



Highgate Wood Consultative Group

Date: WEDNESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2020

Time: 11.15 am

Venue: VIRTUAL MEETING (ACCESSIBLE REMOTELY)

Members: Anne Fairweather (Chair)
Karina Dostalova (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy John Tomlinson
Stephanie Beer (Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association)
Peter Corley (Tree Trust for Haringey)
Therese Gray (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Councillor Bob Hare (London Borough of Haringey)
Councillor Julia Ogiehor (London Borough of Haringey)
Lucy Roots (Muswell Hill Friends of the Earth)
Alison Watson (Friends of Queen's Wood)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)

Enquiries: Leanne Murphy
leanne.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Accessing the virtual public meeting

Members of the public can observe this virtual public meeting at the below link:

<https://youtu.be/x2adev2tQi4>

This meeting will be a virtual meeting and therefore will not take place in a physical location following regulations made under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. A recording of the public meeting will be available via the above link following the end of the public meeting for up to one municipal year. Please note: online meeting recordings do not constitute the formal minutes of the meeting; minutes are written and are available on the City of London Corporation's website. Recordings may be edited, at the discretion of the proper officer, to remove any inappropriate material.

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

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 minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2019.

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 6)

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

To receive the draft public minutes and non-public summary of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 9 September 2020.

For Information
(Pages 7 - 16)

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE REPORT - OCTOBER 2020**

Report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath.

For Discussion
(Pages 17 - 20)

6. **GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The Chair to be heard.

For Discussion

7. **QUESTIONS**

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

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

HIGHGATE WOOD CONSULTATIVE GROUP **Wednesday, 9 October 2019**

Minutes of the meeting of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group held at Highgate Wood Offices, Highgate Wood, Muswell Hill Road, N10 3JN on Wednesday, 9 October 2019 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Anne Fairweather (Deputy Chair)
Deputy John Tomlinson
Stephanie Beer (Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association)
Jan Brooker (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Peter Corley (Tree Trust for Haringey)
Councillor Bob Hare (London Borough of Haringey)
Alison Watson (Friends of Queen's Wood)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerk's Department
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Jonathan Meares	- Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Karina Dostalova, Councillor Julie Ogierhor (Muswell Hill Ward) and Lucy Roots (Muswell Hill Friends of the Earth).

Anne Fairweather was in the Chair.

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 3 April 2019 be approved as a correct record, subject to Alison Watson being deleted from the list of apologies, and Stephanie Beer marked as present.

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

RESOLVED, that the public minutes and non-public summary of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 11 September 2019 be received.

5. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Members considered a report of the Town Clerk regarding outstanding actions from previous meetings and the following points were made.

1 – Walking Guides

- Members noted that the Highgate Society would liaise with the Highgate Wood Manager and agreed therefore, that this action could be closed.

2 – Contact TfL regarding old line between Finsbury Park and Alexandra Palace

- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that a homeless person had chosen to camp on the land in question, an issue which had been the main focus of Highgate Wood staff to date.
- Members felt that there was potential, if TfL were minded to dispose of the land, that it could be turned into a wildlife corridor that would protect the Wood from encroaching development.
- The Superintendent agreed to contact TfL to establish their position on disposals.

3 – School Representative on the Group

- The Superintendent noted that the Head Teacher of Highgate Primary had been invited to the meeting but had been unable to attend that day.

4 – Oak Processionary Moth Risk

- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that he would provide an update under Item 6 (Superintendent's Update – Highgate Wood).

RESOLVED, that the report be received.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE - HIGHGATE WOOD

Members considered an update report of the Superintendent regarding Highgate Wood and the following reports were made.

Roman Kiln Project

- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that the cost of the extension and conversion of the information building was higher than anticipated and stood at £150,000. An application would be submitted by the Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln to the Heritage Lottery Fund in May 2020.

Green Flag and Green Heritage

- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that the Wood had undergone its Green Flag and Green Heritage inspection on 7 June 2019. One of the inspectors was on the Board of Directors for the Forest Schools Association, who had particularly welcomed the City's efforts to increase the number of Forest Schools using the Wood.

