

HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Monday, 27 January 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held at Parliament Hill Conference Room, Parliament Hill Staff Yard, Parliament Hill Fields, Hampstead Heath, NW5 1QR on Monday, 27 January 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present

Members:

Karina Dostalova (Chairman)
Anne Fairweather (Deputy Chair)
Ray Booth (Barnet Mencap)
Nick Bradfield (Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
John Etheridge (South End Green Association)
Colin Gregory (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)
Dr Gaye Henson (Marylebone Birdwatching Society)
Helen Payne (Friends of Kenwood)
Thomas Radice (Heath and Hampstead Society)
Susan Rose (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Ellin Stein (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Neighbourhood Association Committee)
Simon Taylor (Hampstead Rugby Club)
David Walton (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath)
John Weston (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Simon Williams (Vale of Health Society)

Officers:

Colin BATTERY	- Director of Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Jonathan Meares	- Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager
Declan Gallagher	- Operational Services Manager
Richard Gentry	- Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Paul Maskell	- Leisure and Events Manager
Yvette Hughes	- Business Manager
Kate Radusin	- PA to Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Kate Smith	- Head of Corporate Strategy and Performance.
Leanne Murphy	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mathew Frith, Cindy Galvin (represented by Dr Merlin Fox), Harunur Rashid, Steve Ripley, Richard Sumray and Sharlene McGee.

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

There were none.

3. **MINUTES**

The public minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2019 were approved as a correct record subject to additional wording being added to a point made by a Member to provide clarity.

4. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee (HHHWQPC) meeting held on 13 November 2019 were received.

5. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members noted the various outstanding actions and the update provided thereon.

With regards to action 1, Members were advised that the Superintendent had chased the Head of the Communities for Camden and regarding suggestions for a representative for local schools.

6. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

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

Management Framework

- With regards to Appendix 1, Members were advised that the updated AWP covered all disciplines and cyclical work and all shaded items were new. Members were invited to provide feedback to the Superintendent via email.
- A Member (Highgate Society) inquired whether there was consideration over the conditions for hedgehogs and the improvement of ecological corridors to renew wildlife at the Heath. The Member felt that Local Authorities and landowners should be engaged on this issue to maximise the value of spaces for wildlife. The Superintendent informed Members that the City Corporation monitored and submitted representations against local planning applications. There was also ongoing monitoring work and an outreach programme led by the Heath's Conservation Team and Ecologist including local allotments, neighbouring landowners, golf courses, etc.
- In response to a query (Clubs using facilities on the Heath) concerning the poor condition of the cricket pitch, Members were advised that the cricket squares and grass/turfing had been affected by the particularly wet autumn and winter and improvement works would take place in spring when the weather improved.

City Surveyors Cyclical Work Programme

- The Superintendent updated Members that a major investment had been secured for a 12-week programme of works which would be followed by the toilet refurbishment project.

East Heath Car Park (A DP5)

- Members were advised that funding had been secured for this project and tending companies were being approached. Resurfacing work was due to commence following the Whitsun Fair.

Planning

- **North Fairground Site 2017/4346/P.** Members were advised that the planning application appeal was dismissed by the Inspector. The Superintendent thanked the Heath & Hampstead Society and the London Borough of Camden for their support.
- Officers are investigating land use for clarity in the future as the regular interventions by the City Corporation are costly and time consuming.

Fishing – Hampstead and Highgate Angling Society (HAHAS) proposal.

- HAHAS are progressing with their proposal through the Ponds and Wetlands Plan and drawing in the recreational use and ecological concerns identified by Members. The results of a silt survey were pending which was measured against all ponds and would be presented at the Committee's April meeting.

Hampstead Heath as case study for MSc at the Bartlett, UCL

- A workshop hosting MSc Sustainable Heritage students would take place on 28 January 2020 and it was hoped that this would start an ongoing collaboration with UCL to develop research on historic artefacts at the Heath.

