

HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE

26 March 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE held at Guildhall, EC2 on MONDAY, 26 MARCH 2012 at 1:45pm.

Present

Members:

Deputy Michael Welbank (Chairman)	Clare James
Jeremy Simons (Deputy Chairman)	Barbara Newman
Deputy John Barker	Virginia Rounding
Deputy Dennis Cotgrove	Alderman Simon Walsh
Deputy Stella Currie	Councillor Sean Birch
The Revd Dr Martin Dudley	Tony Ghilchik
Alderman Bob Hall	Maija Roberts
Dr Peter Hardwick	

Officers:

Edward Foale	- Town Clerk's Department
Esther Sumner	- Town Clerk's Department
Allison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Andrew Cotton	- City Surveyor's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Simon Lee	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
John Parks	- Public Relations Office

In attendance:

Mathew Dolan	- National Grid
Timothy Burr	- Daclour Maclaren

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Melvin Cohen and Martyn Foster.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 23 January 2012 were approved.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: -

East Heath Car Park and South End Green Approach Improvements (Item 8)

The Superintendent confirmed that a planning application had been submitted to Camden Council in order to proceed with the proposals to modify the car park.

Review of Hampstead Heath Constabulary 2011 (Item 9)

In response to a Member's question, the Superintendent undertook to confirm further details regarding the miscellaneous occurrences recorded by the Hampstead Heath Constabulary during 2011.

4. HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

The draft minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee meeting held on 16 March were noted.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: -

Update on the Hampstead Heath Flood Management Project (Item 4a)

In response to a Member's query, the Superintendent confirmed that the project was currently continuing to progress, and further reports relating to design and implementation would be submitted to the Committee at the appropriate time.

The Superintendent advised that the procurement process for the appointment of the design team was progressing. He also advised on the benefits of appointing a Strategic Landscape Architect to champion the landscape and environmental attributes of the project, recognising the obligations of the foundation legislation in "preserving the natural aspect of the Heath".

The Superintendent would work with the City Surveyor's Department to develop the detailed designs. He recognised that there were tensions within the community about the design standards that had to be adopted for the project. The Superintendent made reference to guidance from the Institution of Civil Engineers in relation to Category A dams, which advised that public opinion would not accept conscious design for a specific threat to a community, even though it would tolerate to an extent both random and accidental loss of life. Consequently, no dam above a village or town should be designed knowingly with a finite chance of a disastrous breach due to the under-provision of spillway capacity. The main design intentions would be to ensure that, where a community could be endangered by the breach of a dam, the risk of any breach caused by a flood would be virtually eliminated.

In response to a Member's question, the Superintendent advised that he believed the guidance applied to both existing and new-build dams.

A Member advised that the Committee held responsibility for the project and was accountable to the Court of Common Council. The Flood Management Project report to be submitted to the Committee would require extensive detail in order for the Committee to make a fully informed decision.

Questions (Item 4a)

In response to a Member's question, the Chairman clarified that there was only limited support for a seven-day suspension of litter collection on the Heath. It was unlikely that such a measure would be adopted.

A Member, also the Chairman of the Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park Committee, advised that at a recent meeting of the Court of Common Council he had raised the possibility of the City participating in a London-wide effort to encourage manufacturers to produce more streamlined packaging in order to make litter less voluminous and easier to collect.

5. OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN 2012 – 2015 – KEY PROJECTS

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces that outlined the Key Projects to be included in the Open Spaces Department Business Plan for 2012 - 2015 for the sites for which the Committee was responsible.

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Open Spaces acknowledged the importance of raising awareness of the shared pedestrian and cycling routes on the Heath. The Superintendent advised that the Hampstead Heath Constabulary was apprehending those individuals found cycling in non-cycle areas of the Heath and that safe-cycle leaflets were to be published shortly.

In response to a Member's query, the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath advised that an order had been raised for the installation of the barrier on Savernake Bridge. Due to the scale of the works the completion date was currently unclear. The Director of Open Spaces advised that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman would be updated on the matter.

RESOLVED: That Members note and agree the Key Projects for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park, for inclusion in the Open Spaces Department Business Plan for 2012 - 2015.