Sustainability

- The Highgate Wood Manager drew Members' attention to efforts to reduce the level of food waste at the café facility.

Volunteer Activity for 2018/19

- The Highgate Wood Manager placed on record his thanks to Heath Hands for their work following the summer holiday period to pull thistle from the meadow area on the southern edge of the sports field.

Tree Disease and Biosecurity Issues

- The Highgate Wood noted that the Wood was, alongside the Heath, subject to a target-based approach to combating identified Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) nests. 110 nests had been found in the Wood, of which half had been removed.

Forest Schools and Events

- A Member commented that it would perhaps be useful for the Superintendent to develop a baseline of officer capacity against which to measure the likely impact of events within the Wood. The Member added that officers should be mindful of ensuring that a diverse range of stakeholders should be able to access the Wood as possible, balanced against the likely impact of noisy activity in open areas e.g. the sports field versus the Wood proper.
- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that the Community Heritage Day had been a success and well attended. The Day had featured a Climate Change Hub with a number of stalls representing Population Matters and Extinction Rebellion.

Sports Field

- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that the football pitch had been affected by a combination of compaction, poor drainage and damage by dogs resulting in a letter of complaint from a long-standing football team. The Highgate Wood Manager had undertaken to commission an independent assessment of the pitches by the Institute of Groundsmen. In response to a question, the Highgate Wood Manager noted that likely mitigation measures would include re-seeding and aeration of the soil, with a potential review of the efficacy of the existing drainage systems.

RESOLVED, that the report be received.

7. FEES AND CHARGES 2020/21& 2021/22

Members considered a report of the Superintendent regarding Fees and Charges 2020/21 & 2021/22 and the following points were made.

- The Superintendent noted that proposed increases were in response to the Retail Price Index (RPI). That said, fees for sports activities had been frozen following a benchmarking exercise against similar sports venues within London.
- The Superintendent noted the consultations he was undertaking regarding the introduction of licences for commercial dog walking. Measures under consultation included whether an individual walker could walk four or six dogs.
- The Superintendent undertook to circulate the findings of those consultations to Members of the Group.
- The Superintendent advised that the increase in charges for engraved benches at the Pergola & Hill Garden reflected the fact the benches at these locations were more ornate compared with other locations on the Heath.

RESOLVED, that the views of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at its 13 November 2019 meeting.

8. **HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK CAFÉ UPDATE**

Members considered an update report of the Superintendent regarding the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Café's and the following points were made.

- The Superintendent noted that the Highgate Wood Café was currently operated by Hoxton Beach under a tenancy at will. Longer term, a tender would be launched offering a longer lease period. The methodology for assessing bids could be shared with the Group, and there was potential for members of the Group to be involved in the tender interview process.
- The Superintendent noted that the Queen's Park Consultative Group had at its meeting earlier that day highlighted the risk of tenders providing an excellent presentation but then failing to deliver on their promised level of service.
- In response to a comment, the Superintendent agreed to liaise with a counterpart at the Barbican Centre regarding their catering offer.
- In response to a question, the Superintendent noted that a longer tenancy period would allow for more investment from the successful tenant.
- The Superintendent noted that a ban on single use plastics had been included in the tender brief.

RESOLVED, that the report be received and the revised tender timeline (concluding March 2020) be noted.

9. **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Members noted the provisional dates of the next meetings on 22 April 2020 and 21 October 2020.

