

Committee(s)	Dated:
Highgate Wood Consultative Group	3 April 2019
Subject: Superintendents Update for April 2019	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Discussion
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Summary

This report provides an update to Members on the management and operational activities in Highgate Wood since October 2018. The report describes progress on income generation, sustainability, conservation and woodland management, infrastructure and facilities. This report also provides a final review of the 2013 - 2023 Conservation Management Plan.

Recommendation

- That the views of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee at their meeting on 5 June 2019.

Main Report

Roman Kiln Project

1. The Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln are now working towards submitting a Heritage Grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (HLF) for around £250,000 for their 'Rekindling our Roman Heritage: Highgate Roman Kiln' Project. The deadline for submission to the National Lottery Heritage Fund is August 2019, with a decision made by November 2019. If successful, this two-year project will commence in early 2020.
2. The project involves the conservation and repatriation of the Roman kiln, that was excavated in the 1970s, back to Highgate Wood. The information hut will be extended, and new interpretation will showcase the important history of this industry, but also allow for a refit for the wildlife section within the hut. There will be a Project Officer post, a possible internship opportunity and funding for a diverse set of activities for different ages and interests both in the wood itself and further afield, including our key partner Bruce Castle Museum (where the kiln currently resides in storage).

3. Partners in this project are The City of London Corporation, Museum of London and Bruce Castle Museum. Currently, the group will be consulting with audiences about the project, revisiting the interpretation and producing an activity plan to feed into the application. The Friends of the Highgate Roman Kiln (FOHRK) have held two meetings at the Pavilion Café to recruit new supporters and scope out potential sources of match funding for the project. The second meeting was held after the Community Heritage Day Event and attracted great interest. The FOHRK have commissioned an independent HLF advisor to produce a report providing guidance on assembling the HLF application.

Divisional Plan update

4. The Divisional Plan 2019 – 2022 has been reformatted to reflect the Outcomes in the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy. The projects are listed according to their primary outcome and the links to the other outcomes are referenced. Please see Appendix 1.
5. The Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan Review and the Roman Kiln Project are included in the Divisional Plan and due for completion in 2019/20 and 2020/21 respectively.

Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan Review

6. The Highgate Wood Manager presented a review of the 2013 - 2023 Conservation Management Plan to the Highgate Wood Consultative Group in October 2018. A number of recommendations were made at the meeting and these have been integrated into a revised version which is appended to this report at Appendix 2.

Sustainability

7. The Divisional Waste and Recycling Review is progressing well with a new waste collection contract commencing with Veolia in April 2019. Hampstead Heath will be introducing a series of phased changes to waste and recycling operations this summer, and a new food waste collection contract has already commenced at the café facilities. We aim to extend this service to Highgate Wood later this year.
8. The Management Team have been working with Keep Britain Tidy to deliver a Communication Strategy for Waste and Recycling. A workshop was held at Parliament Hill on Saturday 2 March 2019, attended by a number of representative groups and members of the public, to capture their views and ideas on waste and recycling. The workshop was a great success and we hope to be able to extend the learning from the event to improve the recycling and waste collection operation in Highgate Wood.

Woodland Conservation and Tree Management

9. The Wood Keepers made good use of the Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) this year, which was used to bring down a leaning oak with decayed roots, reduce two dying mature oaks, reduce a decayed willow, and reduce and fell a dead ash. All these trees were near paths or backing onto

neighbouring residences in higher-risk areas. The Hampstead Heath Tree Team also helped the Highgate Wood Team to fell a large dead elm beside the road, reduce a splitting hornbeam, fell a willow, and reduce an oak damaged by a lightning strike.

Storm damage and closures

10. The weather has been very varied since last November. Thankfully, there were no major severe weather events during October into late November which is probably the worst period for trees and woodland due to wet ground and trees still in leaf. Cold weather in late January and early February was followed by a succession of strong Atlantic weather systems culminating in the 50mph gusts of 10 March due to storm Gareth. Highgate closed for the day and closed on a number of other occasions during March, sustaining some tree damage.