Swimming

- The Chairman chaired a Swim Forum meeting on 14 January 2020 and meetings have begun with individual swimming associations/groups officially starting the swimming review.
- It was noted that the health and safety recommendations made by the HSC following the fatality in the Men's Pond, e.g. increasing the number of lifeguards from two to three, were a key priority for the review and would be taken seriously by the City Corporation.
- Members were informed that all options were being considered and would all be put to the Swimming Forum on 4 February 2020 for feedback.

- The Heath & Hampstead Society were concerned that a fifth of the Heath's budget was currently being used to subsidise swimming and was considered unfair to other activities. A position statement concerning the swimming review was made by the Society as follows:
 - The Society will not contemplate a reallocation of funds from other parts of the Heath budget to support the increasing costs incurred by the tradition of free lifeguarded swimming.
 - The Society considers that swimmers should pay – by season ticket or otherwise – for lifeguarded swimming.
 - The Society believes the parties should explore how the long tradition of not charging for swimming can be maintained by enabling more un-lifeguarded swimming via a swimming club.
 - The City should be mounting a forceful public relations campaign to urge people to pay, as being the 'right thing to do', rather than merely proposing new costly infrastructure (inter alia to keep swimmers out) and staff to enforce payment.
- Members were advised that in 2005 a self-policing charge was brought in, but this has had very poor compliance by swimmers to date (3.7% of swimmers).
- A Member (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) stated that he swam in the Ponds every day and felt that everyone should pay in the same way a runner would pay to use the running track.
- It was agreed the Ponds were a great treasure of the Heath and that the use of communications was key to promoting the issues and reasoning for a review of the swimming facilities and encourage a change in attitude regarding non-payment. A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) added that it was not free to swim anywhere else so why should the City Corporation be expected to subsidise these costs.
- It was suggested that swimming clubs/life guarded versus non-lifeguarded ponds would make swimming for some more exclusive. It was agreed all swimming options needed to be accessible and the costs shared.
- A Member (South End Green Association) stated that swimmers would pay but it was not clear where you needed to pay. There was also confusion caused by people telling day visitors that they do not need to pay. It was not that there had been cases of antisocial behaviour by certain individuals when asked to pay.
- A number of Members considered the lack of technology to be the key barrier to compliance as most people did not carry cash. It was agreed that making paying easy, e.g. contactless payments, was key. However, a Member (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee) voiced concern that contactless payments meant using cards/watches/phones

and without storage facilities to store valuables, this posed a risk for theft.

- As the popularity of the Ponds had increased during heatwaves and hot summer months caused by climate change, a Member (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Neighbourhood Association Committee) wondered if there were any funding opportunities to support this change.
- A member of the public suggested a proposal to charge for fishing licences at the Ponds as an income generator.
- It was suggested (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee) that there was a supply and demand issue with outdoor swimming caused by the closure of Lidos in other Local Authorities, e.g. Finchley and Muswell Hill, and that a campaign for restoration would lower the visitor numbers at the Heath.
- In response to a query concerning how to stop people swimming in the non-swimming Ponds, Officers confirmed that signage and reinforcement that it was not safe would be used. This was covered in the Comms Strategy.
- The Chairman thanked Members for their support and advised that feedback on the proposals made at the additional HHCC meeting on 9 March 2020 would be presented to the HHMC on 11 March 2020 for approval. The new processed would be implemented by 2 May 2020 for the start of the swim season.

Events

- Members were informed that the Showmen's Guild 2021 proposal seeking a longer Easter Fair and no Whitsun Fair plus a second event with the Affordable Art Fair would be presented to members at the next HHCC meeting.

Hampstead Heath Constabulary

- Officers confirmed that enforcement action was taken against an individual at the Men's Pond whilst it was closed during investigations concerning the fatality the Pond. The individual was prosecuted and charged £1,100.

Waste & Recycling

- Officers confirmed that pending permission they would go to procurement for a mini refuse collection vehicle.
- A timber enclosure in forest green masking bins was planned to be constructed near the Hive.