The meeting ended at 5.01 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Alistair MacLellan / alistair.maclellan@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE **Wednesday, 9 September 2020**

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held at VIRTUAL MEETING (ACCESSIBLE REMOTELY) - <https://youtu.be/4TWJPPzEIXs> on Wednesday, 9 September 2020 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Anne Fairweather (Chair)
Karina Dostalova (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy David Bradshaw
Alderman Prem Goyal
Michael Hudson
Alderman Gregory Jones QC
Deputy Edward Lord
Wendy Mead
Ruby Sayed
Deputy John Tomlinson
William Upton
Oliver Sells QC (Ex-Officio Member)
John Beyer (Heath & Hampstead Society)
Councillor Richard Cornelius (London Borough of Barnet)
Councillor Thomas Gardiner (London Borough of Camden)

Officers:

Colin Buttery	-	Director of Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	-	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Katherine Radusin	-	PA to Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Richard Gentry	-	Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Jonathan Meares	-	Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager
Declan Gallagher	-	Operational Services Manager, Hampstead Heath
Gerry Kiefer	-	Business Manager, Open Spaces
Martin Falder	-	Project Support Officer, Open Spaces
Yvette Hughes	-	Business Manager, Hampstead Heath
Paul Maskell	-	Leisure and Events Manager, Hampstead Heath
Mark Jarvis	-	Head of Finance - Citizen Services, Chamberlains
Kristina Drake	-	Media Team, Town Clerk's Department
Leanne Murphy	-	Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Christopher Small, Adeline Siew Yin Au, Rachel Evans and Graeme Doshi-Smith.

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

There were none.

3. **ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL**

Members received the Order of the Court of Common Council dated 16 July 2020 appointing the Committee and approving its terms of reference.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

In accordance with Standing Order No.29, the Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman for the ensuing year. The Town Clerk stated the Members that had expressed an interest and Anne Fairweather, being the only Member expressing their willingness to serve, was duly elected as Chair.

The Chair thanked Members for their support and took the opportunity to welcome new Member Deputy Edward Lord to the Committee.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. The Town Clerk stated the Members that had expressed an interest and Karina Dostalova, being the only Member expressing their willingness to serve, was duly elected as Deputy Chairman.

6. **APPOINTMENT OF SUB COMMITTEES, CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES AND GROUPS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

Members considered a report of the Town Clerk regarding appointments to Committees and Groups for 2020/21.

RESOLVED, that:-

- The terms of reference and composition of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee be noted;
- The terms of reference and composition of both the Highgate Wood Consultative Group and the Queen's Park Consultative Group be approved;
- The Chair and Deputy Chairman to be appointed to the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.
- John Tomlinson be appointed to the Highgate Wood Consultative Group, and the further two vacancies be deferred until the next meeting of the Grand Committee for appointment, but that William Upton QC would be approached to take up one of the vacancies;
- Ruby Sayed be appointed to the Queen's Park Consultative Group, and the further two vacancies be deferred until the next meeting of the Grand Committee for appointment;
- John Tomlinson be appointed to serve on the Keats House Consultative Committee with the Chair to also attend in an ex officio capacity;

- Wendy Mead be appointed to observe meetings of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee with the Chair to also attend in an ex officio capacity.

7. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the public minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2020 were approved as a correct record.

8. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The draft public minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee (HHCC) meeting held on 6 July 2020 were received.

The Chair highlighted concerns from HHCC Members regarding the reduction of the Cyclical Work Programme (CWP) funds which were shared with the City Surveyor. A wider review of the CWP across all Open Spaces was taking place and an update would come to the next meeting.

9. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Members considered a report of the Superintendent providing an update on matters concerning Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park. The following points were made:

- The Superintendent acknowledged the challenges, particularly during July and the August heatwave. Thanks was given to all staff and Heath Hands volunteers for their great work and support.

Waste and recycling

- Staff have begun to reduce the number bins across sites, but recycling will remain at all facilities.
- The Chair highlighted the significant challenge and resource implications dealing with rubbish and waste continued to present. Whilst Members were glad people visited the sites, it was felt that visitors should take their rubbish with them.
- Members voiced support for Option 4 and recommended that this approach be reviewed annually.
- A Member stated that other Open Spaces were experiencing the same issues and queried whether a City-wide communications campaign could be instigated to encourage and put responsibility on individuals to take away their own rubbish.
- The Chairman of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee advised that rubbish was the primary concern discussed over the last three months during meetings and stated that the City Corporation simply could not continue as it was as the costs, resources and time of staff were not sustainable. He agreed that there needed to be a complete change of culture and this would only happen through significant

education and a complete stop in litter collection services. Support across all Open Spaces was requested.

