

**HIGHGATE WOOD JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, 13 April 2016**

Minutes of the meeting of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee held at  
Highgate Wood Offices, Highgate Wood, Muswell Hill Road, N10 3JN on  
Wednesday, 13 April 2016 at 12.00 pm

**Present**

**Members:**

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)  
Jeremy Simons (Deputy Chairman)  
Professor John Lumley  
Barbara Newman  
Stephanie Beer  
Marguerite Clark  
Peter Corley  
Councillor Gail Engert  
Councillor Bob Hare  
Lucy Roots  
Alison Watson  
Michael Hammerson

**Officers:**

Fern Aldous	- Town Clerk's Department
Jonathan Meares	- Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Jan Brooker (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – That the public minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2015 be approved as an accurate record subject to the following amendment:

Item 5 “contractors would carry out spraying operations at the Wood in 2016” to be “contractors would carry out spraying operations at Hampstead Heath in 2016”

## **Matters Arising**

### **Park Champions**

Two members (Tree Trust for Haringey, London Borough of Haringey) volunteered for the Park Champions Scheme.

### **Conservation Management Plan**

- Officers reported that the level of detail and the prohibitive cost of a LIDAR survey would not make procuring it beneficial to the wood.
- It was felt that a detailed ground survey should first be carried out and a member (Highgate Society) agreed to make contact with Historic England to progress this.
- A member (London Borough of Haringey) also agreed to investigate the use of a 3D mapping system recently acquired by the Local Authority.
- The use of drones to survey the Wood was also discussed.

### **Water House Development**

It was confirmed that the London Borough of Camden had rejected a planning application for the site. It was noted that an appeal was likely.

## **4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Consultative Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath providing an update on the management and operational activities in Highgate wood since November 2015.

Members discussed in detail the recent award of the café contract to the chain Benugo, the subsequent petition that had been received, and the decision by the winning bidder to withdraw from all three cafes. The Chairman confirmed that the petitions had focused on the Parliament Hill and Golders Hill Park cafes, with one of the main concerns expressed being the lack of input from local users in the tendering process. The Chairman stated that this would be addressed when the contracts were re-tendered; however it was agreed to be important that the views of those that did not currently use the café also be sought. A tenancy at will agreement was currently in place with the incumbents of the café and it was felt that the agreement would take around a year to finalise. It was confirmed that the other two contracts awarded for the cafes at Queens Park and the Hampstead Heath lido would be proceeding. Where previously the contact was offered as a package the new process would separate the cafes.

Members proceeded to note the following matters arising from the Superintendent's update:

### **Changes to Closing Times**

- The closing time of the Wood would be 9:15pm from 2 May 2016 to the beginning of August 2016 - notices of the change had been on display since February.
- Officers had emphasised to residents that the decision had been made for the safety of staff.

- Members discussed methods of ensuring that the wood was empty before the gates were closed including the pros and cons of installing a one way gate.

#### Proposal to Change Working Arrangements

Officers reported that both the informal and formal consultations on the proposed changes to working arrangements had taken place with implementation proposed for October 2016. All staff feedback had been taken into account. Members discussed the proposal to reallocate some weekend shifts, which although created a better work/life balance would result in a loss of unsocial hours payments.

#### Roman Kiln Project

- The meeting of the working group following the unsuccessful bid had been postponed as a clearer message needed to be developed on fundraising. A further meeting of the working group would be convened to discuss restarting the project.
- The reasons why the bid had failed were discussed including the lack of match funding. It was confirmed that the voluntary offer had been included in the bid.
- It was noted that the majority of the cost of the project was concerned with the renovation of the building due to house the kiln. Officers would investigate the possibility of splitting this off into a separate project.
- The position of Bruce Castle was discussed and it was felt they were not in a position to support the project financially.

#### Sustainability and Infrastructure

- Officers were consulting with the City Surveyor's Department on upgrading the heating system in the changing rooms. It was hoped the work would bring about a cost and energy saving.
- A member (London Borough of Haringey) proposed the use of a thermal heat store to cope with the issues arising from peak time usage
- It was hoped that money from the sale of equipment could be ring-fenced to finance the project.
- A new project proposing the replacement of the Onslow Gate was progressing. An Officer from the City Surveyor's department would be visiting the site to assess the scheme.

#### Woodland Conservation

- Members discussed the recent implementations of the storm protocol. It was agreed that the closures were justifiable and that the procedure should continue.
- It was confirmed that there were no tree swings in the wood.
- Detailed plans of the proposed new conservation area would be circulated to all members prior to being taken to the grand committee in May. Members expressed their approval in principle to the scheme, particularly emphasising their support for the use of "live" fencing.
- It was confirmed that work to the strip of land adjoining Muswell Hill Road would likely commence in around six months' time.

### Squirrels

Members discussed in detail the plans to control squirrels in the wood, as a consequence of the damage caused to the trees by bark stripping. It was felt that there were two viable options for population control; trapping and contraception.

**Trapping:** It was felt that traps which killed the squirrel inside the unit were preferable to those that would require human intervention. These could be placed in safe areas away from the public. The forestry commission would be approached on the best traps to use.

**Birth Control:** It was reported that previous trials of birth control had not been effective in the longer term. It was asked that a feasibility study be undertaken and the results be circulated to the Committee for approval.

It was acknowledged that the problem was urgent and that both pathways should be progressed in parallel.

### Volunteers

- The Committee wished their thanks to the Heath Hands volunteers be noted.

### Oak Decline and Regeneration

- The Wood Manager advised that mildew was the biggest threat to the oak trees. The sheltering of newly sprouted trees had proven successful in encouraging regeneration.

### Oak Processionary Moth

- OPM caterpillars had appeared in Richmond Park and officers were being vigilant for their appearance in the wood.
- Spraying of the trees would soon commence. The wood manager confirmed that this would be taking place at night and would not require the closure of the wood.
- Members requested that photographs of the moths and caterpillars were displayed in the information centre to inform the public to remain vigilant
- PhD students were undertaking a study into the natural control (by use of parasitic flies/woodpeckers) of the moths.
- Officers directed members to the forestry commission website <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/oakprocessionarymoth> for further details.

### Sports and Recreation

- The Wood manager reported that wet weather had led to the cancellation of a number of proposed games on the field. Low-level restoration work would be undertaken to improve the drainage in the area.
- A member (Highgate Society) suggested that sand could be added to the area outside of the café to improve the condition of the grass.

### Community and Events

- The Wood Manager reported that the Community Day would be taking place in late August or early September.
- It was suggested that the event be named the “Community Heritage Day” and this was supported by members.
- The inclusion of craft and educational stalls was being investigated.
- The joint walk between Queens Wood and Highgate Wood would be taking place on 13 July 2016 at 2:00pm, leaving from the information hut.

**RESOLVED** – That the Superintendent’s update report be noted.

5. **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

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

A member (Highgate Society) suggested that the signage to the café be improved.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – That the date of the next meeting to be held at 11:30am on 9 November 2016 be noted.

**The meeting ended at 1.25 pm**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: Fern Aldous**  
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