

## Annual Update 2018-2019

### Introduction

In 2018 the 10-year Management Strategy for Hampstead Heath 2018-2028 (Management Strategy) was introduced, building on the foundation of the Hampstead Heath Management Plan Part 1 - Towards a plan for the Heath 2007-2017.

The Management Strategy seeks to balance the often-conflicting demands of protecting and conserving the Heath while at the same time enhancing the enjoyment of each year's 9.3 million visitors and recreational users.

This Annual Update details the progress we have made during the first year's implementation of the Management Strategy. It summarises our activities throughout the year and sets out the priorities for 2019-2020.

### Background: The Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018-2028

The Management Strategy states our commitment to realising the aspirations of the Heath Vision to protect and conserve Hampstead Heath, thus ensuring it continues to enrich the lives of current and future generations. The Management Strategy sets out four Strategic Outcomes necessary to achieve this Vision:

- A - The Heath is maintained as a flourishing green space and historic landscape.
- B - Improved quality of life for Heath visitors.
- C - The Heath is inclusive and welcoming to a diverse range of visitors.
- D – A greater number and diversity of people taking care of the Heath.

In 2019-2020 we will be developing a Measurement Framework to allow us to gauge our progress towards achieving these Outcomes.

### Reflecting on 2018-2019 and looking forwards to 2019-2020

#### **A - The Heath is maintained as a flourishing green space and historic landscape**

In **2018-2019** we carried out further ecological improvements to our ponds, building on the work that took place during the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project. This included further desilting of the Mixed Pond, which improved water quality, created a better habitat for aquatic animals and improved the swimming experience. The Heath's Tree Team continued to tackle Oak Processionary Moth, which has been on the Heath since 2015. With support from the Forestry Commission and using their own specialist skills, the Tree Team has proactively monitored this invasive species, mitigating its impact and communicating the health risks to visitors.

Ecological monitoring has increased with support from our partners, the London Natural History Society, the Zoological Society for London (ZSL) and Heath Hands. An extensive hedgehog monitoring programme was carried out with ZSL and

volunteers, involving 150 wildlife camera positions. As well as showing that Hampstead Heath is one of the best places in London for hedgehogs, a variety of other wildlife was recorded, including muntjac deer and badgers.

In **2019-2020** we will commence a moth survey to identify the number and distribution of moth species present on the Heath. Moths are an important indicator of a healthy ecosystem. We will also continue to manage Oak Processionary Moth using a risk-based approach, so we can effectively manage this bio-hazard.

Conservation objectives for the Heath's historic features will be developed, to ensure they are maintained as part of the Heath's rich heritage.

### **B - Improved quality of life for Heath visitors**

In **2018-2019** we curated and delivered a varied events programme.

Give it a Go! is our large summer festival, which focuses on health and wellbeing. Run in partnership with the London Borough of Camden and the sports clubs based on the Heath, this event encourages an increased participation in outdoor recreational activities and allows new visitors to familiarise themselves with the Heath and have the confidence to return.

The Night of the 10,000m Personal Bests is a running event held at the Parliament Hill Athletics Track, which is organised by the Highgate Harriers Athletics and Cross-Country Running Club. It is managed almost exclusively by volunteers and the event attracts a large audience to the Heath, keen to watch world-class athletes compete.

Our annual Conker Championship returned in 2018-2019. This popular community event attracts families from across London and celebrates the heritage of the Heath, while forging an enhanced connection with nature and the seasons.

In **2019-2020** we will continue to make an active contribution to the development of the City of London Corporation Sports and Physical Activity Strategy.

We will develop a programme of events and activities to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hampstead Heath Act 1871, the foundation legislation that brought the Heath into public ownership, providing information to visitors and enabling them to gain a better understanding of the Heath and its importance.

Our events will focus on increasing participation and we will continue to promote events like Give it a Go! and the national #ThisGirlCan campaign, both of which are run in conjunction with the London Borough of Camden's initiative, 'We Can Move', a programme that encourages Camden residents to move more and improve their health.

### **C - The Heath is inclusive and welcoming to a diverse range of visitors**

In **2018-2019** we improved access to the Heath for those with a disability by replacing our fleet of mobility scooters with three new models, available to hire for free. The mobility scooters are kept at the Parliament Hill Fields Lido, which is ideally located

for accessibility, being adjacent to a car park with blue badge parking spaces and a nearby Overground Station with step-free access.