- The Chair added that the Committee and Officers wanted to spend the budget on facilities and the wider Heath, not clearing rubbish.
- Members agreed only wider City communications and a programme in collaboration with all Open Spaces Committees and partners, plus the relevant Local Authorities, would bring about the cultural need required.
- The Director of Open Spaces agreed there had been some success with pan-London messaging and that Officers continued to work in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy on how to change behaviours.
- A Member highlighted the significance of social media messaging to reach younger audiences.

Cycling

- The Superintendent advised that Officers had a helpful meeting with the London Borough of Camden to discuss the current position in relation to the cycling to and on the Heath as well as the wider local cycle network.
- The main change to the current position was: *k) The City Corporation committed to undertaking a review of the cycling provision within the mid-term review of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018 - 2028. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic this work will commence ahead of the mid-term review, which will take place in 2024. This process will start sooner than anticipated in the autumn.*
- Continued improvements have been made to pathways and signage, which made it clearer which paths are designed as shared-use.
- A Member commended the City's efforts to discuss better cycling provision with Camden. He hoped this might lead to provision of a safe cycling network around the periphery of the Heath, so that there would be no need for the Heath paths to be used for cyclists to commute to work.
- In response to a query concerning electric scooters, Officers confirmed that these had become an increased issue for Staff and the Constabulary as they were more readily available and affordable. However, it was noted there had been no accidents to date. It was confirmed that it was against the byelaws to ride motorised vehicles across the Heath. The Superintendent added that cyclists using paths not designated as shared use was a bigger issue.

Cafés

- The proposed timeline previously reported for retendering the leases for the Parliament Hill café and Parliament Hill Fields Lido café was delayed by Covid-19. The new proposal was to extend the leases for 12 months to 12 January 2022.
- Members were advised that the current tenant of the Golders Hill Park café had terminated his lease. The tenant, recognising the City Corporation's difficulty to retender currently and in allegiance to his loyal customers, offered to delay terminating the lease until November 2021. The alternative was to find a temporary tenant and set up a tenancy at will whilst retendering took place.
- A Member observed that there were currently three park cafés in Barnet that were struggling to let and felt that it was best to keep someone in post if possible. It was agreed it made sense to continue with the current tenant whilst the tender was carried out.
- It was recommended that Officers proceed with tendering the leases for the Queen's Park café and the Highgate Wood café as soon as possible which were also delayed due to Covid-19. Both were cafés were currently operating under tenancy at will.

Establish a temporary Working Group

- Officers sought approval to establish a small temporary Working Group to progress Forest School Licenses and Fitness Training Licenses.
- The Chair highlighted the significant growth in outdoor fitness training and sport and the opportunity for the City Corporation to tap into this trend for income generation.

Lido Wall

- Members were advised that the boundary wall was regularly breached during summer 2019 and one of the outcomes of the Swimming Review was to install a temporary fence with Officers re-evaluating the height and structure to prevent this risk in future.
- A planning application had been prepared but Officers recommended that it be amended to only seek approval for the additional lighting. Members were supportive of this approach.

Planning

- The Superintendent informed Members that a planning consultant had been appointed.

- A Member noted that violence and Anti-Social Behaviour had been reported across a number of Open Spaces and enquired if this had been an issue for Staff. Members were informed that there had been some incidents, predominantly large gatherings of young people, but the new Government Guidance limiting gatherings to six people would provide clarity to and assist Staff and the Constabulary. The Superintendent highlighted the critical relationship with the Metropolitan Police who had continued to provide enforcement support.
- In response to a query concerning Zippos Circus, Officers confirmed that the upcoming event was able to proceed as the company had rigorous Risk Assessments to enforce social distancing in place.

