

HIGHGATE WOOD CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Wednesday, 18 April 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group held at Heathfield House, 432 Archway Road, N6 4JH on Wednesday, 18 April 2018 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Karina Dostalova (Chairman)
Jan Brooker (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Peter Corley (Tree Trust for Haringey)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)
Councillor Bob Hare (London Borough of Haringey)
Lucy Roots (Muswell Hill Friends of the Earth)
Deputy John Tomlinson
Alison Watson (Friends of Queen's Wood)

Officers:

Leanne Murphy	- Town Clerks Department
Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerks Department
Jonathan Meares	- Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from, Anne Fairweather, Stephanie Beer and Councillor Gail Engert. It was noted that Councillor Gail Engert would be retiring in May and therefore would not attend any further meetings.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2017 be approved.

Matters Arising

Sustainability

In response to a question regarding what the overall energy/resources benefits of using a battery vehicle were, Members were advised that there is an Energy Officer employed by the City of London Corporation and the Town Clerk agreed to liaise with them on this matter. The Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager noted that this vehicle had been used for as long as possible and was cheap to run but the cost to continue maintaining the vehicle had now become too high. The vehicle may be refurbished elsewhere.

Walking Guides

A Member noted that there were excellent walking guides available covering Highgate Woods and suggested making these available in the café.

4. **ACTIONS SHEET**

The Committee noted the various outstanding actions and the updates provided thereon.

Meeting with Natural England

The Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager advised Members that there was good progress applying for Countryside Stewardship the Team were confident on securing a grant in the 2019 bid year. The Heath's Senior Ecologist provided an update on work that had subsequently taken place during the Committee Walk before the meeting.

Oak Processionary Moth

Members were advised that this allergic reaction was rare, usually occurring hours after exposure. The Director agreed to raise this concern at the National Oak Processional Group and ask for guidance on Epipens. It was agreed that the standard Forestry Commission leaflets would continue to be used.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Members considered an update report of the Superintendent and the following points were made:

- A Member suggested that "no dog waste" be stated on all recycle bins. Members were advised that planned work was due to take place on bins to provide clarity on general and recycling bins and to convey educational messages.

Roman Kiln Project

- It was recommended that the work of Bruce Castle Museum be mentioned in this project.
- Members were advised that a report on the outcomes would be provided at the next meeting.

Woodland Conservation and Tree Management

- The Superintendent advised that storms and extreme weather in January, most notably storms Eleanor, David and Georgina, had caused damage throughout Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood and led to closure of Highgate Wood for four days in compliance with the Division's Extreme Weather Event Protocol.

Ecology

- The interesting survey results of the research projects on hedgehogs and foxes were noted and Members were advised that a student could be approached regarding the preparation of a leaflet to go to Lancaster Road residents regarding hedgehogs.

Volunteer activity

- Members were advised of Heath Hands' plan to increase their already significant activity.

- The Superintendent expressed thanks to all the volunteers that work at Highgate Wood.

Oak decline and oak regeneration

- It was noted that the two tables projecting tree loss were based on 100+ year old trees.
- In response to a question, Members were advised that currently, approximately ten trees die per year.

Pavilion Café

- Members were advised that the Superintendent planned to work with the Highgate Wood Consultative Group on the project to re-tender the café lease. Members were supportive of the suggestion to offer a seven-year lease with a possible extension of three years.
- A Member suggested adding something to contracts for them to be environmentally aware in line with the City of London Corporation's attempts to reduce plastic bottles.

Licensed events and activities

- Members were provided with a table listing the income generated and numbers of people attending of licensed events at Highgate Wood. Members discussed the significant increase in events in the last year and questioned whether there needed to be a limit in order to control the trend.
 - It was agreed that the saturation rate was nearly at maximum as more would impact on the flora and fauna, if numbers were to increase.
 - Members felt that it was important for children to be with nature and queried whether more dispersal of the Walk Talks could take place to spread out the impact.
 - A Member suggested limiting the use of the field for sport.
 - The Chairman suggested concentrating school groups to one area with a boardwalk decked hut in an attempt to protect other areas. The Superintendent recommended engagement with the schools.
 - It was agreed that wider thinking was required, and this would be explored by the Team before the next meeting.

RESOLVED – that:-

- Members provide feedback on the draft Woodland Management Plan (Appendix 1);
- The views of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee at their meeting on 23 May 2018.

