

Committee	Dated:
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	11 September 2019
Subject: Superintendent's Update	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Decision
Report author: Bob Warnock – Open Spaces Department	

Summary

This report provides an update to Members of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee on management and operational activities across the Division since June 2019. The report format has been updated to align with the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018 - 2028 Outcomes.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Members agree the proposed phases for the future use of the meeting room on the Heath Extension (paragraphs 27-28).

Main Report

Management Strategy – Annual Update

1. An Annual Update which forms part of the Agenda Pack for this meeting, has been prepared for 2018-19 covering each of the four Management Strategy Outcomes, to demonstrate progress. The report reflects on what has been achieved and will set out the priorities we will be focussing on during 2019-20.

Management Framework

2. The Superintendent is developing the Measurement Framework, to gauge our progress towards achieving the Outcomes and delivering our Priorities. This will inform future Annual Updates as we seek to communicate our impacts. This approach was discussed with Members in May 2018 and embedded into the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018-2028.

A: The Heath is maintained as a flourishing green space and historic landscape.

Green Flag Judging

3. Hampstead Heath has retained its Green Flag award and Green Heritage status. Staff and volunteers attended the awards ceremony on the 17 July 2019.
4. The results of the London in Bloom 2019 will be announced on the 20 September. The award ceremony is to be held at Arts Pavilion, Mile End Park and The Hill Garden & Pergola, Golders Hill Park, Queens Park and Keats House have entered this year's competition.

City Surveyor's Cyclical Work Programme

5. The Cyclical Work Programme for 2020-21 forms part of the Agenda Pack.
6. The Superintendent will provide an update on current projects within the Cyclical Work Programme.

East Heath Car Park (A DP5)

7. The Superintendent will provide an update at the meeting.

Planning

8. The Superintendent will provide an update on the following planning applications:
 - Jack Straws Castle 2017/2064/P, 2017/2211/L, 2017/2171/P
 - North Fairground Site 2017/4346/P
 - South Fairground Site
 - 55 Fitzroy Park 2018/3672/P
 - The Water House, Millfield Lane. 2017/3692/P
 - Jack Straws Castle – Change of use application
 - Athlone House

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)

9. Two applications of biological pesticide spraying were undertaken in May 2019. This was followed by nest removal operations which were completed in early August. The management approach this year was to target high use areas, such as playgrounds and facilities and avoid spraying in ecologically sensitive areas to avoid impacting on non-target species.
10. Interestingly nest numbers were significantly less than last year; approximately 900 nests were identified compared to in excess of 1,800 in 2018. The Tree Team purchased an industrial vacuum unit to remove small nests and caterpillar trails and this has been highly effective.
11. Alongside conventional pest management operations the Tree Team have also been working with a retired Professor of biological pest control on monitoring the parasitoid fly *Carcelia iliaca* which has been identified on Hampstead Heath in Oak Processionary Moth nests.

Storm Damage

12. A mature oak tree near to the drinking fountain at Cohens Field was destroyed by a lightning strike during a thunderstorm on the evening of 10 June 2019. A lime tree on West Heath fell in heavy rain and wind on 16 June. On the 30 July during heavy rain there were a number of trees damaged including two veteran trees, one of which suffered a catastrophic stem failure.
13. A further day of bad weather on the 10 August, this time high winds with intermittent rain caused a number of canopy failures in Highgate Wood and one stem failure on Hampstead Heath. Due to the yellow weather warning and gusting in excess of 40mph Highgate Wood was closed for most of Saturday 10

August along with the Hill Garden at Golder's Hill Park and the Woodland Walk at Queen's Park.

14. It is worth noting that there are already 77 recorded tree failure incidents on the Divisional data base for 2019, reflecting a changing pattern of spring and summer extreme weather incidents rather than the autumn.

The Listening Wood

15. The Tree Team have collaborated with the University College London to deliver a three-month Project. 15 trees across Golders Hill Park and Sandy Heath have been selected and a map has been created to allow members of the public to interact digitally with the trees, learning about their history with stories and poetry. <https://thelisteningwood.com/about>. The project has been extended and will now run over the summer until the Autumn.

Humanitarian Aid Workers Memorial proposal – Kenwood Estate

16. Following Members discussions at the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee on 29 April and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee on 5 June, the Chairman has written to English Heritage to convey the views of Members.