RESOLVED – That:-

- Members agree the preferred long-term option for waste and recycling as set out in para 10;
- Members agree the policy position on Cycling, as outlined in paragraph 14;
- Members agree the Superintendent's proposal to extend the leases for the Parliament Hill Fields café and Parliament Hill Fields Lido café for 12 months to 12 January 2022 as set out in paragraph 24;
- Members agree the Superintendent's proposal to proceed with tendering the leases for the Queen's Park and Highgate Wood cafés as set out in paragraph 25;
- Members agree the Superintendent's proposal to proceed with tendering the lease for the Golders Hill Park café as set out in paragraph 30;
- Members agree the Superintendent's proposal to establish a small temporary Working Group to progress Forest School Licenses and Fitness Training Licenses, as outlined in paragraphs 56 & 57;
- Members agree the preferred option (option 1) for the Lido Wall, as outlined in paragraph 74.

10. HAMPSTEAD HEATH SWIMMING COVID-19 TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS - WINTER SWIMMING SEASON

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces setting out the COVID-19 temporary Winter Swimming Season arrangements, updating on the actions taken to implement the outcomes of the Swimming Review 2020 plus an update on the 2020 summer swimming season. The following comments were made:

- The Chair stated that reopening the three swimming ponds and Lido in line with Government Guidance had been incredibly challenging.

- The Chair apologised for the late additional documents but felt that it was important for Members to appreciate the large amount of correspondence received from swimmers. A document summarising feedback and representations from members of the public regarding issues relating to swimming charging, data privacy, concessions and the Support Scheme was circulated along with initial feedback from a Hampstead Heath swimming online survey. The Chair confirmed that the results to the review of the summer swimming season, including costs and revenue, would follow at the next meeting to provide a full picture. A full end of year swim review would also take place and be reported back to the Committee.
- The Superintendent advised that Officers were preparing for the winter season starting 21 September which would include the parallel introduction of season tickets and contactless payment at each facility. Cash would also continue to be accepted and the swimming telephone line would remain available to assist swimmers. It was noted that Lifeguards would remain at the Mixed Pond until late October.
- The Superintendent highlighted commentary concerning the Support Scheme and the package on concessions available at the swimming facilities. The scheme offering free swimming for under 16's and over 60+ between 7.00 - 9.30am had been very successful at the Lido and Officers were keen to introduce this offer at the Ponds. It was noted that the timings did not align with the current Transport for London free travel time for freedom card holders.
- With regards to comments concerning prescribed swimming for health, the City Corporation has aligned with relevant groups, partnerships and Local Authorities.
- The Superintendent noted an existing City Corporation scheme offering time credits for volunteering and would be expanded to cover season ticket.
- The Chair advised that bids concerning swimming made through the CWP had been delayed but hoped they would be successful.
- An Equity Test of Relevance was carried out and aligned with the Option 3 decision made by this Committee during the Swim Review, on 11 March 2020.
- Season tickets were frozen during the summer season and would be extended for the period of lockdown and re-introduced for the winter season.
- The Chair highlighted that unlike other swimming venues, the City Corporation had not put their prices up despite the significant loss of income due to the pandemic.

- A Member, whilst supportive of the new swim charges for the safety and future sustainability of the facilities, highlighted the importance of diversity. The Member was concerned by the lack of BAME communities use of the facilities, as reflected in the survey stats and question how this could be improved.
- Members were advised that the City Corporation had reached out to a number of groups including migrant youth groups which had some success. It was agreed more needed to be done to engage with wider groups and communities.
- Members agreed that accessibility and affordability for all was key and recommended that the support scheme continue to be reviewed. The Superintendent advised that concessions were currently being reviewed across all City Corporation Open Spaces. The Fees and charges would also be reviewed as part of the annual review.
- A Member was concerned that the Support Scheme did not go far enough to help those on a lower income and should include all individuals on benefits including, Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The Chair stated that it was difficult to help everyone as benefits were based on means testing but the scheme aimed to assist these groups.
- Members felt there was a clear position for a campaign to attract more diverse visitors. It was agreed that cost was not the only issue and some groups may not know these facilities were available.
- A Member suggested approaching City Bridge Trust for possible funding for engagement with wider groups and communities.