5.1 Appendix 1 - Highgate Wood Management Plan

Members noted the draft Woodland Management Plan 2018-2028 and the following points were made:

- Members were advised that this was a ten-year plan providing site-specific detail. It was noted that the formatting of the plan was based on the Forestry Commission's format for grants.
- A Member noted that it would be useful to provide an online archive of background documents, earlier versions of plans, references, guides, etc, on the City of London Corporation website.
- A Member stated that a for reference/further reading item could be added to the document.
- Members discussed the overlap between the Woodland Plan and the Conservation Management Plan. The Highgate Wood, Conservation, Trees & Sustainability Manager noted that there were overriding links between the two plans which they had tried to link but they also have different elements, e.g. the Woodland Plan was limited to just woodland. It was agreed an explanation of the different plans should be provided including how they support each other.
- A Member felt that habitat should be a separate item.
- In response to a query regarding a potential market for commercial outlets for dead trees, etc, Members were advised that deadwood was normally retained in-situ to provide important deadwood habitat. However, there was no objection for providing smaller quantities of wood to local wood turners.
- A Member highlighted the importance of research and the value data collected at Highgate Wood and felt that this should be highlighted in the plan. It was agreed that data/research should be mentioned under item 6 Management Strategy and include work with other science organisations.
- It was noted that the report was very tree orientated with minimal reference to soil, which was regarded as very important as soils determine the habitat.
- Members supported the vision of the Management Plan but noted some changes:
 - Objective 5 to be changed to the following: *Mitigate and minimise damage from compaction and erosion whilst not restricting public access and enjoyment.*
 - Objective 6 to be changed to the following: *Continue to survey and support research on birds, bats, fungi and moths; monitor the population of oak standards and saplings; and records wildlife sightings.*
- A Member noted a point under 4.2 that Highgate Wood was designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and requested that this be confirmed.
- A Member suggested adding "collateral monitoring of spray" to the response against Oak Processionary Moth in the table under 5.2 Plant Health.
- It was suggested that "erosion to earthworks" be added to the response against people and dogs in the table under 5.8 Other Risks.
- A Member recommended using a spray with natural synthesised fungicide for oak saplings and along with randomised testing by a volunteer to measure the collateral impact.

- The Chairman felt that item 7 Stakeholder Engagement required expanding. It was noted that this was covered heavily in the policy section. After discussion, it was agreed that the plan should state exactly where this is covered in the Conservation Management Plan to avoid duplication.
- Members agreed that the introduction should explain the hierarchy between the Woodland Plan and the Conservation Management Plan.
- It was noted that the Appendix 1, Figure 1 did not reflect all of the archaeological features within Highgate Wood. It was agreed that this figure would be replaced with a more detailed map from the Conservation Management Plan and would be checked by the Member for Highgate Society for accuracy.
- The Highgate Wood, Conservation & Tree Manager advised Members that the deadline to provide any additional written comments was the end of April.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

5.2 Appendix 2 - 2018/19 Divisional Plan

Members noted the progress of the projects (notably the April 2018 milestones) in the fourth Quarter update on the status and progress of the 2017/18 Divisional Plan. The following points were made.

- The Superintendent noted that due to a duplication of project 3.5, an additional project has been developed (3.14) to separate the events and cultural strategies and develop a broader cultural strategy.
- The Superintendent advised that Members would be provided with an update at the end of quarter 2 at the next meeting providing more information of project priorities.
- Members felt that milestones were a good way of measuring impact.
- The Director of Open Spaces clarified that there were two parts of the Events Policy with Part 1 covering all of the Open Spaces and Part 2 being of more specific importance to Highgate Wood. Members would be provided with a more detailed version at the next meeting for consideration.

5.3 Appendix 3 - Licensed Events, School Walks and Schools Sports usage 2016/17 & 2017/18

Members considered a report regarding Licensed Events, School Walks and Schools Sports usage in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Members felt that it was a disservice not to list all events and walks and requested that this list be updated.

5.4 Appendix 4 - Heath Hands Progress Report

Members noted a report from Heath Hands regarding the volunteering highlights for 2017/18.

5.5 **Appendix 5 - 2018/19 Annual Work Programme**

Members noted the Highgate Woods 2018/19 Annual Work Programme for Cyclical Works and Projects. The following points were made.

6. **COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP FUNDING**

Members received a verbal update from the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath regarding Countryside Stewardship Funding.

7. **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

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

The Chairman gave special thanks to the Heath's Senior Ecologist, who was retiring the following day after 15 years working for the City of London Corporation. These sentiments were echoed by Members.

The Town Clerk agreed to contact the Highgate Society regarding their representation on the HWCG.

Members were advised that the Superintendent had written to the Board of Governors regarding finding a school's representative to sit on the HWCG and was awaiting a response. The Chairman noted that there was a teacher in the Hampstead Heath area that could potentially be interested in this role.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted that the date of their next meeting would be on 17 October 2018 at 4.00pm.

The meeting ended at 5.50 pm

Chairman

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