6. RESOLUTION FROM THE AUDIT & RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Director of Open Spaces advised that a key function of the Audit & Risk Management Committee was to seek assurance in adequacy of arrangements for managing risk. The report submitted to the March meeting of the Audit & Risk Management Committee advised that appropriate measures to address the risks associated with Hampstead Heath hydrology were being undertaken. Until the completion of the Dams Project it was likely that all associated risk would remain red.

The Audit & Risk Management Committee would receive an update report on Hampstead Heath hydrology every nine months. Members noted that the Director of Open Spaces had become the Hampstead Heath hydrology risk owner.

RESOLVED: That Members note a message of support from the Audit and Risk Management Committee for the steps being taken by the Hampstead

Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee with regard to Hampstead Heath hydrology.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath was heard on Hampstead Heath matters.

English Cross Country Event

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath advised that the English Cross Country Event had been a great success with over 1600 participants. Sheriff Wendy Mead had also been in attendance on the day.

Hampstead Heath Diary

The Hampstead Heath diary would be released in early April 2012.

Fitzroy Farm Allotment

The Fitzroy Farm Allotment Holders Association had plans to create a community orchard on the boundary of the allotment, which would result in the felling of several large trees. The City had not been consulted on the initial plans and had made representation to Camden Council about the importance of retaining a screen for the Heath. Grant funding for the project would be held over for one year. The Head of Parks and Gardens at Camden Council was currently consulting stakeholders on the matter. The City had met with allotment holders in an effort to accommodate a compromise for retention of the larger trees.

Water House Development, Millfield Lane

The Superintendent confirmed that the Waterhouse Development had not yet been approved. However, Camden Council had recently approved an application for an adjoining development site, which included cutting down a number of trees and building a deep basement.

Hosepipe Ban

The hosepipe ban, due to come into effect on 5 April 2012, would represent a challenge to maintaining healthy vegetation across the Heath, particularly newly planted horticultural features and maintaining fine sports turf.

In response to a Member's question, the Superintendent confirmed that it was currently unclear as to whether the City Dip event of 2011 would be repeated at the lido.

8. REVIEW OF SUMMER HOLIDAY EVENTS 2011

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath, which reviewed the 2011 summer events programme delivered by the Education and Play teams across Hampstead Heath, Golders Hill Park, Queens Park and Highgate Wood.

The Superintendent advised that over 2500 individuals had been involved in 2011, some of whom came specifically for the events, and others who were using the open spaces for other activities and decided to participate. It was hoped that a similar number of visitors would be involved in the summer 2012 events.

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9. FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS OF PARLIAMENT HILL BOWLING GREEN

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that updated Members on the consultations that had been undertaken with members of the Parliament Hill Bowling Club and Hampstead Heath Croquet Club to achieve the £40,000 savings identified as part of the City of London budgetary savings that were reported to the Committee in July 2011.

The Superintendent advised that there was a contingency plan to transfer funds from other sources if the predicted savings were not met. In response to a Member's question, the Superintendent confirmed that, under the terms of the agreement, non-members of the Croquet Club would not be able to play croquet on the Green, but would be able to bowl. This was because there was a significant risk that an inexperienced croquet player could cause damage to the Green.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approve the proposal for the City to enter into a lease with the Parliament Hill Bowling Club on the basis set out in the report for an initial two-year trial basis.

10. PROPOSALS BY NATIONAL GRID TO UNDERTAKE WORKS TO GAS MAINS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR HAMPSTEAD HEATH

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath setting out a proposal by National Grid to undertake replacement of gas mains, which were a vital part of the local gas supply system, to ensure a safe and reliable gas supply for years to come. The project was part of an investment of over £2 billion a year in National Grid's gas and electricity networks in the UK.

In response to a Member's query, Mr. Burr of Daclour Maclaren advised that the gas regulators would be underground. The gas regulator vent would be disguised as a non-functioning lamp, which would contain telemetry equipment. It was not currently possible to confirm how large the lamp base would be.