RESOLVED – That:-

- Members agree the Support Scheme arrangements as outlined in paragraphs 30-40;
- Members agree for the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman to have delegated authority to agree changes to the Winter Season Proposals in response to further Government Guidance.

11. HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK RISK MANAGEMENT

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces providing an update on the management of risks undertaken by the Open Spaces Department and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Division.

Members were advised that risks were reviewed regularly by the Department's Senior Leadership Team as part of the ongoing management of the operations

of the Department and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Team. There were currently seven risks were reported amber.

RESOLVED – That Members note and approve the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Risk Register (Appendix 2).

12. FINANCE UPDATE

Members received a verbal finance update from the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces.

The Chair, as expressed previously, was keen for the Committee to explore revenue raising opportunities. Since the last meeting, an Open Spaces mid-year review had progressed with a report going to the upcoming Resource Allocations Sub Committee meeting. As the report was not ready for this meeting and the Committee's November meeting would be too late for their input before a final decision was made, the Chair considered an extra meeting looking at re-budgeting proposals and impacts to be necessary.

The Director of Open Spaces advised that monitoring of the in-year financial position was happening across all Open Spaces. Some steps had already taken place to overcome the significant loss of income in the first quarter and the Team continued to improve income generation and find efficiencies.

The Superintendent stated that the Heath's outline figures for the current year were forecast at £6m with income estimated at £4.6m and an overspend of £126k. Significant costs were incurred dealing with rubbish and recycling, external security at the Bathing Ponds and implementing Covid secure facilities including additional signage. The cancelling and postponement of events was also a significant income loss.

The expenditure at Highgate Wood and Queen's Park was estimated at £1m with an income of £152k leaving a small overspend but it was hoped this would balance by year end. It was noted that the licences for Forest Schools at Highgate Wood had not yet resumed.

13. OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20 - YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces providing Members with a review of the Open Spaces Department's delivery of its 2019/20 Business Plan.

RECEIVED.

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

There were no questions.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

16. **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 of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

17. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2020 were approved as a correct record subject to one typo.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was one item.

The meeting ended at 6.02 pm

Chair

Contact Officer: Leanne Murphy / leanne.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Committee(s)	Dated:
Highgate Wood Consultative Group	07102020
Subject: Superintendents Update - October 2020	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Discussion
Report author: Jonathan Meares, Open Spaces Department	

Summary

This Report provides an update to Members on management and operational activities in Highgate Wood since April 2020. This report also proposes a new approach to engaging with Members of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group on activities at Highgate Wood.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Impact of COVID

1. There was a major increase in visitors from the start of the lockdown in late March through to the end of August. Numbers increased again significantly after the mid May relaxing of restrictions with many more visitors travelling by car and staying longer on site. The Highgate Team had to keep the site open with less staff and had major issues with litter, cycling and conflict between different user groups. The play area, café and toilets were closed, all sports fixtures, events and licenced activities were cancelled. These measures have had a major impact on income generation with some recovery following the café providing a takeaway service and some sports fixtures reinstated.
2. The other impact is on staff with the added anxiety of shielding and the longer shift patterns that were necessary at the beginning of the lockdown. With the end of the summer and the shorter days, there will be a chance to recover but the uncertainty of what the winter might bring is causing concern.
3. There are numerous desire lines throughout the woodland especially near the main pathways where people have been trying to maintain social distancing. It is intended to fence off some of the worst of these areas in order to allow the ground flora and underlying soil to recover.

Roman Kiln Project update.

4. The Highgate Wood Manager remains in contact with the Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln (FOHRK) who are currently setting up a website to broaden support for the project and also attract donations. The HLF bid will be delayed until 2021/22 while there is continued disruption due to COVID.

Green Flag and Green Heritage

5. Green Flag and Green Heritage assessments were desk based this year and we are still awaiting results.

Sustainability

6. The Waste and Recycling operation in Highgate Wood has been severely disrupted during the lockdown period. For the six-week period up until May all the rubbish bins were tapped off as there were insufficient staff to empty bins, and visitors were asked to take their litter and waste home with them. This action was partially successful but with the changes in May and increased visitor numbers rubbish bins were reinstated.