Volunteer activity for 2018/19

11. Over the period between April 2018 to March 2019 Heath Hands volunteers have helped the Highgate Wood Team on 24 2-hour sessions (2 more to run before the end of the month). Numbers attending each session have ranged from 5 to 12, with 9 being an average.
12. This year volunteers helped maintain living and dead hedging around 5 conservation areas and a bluebell area. They have planted about 200 tree and shrub whips into the new and some of the older conservation areas: including Oak, Lime, Hawthorn, Hazel, Guelder Rose, and Spindle.
13. The volunteers have sown wildflower seed into the meadow and field edge. They also helped with some meadow management, transplanting of seedling oaks, holly control and planting oaks dug up from Hampstead Heath's grassland management operations.

Tree disease and biosecurity issues

14. In the October 2018 Superintendent's Report noted that 71 Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) nest were found in Highgate Wood. All these nests were removed by the middle of August 2018, but a number of additional nests have been found over the winter months which was expected.
15. Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood have been selected as pilot sites for a new 'Target Based' approach to OPM Management being rolled out by the Forestry Commission. A great deal of work has gone into developing plans to reduce the risk to the public, and minimise the ecological impact for both sites, working closely with the Forestry Commission and also the Heath and Hampstead Society. Biological pesticide spraying will be kept to a minimum in Highgate Wood and nest removal focused on busy areas within the site such as the café, play area and field edges. Oak trees support a total of 89 of the recorded 400 moth species recorded in Highgate Wood.
16. The Director of Open Spaces has prepared a report updating on control measures across the Department, which is included in the agenda pack.

Pavilion Café update

17. The Highgate Wood Café lease documentation has been reviewed and the tender process is progress. The City of London are seeking a supplier who

can deliver a family-friendly café, offering good quality food at affordable prices. The Café is a distinctive & environmentally-friendly destination, offering employment and training opportunities for local people.

18. The bids will be evaluated against set criteria for both quality and price (60% quality and 40% price). The City of London Procurement Team will be overseeing the procurement process. In relation to quality, this includes the social and environmental value, in relation to price; this includes both the financial offer to the City and the strength of the Company's Business Plan.
19. Evaluation of the bids is expected to take place towards the end of May 2019 with a recommendation being made to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee in June 2019. The Superintendent will involve Members of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group in a review of the bids.

Licenced activities and events

20. Tables listing licenced activity income are appended to the report, see Appendix 3.
21. There is a 5.3% increase in income from licenced events compared to 2017/18.

Infrastructure and buildings

22. Highgate Wood's noticeboard frames are in serious need of replacement, and work is underway to source suitable replacement frames for the eight D1 type byelaw boards installed at the entrances. The boards date back to the late 1980's and are in generally poor condition. The intention is to replace with a simple oak framed unit very similar to that installed in Golder Hill's Park recently.

Income and Expenditure

23. Information relating to income for 2017/18 and 2018/19 is attached at Appendix 4.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

24. The Open Spaces Department and Highgate Wood actively contributes to the following Corporate Plan 2018 – 23 aims and outcomes:

Contribute to a flourishing society

- People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
- Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.

Shape outstanding environments

- We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration.
- We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.

- Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained.

Support a thriving economy

- Our land management supports local businesses and enterprises.

Conclusion

25. Highgate Wood has had a productive period over the winter months with well attended Heath Hands Volunteers sessions, and catching up on planned tree works. The focus for the coming year will be the control of Oak Processionary Moth and progressing the Roman Kiln Project. There will also be a concerted effort to replace the old noticeboards.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Divisional Plan 2019 – 2022 Highgate Wood Management Plan
- Appendix 2 - Conservation Management Plan 2013 – 2023
- Appendix 3 - Licensed Activity Tables
- Appendix 4 - Income 2017/18 & 2018/19

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