RESOLVED: That the Management Committee approve:

- i) the principle of National Grid undertaking works to reinforce the local gas supply system to ensure a safe and reliable gas supply for years to come in this part of London, which would result in large sections of the gas main which was installed in the 1960s, running from the Heath Extension, to Parliament Hill Fields, being taken out of operation;
- ii) the Heads of Terms appended to the report, as the basis for creating a new Licence with National Grid for the installation of two below ground

gas regulators with an upfront premium of £20,000 (as a minimum) for each regulator, the existing pipework to be retained, and the existing pipework to be decommissioned, therefore ensuring that terms are consistent across the infrastructure

- iii) National Grid occupying a fenced-off site on Parliament Hill, just north of the bandstand for a minimum fee of £200/week.

11. REVIEW OF PARLIAMENT HILL FIELDS – PLAY FACILITIES

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath which reviewed the success and key achievements of the Hampstead Heath play service in 2011, including its work at the Adventure Playground, One O'clock Club and Parliament Hill Playground.

In response to a Member's question, the Superintendent advised that the Queen's Crescent Community Centre managed the One O'clock Club in the morning.

RESOLVED: That the success and key achievements of the Hampstead Heath play service in 2011 and the proposed strategy for the service into 2012 be noted.

12. QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE FESTIVAL – GOLDERS HILL PARK

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that updated Members on the consultations that had been undertaken between the City of London and the London Borough of Barnet to host a community festival to be held in Golders Hill Park on Monday 4 June 2012 to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The London Jewish Cultural Centre had agreed to support the event and open their buildings as part of the day's activities.

In response to a Member's query, the Superintendent confirmed that National Grid had agreed to sponsor the weather vane mentioned in the report.

In response to a Member's query, the Superintendent advised that it was currently unknown whether permission was required to reproduce the Royal Cypher. He undertook to investigate the matter and report to the next Committee meeting.

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HIGHGATE WOOD & QUEEN'S PARK

13. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath was heard on Highgate Wood and Queen's Park matters.

Conservation Management Plan

The Superintendent confirmed that tenders had been completed for the Conservation Management Plan at Queen's Park and that a draft plan was close to being finalised for Highgate Wood.

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

In response to a Member's query the Chairman clarified that there had not been a change in policy with regard to Swimming Pond charges. The possibility of continuing voluntary entrance fees would be explored; however, in order to address issues such as improving the quality of pond facilities and aiding disabled pond users, it had become necessary to commence works on the Ponds.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Alderman Robert Hall Standing Down

The Chairman noted that Alderman Robert Hall would be standing down as a Member of the Committee. He thanked Alderman Hall for his contributions to discussions during his time on the Committee.

Michael Welbank's Last Meeting As Chairman

Members noted that this was Michael Welbank's last meeting as Chairman of the Committee. The Committee expressed thanks to the Chairman for his Chairmanship during his term of office.

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 that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

<u>Item Nos.</u>	<u>Exempt Paragraph</u>
17 & 18	3
19 & 20	-

SUMMARY OF MATTERS CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC WERE EXCLUDED

17. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2012 were approved.

18. QUEEN'S PARK CAFÉ AND HIGHGATE WOOD CAFÉ – MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered a report relative to the management of the Queen's Park Café and Highgate Wood Café, the leases of which were due to expire on 31 October 2012.

The Superintendent advised that the report had been written following representation from some members of the Queen's Park Area Resident's Association (QPARA), who believed that the service of the Queen's Park café should be retendered.

The Superintendent advised that the cost of retendering would need to be considered, as well as the possibility that, if this option were pursued, the

premises at both open spaces could become vacant for a period. He made reference to a café in another of the City's open spaces which shut down for six months and took two years to rebuild a successful customer base.

Members recognised that the current tenants were deemed to be offering a good level of service for the vast majority of Park users. Whilst certain aspects of service could be improved, some factors such as toilet facilities were beyond the control of the tenants. Negotiations would focus on improvement targets. There was no guarantee that, in the current economic climate, food standards through an alternative operator would improve.

Members agreed that, if the lease were renewed, the tenants would have the Committee's full support.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to the City Surveyor to open negotiations with the current tenants for the renewal of their leases for the Queen's Park Café and the Highgate Wood Café upon terms to be reported for approval by the Committee.

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

There were none.

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

There were none.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm

CHAIRMAN

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