija Roberts (Open Spaces Society /Ramblers' Association)
Revd Dr Martin Dudley	Philip Wright (English Heritage)
Anne Fairweather	
Michael Hudson	
Professor John Lumley	

Officers:

David Arnold	- Town Clerk's Department
Fern Aldous	- Town Clerk's Department
Susanna Lascelles	- Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Alison Hurley	- Chamberlain's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Philip Everett	- Ponds Project Director
Declan Gallagher	- Open Spaces Department
Richard Gentry	- Open Spaces Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Dennis Cotgrove, Clare James, Graeme Smith, Councillor Melvin Cohen and Councillor Sally Gimson.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

3.1 Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2016 be approved as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Oak Processionary Moth

The Superintendent advised that 12 nests had so far been found on Hampstead Heath and one had been found at Kenwood Common. The nests were being removed and spraying would take place in Spring 2017.

View Point Sign

The new sign would be unveiled on 9th September to coincide with the Committee walk.

3.2 Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee Minutes

RESOLVED – That the draft minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2016 be noted.

Matters Arising

The Superintendent drew members' attention to the Consultative Committee's views on the proposed changes to the format of committee meetings and minute styles. The proposals were discussed under Item 5.

Café Leases

The Superintendent updated the Committee on the formation of the Café Working Party, the first meeting of which was due to take place on 19 July 2016.

There was a discussion on the composition of the group, following the Consultative Committee's suggestion that the number of "petitioners" should be increased. In response to a Member's concern that the opinions of one particular group could dominate the discussion and affect the outcome of the lease, the Chairman summarised the following points:

- The group was non-decision making and collaborative
- The "petitioners" provided knowledge of the local community
- The need to ensure that knowledge of each of the three cafes was adequately covered in the group's composition
- The petitioners did not have a single agenda and should no longer be referred to in those terms.

It was advised that the Working Party would be evaluating the suggested criteria for the consultation in terms of People, Environment and Economic outcomes. A consultation would be carried out with both users and non-users of the Heath using online and clipboard-based surveys, with focus groups used to form appropriate questions. Visits would also be conducted to other sites offering similar cafés.

3.3 Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group Minutes

RESOLVED – That the draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2016 be noted.

Matters Arising

The Deputy Chairman updated the Committee on an incident that had taken place in Queen's Park, as a result of which the Superintendent had reviewed staff training and the procedures for handling reported incidents.

4. **REVENUE OUTTURN 2015/16**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces informing them of the revenue outturn for 2015-16. In response to Members' questions the Chamberlain advised that the underspend had been a result of additional income being generated. The Superintendent stated that the carry forward request for £50,000 café improvement work would be for upgrades to the Lido Building to make it viable premises for the new lease.

RESOLVED – That the Revenue Outturn for 2015/16 be noted.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided Members with an update regarding the following management and operational activities across the Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park since May 2016.

Consultation

The Superintendent updated the Committee on the plans for improving the consultation arrangements, following on from a discussion and resulting recommendations from the Consultative Committee. The priorities that had been identified were;

- To consistently engage with the Consultative Committee at a formative stage when proposals were being prepared
- To prepare a Divisional Plan to feed into a forward reporting plan (to be developed for the November meeting cycle)
- To update the data relating to Heath usage to put reports in greater context and to use statistics to assist forward planning and the decision-making process
- To clearly state in reports going to the Grand Committee the recommendations of the Consultative Committee
- To 'close the loop' by ensuring that the Consultative Committee was clearly informed of the notice taken by the Management Committee of their recommendations.

Schedule of Meetings

The schedule of meetings would be amended to allow for four Consultative Committee meetings and four Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Committee meetings per year, with a gap of approximately four weeks between them. This would allow time for reports to be amended to

incorporate the views of the Consultative Committee. It was agreed that the new schedule should begin in the new municipal year (April 2017). The programme of walks on the Saturday morning before the Consultative Committee would remain in place and the Superintendent would circulate a note of the issues discussed on the walks.

Minutes

A meeting between the Town Clerk and the Superintendent would be arranged to discuss the recommendations of the Consultative Committee in regards to the level of detail and format of minutes. It was agreed that the draft minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Committee should be circulated to the Consultative Committee as soon as they were available.

Open Spaces Bill

It was advised that a meeting with the Kennel Club had been arranged to discuss the issues presented in their petition against the Bill.

Learning Team

A Gateway 2 report for conversion of The Hive would be progressing through the Chief Officers' Group, the Consultative Committee, the Management Committee and the Projects Sub-Committee in due course. The proposal involved the conversion of existing changing rooms into two classrooms and an outdoor learning space.

Benches

The Superintendent advised that 120 applications for benches were on the waiting list, which would be closed to deal with the backlog.

Heath Hands Volunteers

Heath Hands had completed 100,000 hours of volunteering and an invitation to an event to mark this achievement on 21 September 2016 would be sent to Members, who wished to record their thanks to Heath Hands Volunteers for their hard work in supporting the management of the Heath.

Events Update

The Committee wished to thank the Leisure and Events Manager for organising the successful events programme, including the Give it a Go festival, which had been well attended.

Veteran Tree Seminar

A Member informed the Committee of the discussion that had taken place at the Veteran Tree Seminar, which had highlighted the level of expertise of officers working in the Tree Team. The challenges facing the department, including lack of resources, were discussed and the Tree Team were thanked for sharing their expertise.

RESOLVED – That the update regarding the management and operational activities across the Heath be noted.