#ThisGirlCan is a series of organised activities that encourage women and girls to try out a new sport or activity for free, in partnership with sports clubs that use the Heath. In 2018, the activities on offer included gardening, fencing, tennis, bowls, croquet, athletics, rugby and military fitness, with plans to expand this in future years.

To ensure the Heath continues to be a place where people feel safe, the Hampstead Heath Constabulary continued patrols, reassuring visitors through their presence and providing a response to infringements of byelaws and regulations. The Constables work closely with stakeholders such as the Metropolitan Police Service and the other Emergency Services to tackle challenging issues on the Heath. Constables focus their patrols on the issues which matter most to our users, including anti-social behaviour, dog control and cycling on pedestrian-only routes.

In partnership with Heath Hands, Community Heath was established. The first festival took place in summer 2018, offering free activities and encouraging people to socialise with their neighbours. The aim was to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing, as well as offering opportunities to become involved in sport, recreation and volunteering on the Heath. In 2018, over 1,200 people were involved in Community Heath activities. A total of 90 events were held that encouraged participation in recreation and volunteering opportunities.

In **2019-2020** we will continue to support the Community Heath project that forms links with different local organisations, helping encourage an even more diverse audience to visit the Heath and participate in recreation or volunteering opportunities.

We will develop a project to ensure our swimming facilities are accessible to all and we will aim to improve accessibility at Golders Hill Park, in response to a survey focusing on its car park.

We will continue to develop digital communications, including social media, to expand our audiences and ensure as many people as possible know more about the Heath, what's on offer and how to take part.

### **D – A greater number and diversity of people taking care of the Heath**

In **2018-2019** we developed recommendations for the future management of waste and recycling. Heath staff worked with Keep Britain Tidy to look at what waste is typically brought to the Heath and how we can encourage visitors to bring less of it, and to take their rubbish away with them when they leave.

We have continued to support our volunteering charity, Heath Hands, who reported an increase of around 10% in volunteering activity, contributing to more than 13,000 hours of voluntary conservation and maintenance work on the Heath. There was a particularly noticeable increase in volunteering activity relating to wildlife monitoring, supporting the Heath's Ecologist.

The Heath's Ranger Team has developed a partnership with the charity Phoenix Futures, which supports people who are recovering from addictions while getting back into work. Several projects were identified where volunteers from Phoenix Futures could work alongside our staff to help conserve the Heath. This provides the volunteers with a lasting connection with the Heath, even though some of them may never have visited it before. As a result of this partnership, one of the volunteers from Phoenix Futures has gone on to find employment as a gardener.

In **2019-2020** we will continue to implement and promote recycling, including installing two new recycling points at Parliament Hill that will be part of a new recycling contract. A clear communication campaign will promote these developments to build awareness, improving visitor understanding of why we are doing this and how they can help us conserve the Heath.

In conjunction with Heath Hands, we will identify additional volunteering opportunities for wildlife and interpretation projects, to enable more visitors to become involved with caring for the Heath.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to produce a code of conduct for dog walkers and fitness instructors, to inform a future licensing scheme that will enable us to understand how best to work with these stakeholder groups, ensuring that everyone is able to enjoy the Heath.

We will focus on changes to our fleet, plant and equipment to ensure compliance with the Ultra-Low Emissions Zone regulations and promote a greener Heath by using sustainable equipment.

We will commence the feasibility study for the Parliament Hill Fields area of the Heath to understand how we can best use our facilities to support visitors and manage the space effectively.

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If you would like further information or to get involved with any of the initiatives mentioned in this Update, you can contact us at [hampstead.heath@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:hampstead.heath@cityoflondon.gov.uk).

If you would like to volunteer with Heath Hands, you can email: [info@heath-hands.org.uk](mailto:info@heath-hands.org.uk).

Follow us on twitter: [@CityCorpHeath](https://twitter.com/CityCorpHeath)

Find us on Facebook: [facebook.com/hampsteadheathofficial](https://facebook.com/hampsteadheathofficial)

Find us on Instagram: [@ColHampsteadHeath](https://www.instagram.com/ColHampsteadHeath)

The Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018-2028 can be found at <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath/Documents/heath-strategy.pdf>