Grazing

17. A small grazing trial involving 5 sheep within the Tumulus enclosure ran between 27 August - 5 September. The trial was conducted in partnership with the Heath and Hampstead Society, Mudchute Farm, the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, Heath Hands and Historic England.
18. The small flock composed of 3 Norfolk Horns and 2 Oxford Downs, both of which are classified as rare breeds and were supplied by Mudchute Farm based in East London.
19. A combination of staff and volunteers shepherded the sheep and engaged with visitors over the trial period. The trial attracted a great deal of interest from members of the public and the media. Sheep last grazed on the Heath over seventy years ago, so it was a welcome sight to see their return. The Tumulus was chosen due to the existing fencing and uneven terrain making it difficult to maintain with machinery.

B: Improved quality of life for visitors.

Swimming

20. The Superintendent will provide an update at the meeting.

Bowls and Croquet

21. New annual licensing arrangements with the Parliament Hill Bowling Club and the Hampstead Heath Croquet Club have been agreed. As part of this agreement two rinks will remain available for public play at all times. The green will be maintained by the Sports and Recreation Team at Parliament Hill, as part of their grounds maintenance Work Programme.

22. This will allow the Superintendent to arrange short term hire arrangements for the Bowls Pavilion during the winter months.

Heath Extension Moth Surveys

23. The Heath Ecologist has engaged a specialist moth lepidopterist surveyor to provide a current record of the moth species on Hampstead Heath. Nine survey nights have been undertaken in four separate locations with a further 11 planned. 265 species of moth have so far been recorded with a number of new records for the site, including a heathland specialist the 'True Lover's Knot' moth.

Heath Extension Meeting Room

24. The London Natural History Society (LNHS) have agreed to relinquish the use of a small meeting room adjacent to the public toilets on the Heath Extension. Although some publications remain, discussions are ongoing about either relocating these items or the necessity of further storage. The Heath Ecologist continues to maintain a very effective relationship with the LNHS and taking account of technology they are now working in a more agile way and consequently no longer require a dedicated space on site.
25. There has been a long-term aspiration to utilise this facility as a refreshment kiosk to serve the visitors to the Heath Extension and to support the sporting offer comprising of cricket, football, rugby and the many schools and community groups who use the Heath Extension.
26. We have informally discussed this approach with the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee on their Saturday walks and also with the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust at their annual walk across the Heath Extension. This approach aligns both with both the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy and also the recently approved Hampstead Heath Asset Management Plan.
27. Therefore, we are proposing two phases, firstly, we will prepare the space to be suitable for hiring by sports clubs, schools and community groups to support their training, games and events on the Heath Extension. This would be booked in the same way as the changing rooms and we will set a hire rate based on bench marking for the 2019-20 season. Sports and Recreation Keepers will manage the facility on the same basis as the changing rooms i.e. open, cleaning, closing up and organising maintenance and repairs. We will prepare booking conditions for the room which will control the way the facility is to be used.
28. Secondly, we are in the process of engaging Groundwork London to undertake an engagement and consultation exercise with visitors, members of the local community and stakeholders to seek their input into the potential for this facility and the way it can contribute to the achievement of our four Management Strategy Outcomes. Once we have completed this exercise, we will bring a report to the Sports Advisory Forum and then the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee to discuss the proposals for this facility, timelines and the next steps. A final report will then be prepared for the Management Committee.

Playgrounds

29. The Superintendent will provide an update on the Adventure Playground, Preachers Hill Playground and the Vale of Health Playground.

Weddings and Civil Ceremonies

30. There are currently 12 confirmed and completed and one pending booking for 2019, with four confirmed bookings for 2020 and a number of viewings booked. Excellent feedback has been received from couples and Camden Registrars who are all delighted with the location and service provided.

C: The Heath is inclusive and welcoming to a diverse range of visitors.