6. **CROSS COUNTRY PILOT ON THE HAMPSTEAD HEATH EXTENSION**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that sought approval for use of the Heath Extension for a one-year pilot of a young athletes' cross-country race.

The Operations Service Manager advised that a wide-ranging consultation had been carried out on the proposal, the recommendations from which had resulted in a change to the route of the race to avoid ecologically sensitive areas.

It was noted that both the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum and the Consultative Committee had expressed support for the proposal identified as 'Option A'.

In response to a query from a Member concerning the retrieval of a "reasonable contribution", it was confirmed that a schedule of rates for any damages would be made available to organisers prior to the event.

RESOLVED – That approval be granted for a pilot event to be held on the Heath Extension, using the route identified as Option A, that will ensure no permanent damage is caused to the Heath Extension.

7. **MANAGEMENT WORK PLAN FOR SMALL TUMULUS FIELD**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that presented the work plan for the Small Tumulus Field.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the proposals set out in the work plan (Appendix 1).

8. **PONDS PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received an update from the Ponds Project Director on the on-going works and habitat restoration at the Heath. It was detailed that the construction part of the project was in its final stages, with the work on track to be completed in October.

The following points were noted:

- About 4.5% of the area of the Heath was directly affected by the works
- The contractor had been considerate to the needs of residents and Heath users, and understood the importance of habitat restoration. The involvement of the contractor at an early stage of the project had proven useful to furthering these and all other project aims.
- The decision not to use Millfield Lane for construction had proven to be beneficial
- The water quality of the Ladies Pond had seen an improvement since the works
- The hot weather had contributed to the silt-drying process.
- The habitat restoration and landscaping works that will follow the construction part of the project is of great importance.

The Ponds Project Director confirmed that he would keep the Committee updated on a claim for additional payment made by the contractor which revolved around the ownership of risk. In response to a question from a Member it was confirmed that a thorough post-implementation review would be conducted upon completion of the Project.

RESOLVED - That approval be granted for the reallocation of landscaping costs to be carried out by the Open Spaces team.

9. **HABITAT RESTORATION OF THE BOATING POND AND TUMULUS FIELD**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath regarding the habitat restoration proposals for the Model Boating Pond and Tumulus Field. It was proposed that the edge profile of the pond be changed to deter dogs and unauthorised bathers from entering the water. It was noted that the Consultative Committee had been supportive of the recommendations.

In response to a query from a Member the Superintendent confirmed that access to the newly created island in the pond, and the impact to wildlife of pedestrian access, would be kept under review.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the proposals for habitat restoration and changes to the edge profiling of the model boating pond.

10. **ANNUAL REPORT ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSTABULARY FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2015 TO 31 MARCH 2016**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath reviewing the performance of the Heath Constabulary and seeking approval for the continuation of the support for outreach work in Public Sex Environments. The Committee noted that the Consultative Committee had been supportive of the proposal to continue working with the Terrence Higgins Trust, but had deferred commenting on the proposals for the policing priorities until they were able to consider the report on more detail at their next meeting.

In response to a query from a Member the Superintendent confirmed that organisations that use the Heath for events were asked for a contribution towards the policing and administration time involved in their events.

The Superintendent further clarified that the increase in the number of incidents responded to by the Constabulary was due to recent additional training and growing confidence and competencies among the Constabulary as to the extent of their powers, rather than an increase in offences. It was felt that resources were sufficient for the number of incidents reported.

It was reported that the use of a new phone application was increasing the use of the Heath, but that there were associated risks involved with carrying mobile phones in the open.

The Committee wished their thanks to the Constabulary Team to be recorded.

RESOLVED – That;

- Approval be granted for the continuing of outreach work with the Terrence Higgins Trust, and that
- The priorities as laid out in Appendix 4 of the report are endorsed and a further report be presented to the November Consultative Committee meeting.

11. CYCLICAL WORKS PROGRAMME BID 2017/18

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor detailing the planned programme of Cyclical Works for 2017/18.

It was noted that the Consultative Committee had recommended that the format of financial reports be changed so as to be more readily understood, and the Committee agreed with this suggestion. The City Surveyor undertook to review the content of future Cyclical Works Programme reports.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

12. QUEEN'S PARK - SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that updated Members on the on-going management and operational activities at Queen's Park.

Members took account of the views of the Joint Consultative Group in their discussion on the proposal to hold a fireworks display in the Park. The Superintendent advised that a wider consultation on events in the Park was currently being carried out with users and local residents, the results of which would inform the policy on approval for such events going forward.

In response to a query from a Member in regards to Christmas tree collection, Officers clarified that the London Borough of Brent funded the collection of the trees from the Park.

RESOLVED – That the request for a licence for a fireworks display in the Park be declined, with the Committee to await the outcome of feedback from the Event Survey to consider it as a future event.

13. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The Deputy Chairman circulated examples of interesting donation boxes, following a discussion at the Queen's Park Consultative Group about the amount of donations received.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that a Select Committee enquiry into public parks and their importance to communities had been convened. The City Corporation would be making a submission, the deadline for which was 30th September.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Committee Dinner would be held on the 10th October.

15. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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

16. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting on 16 May 2016 be approved as an accurate record.

17. **PONDS PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT**

RESOLVED – That the non-public appendices to the Ponds Project Report be noted.

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

There was one question.

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

There was no other business.

20. **RESTRUCTURE OF A TEAM WITHIN THE OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT**

The Committee considered a confidential report from the Superintendent.

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm

Chairman

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