- In response to a query concerning the new bins and recycling scheme, Members were advised that the waste figures were increasing significantly, especially at peak times, and solutions were currently being trialled to resolve this. New bin stations would be implemented allowing for larger bins at peak months and fly tipping hot spot bins have been removed. The new bins will not allow wine bottles or picnic waste in an attempt to encourage visitors to take their waste with them.
- With regards to water stations, Officers confirmed push bottle fountains would be available all year round.
- The Superintendent agreed to make enquires concerning the western pond fountain.
- A Member (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Neighbourhood Association Committee) raised concerns that the removal of bins and not allowing picnic waste would mean that littering would take place in the local neighbourhoods.
- A Member (Highgate Society) encouraged a sense of ownership for litter, e.g. a local schools litter picking initiative.

RESOLVED – That:-

- Members provide feedback on the Annual Work Programme 2020-21 (appendix 1);
- Members provide feedback following the verbal update on swimming;
- Members to provide feedback on the Keep Britain Tidy report appended to the report (appendix 2).

7. REVIEW OF THE 2019 EVENTS PROGRAMME & PROVISIONAL 2020 EVENTS PROGRAMME

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces detailing the success and learning from the 2019 Hampstead Heath Events Programme and setting out the proposed 2020 Events Programme.

Members were advised that it had been a busy and successful 2019 for events with thanks given to the Officer Events Group for their assistance. Members congratulated the Events Team for their hard work and the successful implementation of the new Events Policy.

A Member (Highgate Society) noted previous discussions regarding the potential for a heritage/history day similar to the Highgate Wood Heritage Day. It was added that the annual conker event could be expanded to incorporate this idea. Officers confirmed that there had historically been a Heritage Day at the Heath and that such an event would require considerable work and planning. Members were invited to follow up with contacts and ideas for a Heritage Day.

A Member (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Neighbourhood Association Committee) felt there was a missed cultural opportunity for a literary event looking at the huge amounts of literature past and present (not just Keats) with a connection to the Heath. This could include appearances and readings from local writers. The Superintendent noted that there was a Keats 200 programme which included live actors, walks, etc, but agreed to talk to Keats House regarding a ticketed fundraiser. A Member agreed to follow up with the Ladies Pond about assisting. The Deputy Chair noted that Queen's Park hosted an annual literary event which was coordinated by external, commercial organisers.

A Member (Hampstead Rugby Club) suggested expanding "This Girl Can" to bring in walking groups.

In response to a concern raised regarding the popularity of large events and carrying capacity of the Heath (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee), Members were advised that the Events Policy and Committee oversight guaranteed that the carrying capacity and impact of each event was considered and that balance was ensured. It was agreed balance was essential to diversity and inclusion at the Heath.

A Member queried if there was potential to expand on the recent Southern Cross-Country Championships to develop a European Cross-Country event. Officers confirmed that European Athletics were approached but uptake was poor.

RESOLVED – That:-

- Members of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee provide feedback on the proposed 2020 Events Programme (Appendix 2);
- The views of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee are conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at their meeting on 11 March 2020;
- Members of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee agree the proposed 2020 Events Programme (Appendix 2).

8. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH, PARLIAMENT HILL FIELDS, GOLDERS HILL PARK AND HAMPSTEAD HEATH LIDO CAFÉS TENDER TIMELINE**

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces providing an update on the proposed timeline for the tendering of the Parliament Hill Fields, Golders Hill Park and the Parliament Hill Fields Lido Cafés.

Members supported the proposed timeline.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- Note the report, including the proposed timeline, as set out in paragraph 7;

- Give feedback on the content of the report, the views of this Committee will be shared with the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

9. **DOG WALKER CODE OF CONDUCT AND LICENCE CONSULTATION REPORT**

Members received a verbal update from the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath concerning the dog walker code of conduct and licence consultation.

The Superintendent confirmed that the report from the consultant with the draft scheme had not been finalised and would now come to the April HHCC meeting for feedback. The next step was to form a small working party looking in detail at the draft code of conduct and the licensing scheme consultation. Key issues to address was providing clarity between private and commercial gain and defining the byelaw for effective control.