Open Spaces Learning Team

31. It has been a successful summer for learning on Hampstead Heath. The Learning Team engaged with 1,545 school students in July, including fieldwork sessions for 200 GCSE students from Highbury Grove City of London Academy. Over the school summer holidays, the learning offer has also included weekly family learning sessions at the Education Centre. Activities such as pond dipping, orienteering and nature-inspired crafts have been popular with visitors.
32. The play programme at the Adventure Clubhouse and One O'clock Club has continued to be extremely popular, with 2,823 participants in July and 3,879 in August. Comments from participants demonstrate the value of this free, drop-in play service:
33. *"It's so nice to know my 8 and 10 year old can come and get involved in the play outside and activities as we live in a tower block and my children can't play out where we live."*

Licensing (A DP 6)

34. An engagement and consultation exercise to inform the development of a dog walkers code of conduct and a personal training code of conduct has commenced. Pop-up events, and a focus group session facilitated by an external consultant has been completed.
35. In addition, a dog walking consultation survey has been published online. Analysis of this survey and feedback from the pop-up events and focus group session will be reported to this Committee in due course. The outcomes from the analysis will support the delivery of the objectives of this project.

Forest Schools

36. An enquiry to use the Heath on a daily basis for Forest School activities has been received. The applicant has been requested to submit an Events Application Form, which will be reviewed by the Officer Event Group before being presented to the HHCC, followed by this Committee for decision. All the Forest Schools operating on the Heath are being contacted to ensure they are appropriately licenced in accordance with the Events Policy.

Events

37. The Superintendent will provide an update at the meeting on the following recent events:

- #ThisGirlCan
- Race for Life
- Hampstead Summer Festival – Art Fair Day
- Night of the 10,000m Personal Bests.
- Give it a Go
- 21st Heath Duathlon

D: Greater number and diversity of people taking care of the Heath.

Hampstead Heath Constabulary

38. The Constabulary worked alongside the Metropolitan Police to restore order at Parliament Hill Fields Lido on 25 July, which was the hottest July day on record. A significant increase in visitor numbers led to outbreaks of disorder in the waiting queue and poolside. Missiles were thrown at Officers prior to order being restored.

39. Constabulary Officers intercepted two separate incidents where persons had attended the Heath with clear intent to take their own life. With assistance from London Ambulance Services both persons were located prior to any harm being done and then transferred to appropriate medical services.

40. Body Worn Video Cameras (BWV) equipment has been purchased and City of London Corporation Information Technology Team are currently working on the necessary technical issues to allow the system to begin operation. It is hoped that the delay will be kept to a minimum.

41. A recruitment process for Reserve Constables was recently completed, however an inadequate number of suitable candidates were identified. This led to a review being carried out, and a decision has been taken to look at the concept again in a few months with consideration being given to a more bespoke recruitment campaign.

42. A Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle has been procured for the Constabulary. The vehicle will replace an existing diesel van and on a full charge will be able to operate for approximately 50 miles using only electricity, dramatically cutting our current vehicle emissions.

43. The Constabulary continue to work closely with the Metropolitan Police Service and local partners including Camden Council and English Heritage. The Team regularly liaise with stakeholders regarding shared issues and attended relevant meetings such as the Ward Panel Meetings.

44. The Constabulary's enforcement activity continues to focus on the priority issues of cycling, dog control, anti-social behaviour and swimming in non-lifeguarded ponds. The months April to July have seen a 66% increase in enforcement engagements across these four byelaw areas compared with the same period last year. An example is a rise in engagement work undertaken with dog walkers

rising from 62 to 164. This coincides with and supports the current survey on this subject.

Waste & Recycling

45. The Superintendent will provide an update at the meeting.

30th Anniversary

46. The Superintendent will provide an update at the meeting.

Highgate Wood

47. The London Borough of Haringey Planning Department has refused the planning application for 5 Muswell Hill Road. Along with stakeholders the City of London Corporation made representations against the application with reference to impacts of the ecology and character of Highgate Wood.
48. A target-based approach to Oak Processionary Moth management was adopted in Highgate Wood this spring and summer, mirroring that which was adopted for Hampstead Heath. Biological pesticide spraying was carried out in the playground only and then nest removal was carried out in the remaining areas identified as high use, including the field edge and area around the Pavilion Café. Nest removal was also carried out in the woodland areas used by Forest Schools. Nest numbers were slightly up on last year at 110 nests of which 88 were removed. The remaining nests are outside the target areas but will be monitored.
49. The Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln (FOHRK) held a well-attended fund-raising evening on the 5 August 2019 attended by key partners in the project. FOHRK are now focusing on submitting a capital grant application to City Bridge Trust to cover the costs of the extension of the information building, the restoration and installation of the kiln and the interpretation material. If successful, FOHRK will submit an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in November 2019 or May 2020.
50. Highgate Wood experienced a number of branch failures on the 10 August 2019, all of which were hornbeams, but fortunately no major failures. Despite the high winds the site was able to open to the public for a couple of hours, once the wind speed had dropped and the Team were able to carry out a safety inspection.
51. The weather conditions, rain and high winds, have impacted upon the cricket season and a number of matches have had to be cancelled as a result. One of our regular teams the Metro Cricket Club, who are a partially sighted and blind Team, have had an excellent season reaching a tournament final and doing well in their league. The pitch is being carefully managed and collaborative working with the Heath Sports and Recreation Keepers to carry out end of season renovation works.
52. Highgate Wood had their Green Flag and Green Heritage judging on 7 June 2019. The judges were impressed with the emphasis on ecological and conservation management of the woodland and the management approach to the increasing popularity of Forest Schools and outdoor classroom activities.