Woodland Conservation and Tree Management

7. Highgate Wood has suffered 31 tree failures since the beginning of April unusually high numbers for this time of the year, but an indication of how the weather patterns are changing. The Heath by comparison has also had a higher than average number of tree failures for the same period.
8. The results from this year's oak decline survey reveal another 2 dead oak trees and there are concerns about the extended drought period and consequences for next year's growing season.
9. The Sparrowhawks have had another successful breeding season, and there have been a number of sightings of the four or five fledglings honing their flying and hunting skills above the wood. Another piece of good news is that recent moth surveys have been numerous which is a reassuring indicator that the biodiversity of the wood has not been adversely affected by the momentous events this year.

New Reporting format to Highgate Wood Consultative Group for 2021

10. In recent years, Highgate Wood Consultative Group meetings have received a written report prepared by the Highgate Wood Manager, summarising management items and achievements at Highgate Wood.
11. In addition, updates are provided to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at their 4 meetings throughout the year.
12. It would be more efficient to use the autumn meeting of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group to reflect on progress against priority projects to date and begin to set the objectives for the following business year, with the spring meeting being used to finalise the end of year reports for onward submission

to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee and, eventually, for incorporation into the Annual Statement of Accounts, as required by the Charity Commission.

Climate Change

13. The City of London Corporation is scheduled to adopt a new Climate Action Strategy in October this year. The Strategy aim is to reach Net 0 by 2040 and there will be a range of measures implemented to achieve this including increasing carbon sequestration and storage across the Open Spaces alongside biodiversity enhancement and resilience measures. Highgate Wood will contribute to these measures with continued work to improve and conserve existing Ancient Woodland habitat and species.

Volunteer activity for 2018/19

14. Heath Hands sessions have resumed in Highgate with four sessions to date. It was great to have the volunteers back albeit in reduced numbers owing to COVID-19.

Tree disease and biosecurity issues

15. Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) numbers increased in 2020 with 299 nests recorded on 173 trees. This is double the number of nests found in 2019. No spraying was carried out in Highgate Wood this year which may have led to the increase, but on the positive side a significant population of the parasitoid fly *Carcelia iliaca* has been found in harvested nests from 2019 which indicates that natural control of future OPM populations may occur. Number of OPM nests on Hampstead Heath have fallen significantly for two consecutive years so it is hoped that Highgate Wood will experience the same reduction in numbers going forward.

Pavilion Café update

16. The Superintendent will provide an update on the plans going forward with the Pavilion Café.

Forest Schools and events

17. Forest Schools will be resuming their activities this autumn having being suspended for the duration of the lockdown. New licencing procedures are being introduced this winter to better regulate their activities. The cap on forest school groups in Highgate Wood will remain at current levels and groups continued use of the site will be reviewed annually.
18. Community Heritage Day was cancelled this year.

Sports Field and Play area

19. The sports field has suffered a degree of wear and tear over the lockdown but the Keepers have managed to deal with the major slips and trips issues. The ongoing dry weather conditions have also led to ground damage.
20. Several items in the play area are being refurbished this autumn, and quotes are being obtained from contractors.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

21. The activities and projects included within this report contribute to the three objectives and outcomes set out in the Open Spaces Business Plan 2019-20 (a) Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible, (b) Spaces enrich people's lives and (c) Business practices are responsible and sustainable.
22. These activities and projects also contribute towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporation Corporate Plan 2018-23. Contribute to a flourishing society (1-4), Support a thriving economy (5) and Shape outstanding environments (9-12).

Financial Implications

23. The operational requirements highlighted in the report will be met from the Superintendent's Local Risk Budget.

Conclusion

24. The pandemic has completely dominated the last six months and although there has been widespread gratitude for keeping the wood open there has been a major impact on the woodland with compaction and erosion damage. Equally the Highgate Wood team have also been affected and hopefully with the arrival of autumn will have a chance to recover.

Appendices

- None

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