A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) felt that the current wording was constrictive for non-commercial dog walkers and recommended a change in tone.

Members agreed that the number of dogs that could be walked at one time was the key issue and that it needed to be explicit that dog waste was a health hazard. A Member (Highgate Society) also recommended changing the wording "dog social skills" to "well behaved and social".

In response to a question (Hampstead Rugby Club) concerning how to identify a commercial dog walker from a normal dog walker, Members were informed that commercial walkers would wear something identifiable (?) but walkers would stand out from how regularly they visited the Heath if they did not have a licence. This would be defined in the code of conduct.

10. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH EXTENSION CONSULTATION**

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces providing an update and the outcome of an engagement and consultation process regarding the use of the Hampstead Heath Extension Annex Room that is attached to the public toilet building.

A Member (Hampstead Rugby Club) noted that there was a lack of facilities on the extension and welcomed a kiosk over a café. In response to whether the Rugby Club would be able to use the facility to prepare tea and coffee, the Superintendent confirmed that it would be written into the specs to allow provision for the Cricket and Rugby Clubs to use for refreshments. The Superintendent also agreed to explore possible menu options for the Clubs.

A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) was concerned that a café would create an environmental impact and would only support a flagship environmentally friendly kiosk facility with non-permanent furniture that could be put away. With regards to the annex room, the Member suggested an interpretation centre.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- Provide feedback on the report findings (appendix 2);
- Provide feedback on the Superintendent's recommendation to proceed with a tender for the lease of the Annex Room as a refreshment room, as set out in para 20.

11. DRAFT SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY FOR 2020-25

Members received a report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Performance concerning the City of London Corporation's Draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for 2020-25. The following comments were made:

- The Chairman was pleased that the Strategy had been significantly revised and strongly advocated for a working party to give oversight for this important area.
- A Member (Highgate Society) felt the Strategy was not sufficiently clear that walking is exercise and was a main reason for people visiting the Heath. It was added (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) that this could be expanded to promote the Heath's benefit to people's health and wellbeing. Members were advised that the links between the Heath and physical activity were covered in the Heath vision.
- A Member (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath) noted that there was new strategic planning sport guidance had been released by Sport England and recommended incorporating the recommended process as this could help to secure grant aid. Members were informed that Sport England guidance and data had already been used but the new guidance would be reviewed, and stakeholders consulted.
- It was noted that sport featured heavily throughout the Strategy which was a turn-off some people and a Member (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath) recommended that the Strategy make a steer towards using physical activity as an inclusive concept.
- A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) felt that it was not clear where funding for this Strategy was coming from which was needed for prioritisation of projects in the Fundamental Review. It was recommended that the wording be changed to say Open Spaces and beyond.
- It was noted that there was no mention of the future or looking at trends and a Member (Hampstead Rugby Club) queried whether there was scope to introduce new sports, e.g. basketball, netball, that were growing in popularity over less popular sports such as bowls and croquet that were currently represented.

- In addition, a Member (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Neighbourhood Association Committee) added that an organisational approach was needed to book classes, e.g. yoga and tai chi, at the Heath. Members were advised that stakeholder views would be sought concerning diversifying activities.
- A Member (Friends of Kenwood) highlighted that there were assets outside the Square Mile with nearly all team sports taking place elsewhere.
- Members felt there was a disconnect with the Heath Vision as most people were not involved in team sports. It was agreed that individuals that visited the Heath (and other City Corporation assets) for their physical activity needed to be adequately captured. Members were informed that an equalities impact assessment would be carried out which would hopefully ensure all relevant groups were captured.
- The Director of Open Spaces stated that similar comments were received at other sites and anticipated that operational plans looking at diverse groups, new activities and non-formal sports would be addressed at a local level rather than within the full Strategy.
- It was noted that there would be further opportunity for feedback during public consultation.

RECEIVED.

12. **QUESTIONS**

There were none.

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

There was no urgent business.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting on 9 March 2020 at 7.00pm was noted.

The meeting ended at 9.03 pm

Chairman

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