Highgate Wood will be focusing on replacing all of the 30-year-old signage that is now in poor repair and have just taken delivery of the first new English oak framed noticeboard, which will replace the old noticeboard at Onslow Gate. The 2018 Green Flag 'mystery shopper' visit highlighted the poor condition of the noticeboards so this will be a focus between now and next summer.

Queen's Park

Public Toilet and Sandpit Refurbishment

53. Due to the Fundamental Review, this project has been placed on hold. New central funding arrangements are being introduced allowing Officers to bid for funding for the projects that are on hold, as well as new projects.
54. There have been two Wedding Ceremonies on the Queen's Park Bandstand this Summer. The income from weddings helps support the ongoing maintenance of the Park. Prior to the second wedding, there were necessary repairs carried out to the flooring and the roof of the bandstand.
55. Shakespeare in the Square took place in the Quiet Garden on Saturday 22 June. This event was well attended with over 200 people in the audience.
56. The Queen's Park Book Festival took place over the weekend of the 29 and 30 June. The good weather saw crowds at this local literary event. There were events over the weekend specifically aimed at getting children interested in reading books. Authors in attendance signed copies of their books on the Bandstand.
57. There have been 44 bookings of the bandstand amounting to 54 sessions. Many bookings have been for children's parties, but we have also had educational sessions for pre-school children and music from a local band.
58. We continue to invite Regent Brass to perform on the Bandstand on Sundays over the summer. The performances have taken place on Sundays from 3-5pm and are well attended.
59. There were ten children's magic/puppet shows held in the Park in August. These shows are free to the public and took place on Wednesdays and Fridays from 3-4pm. They have been well attended and positive feedback received from the public.
60. There will be an open-air cinema night in the Park on Saturday 7 September. The film being shown is the Freddie Mercury biopic Bohemian Rhapsody. This event will be organised by the Nomad Cinema who have held pop up cinema events in the Park over a number of years.
61. Queen's Park Day will take place on Sunday 15 September 2019 from 12 noon - 5.30pm. This event continues to be organised by volunteers from the Queen's Park Area Resident's Association with support from the City of London Corporation.

Woodland Walk Management Plan update

62. The appointed consultant is preparing a draft document following a meeting with stakeholders and staff where feedback on some suggested proposal were given. This draft will initially be shared with the Queen's Park Consultative Group for their commentary and feedback.
63. It is recognised that there is a need for more active management, including some long-overdue thinning. The hedge is struggling to establish itself in the present conditions and the development of a softer more extended woodland edge was suggested. Further discussion with Officers has taken place regarding the planting for biosecurity, i.e. responding to climate change and pests and diseases. There could be a potential conflict between developing activities in the woodland and enhancing its biodiversity value. The need to augment maintenance with some voluntary input if we are to change the woodland management should be considered with any future activity plan.
64. There have been more Oak Processionary Moth nests in Queen's Park this year. Instead of spraying, a decision was taken to manually remove the nests from the trees as this is less intrusive than spraying and allows continued access to the Park, rather than have large areas barriered off. The removal of the nests was carried out by the Hampstead Heath Tree Team. The Team carry out regular inspections of the trees.
65. The Paddling Pool was filled in preparation for this summer season, unfortunately a leak was discovered that meant the water was escaping each night and the pool would need to be filled again. A company were appointed to investigate the leak. A temporary solution has been implemented to keep the pool open during the summer. Further interventions will be undertaken in due course.
66. We are delighted that Queen's Park have retained the Green Flag and Green Heritage awards again this year.
67. The London in Bloom awards will take place on 20 September 2019. The Park hopes to retain its Gold Award.

Appendices

- None

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