

Committee(s): Queen's Park Consultative Group	Date(s): 07102020
Subject: Draft Mid Term Report – Queen's Park Charity (No. 232986)	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Discussion
Report author: Richard Gentry	

Summary

This report proposes a new approach to engaging with Members of the Queen's Park Consultative Group on activities at Queen's Park.

Presented at Appendix 1 for discussion is the draft Annual Report on activities at Queen's Park, updated for the period 1 April – 30 September 2020.

Once finalised, this will then be included in the Trustees Annual Report as required by the Charity Commission.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the contents of this report;
- Share their thoughts on achievements at Queen's Park and how the Park meets the priorities, aims and objectives outlined within the Corporate Plan 2018-23, the Departmental Business Plan, 2020/21 and the objectives of the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn charity.
- Discuss the revised priorities for April 2021 onwards be included in the Plans for Future Periods section of the Annual Report when it is submitted in Spring 2021:
 - Refurbishment of the Queen's Park Children's Sandpit.
 - Improve provision of equipment in the Children's Play Area.
 - Consult on, finalise and implement the Queen's Park Woodland Walk Management Plan 2020.
 - Discuss the Cyclical Works Programme for the Queen's Park Toilets,
 - Review of the Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan.
 - Develop a Park Activity Plan.
 - Deliver the tender for the Queen's Park Café.

Main Report

Background

1. Queen's Park is a registered charity (No. 232986).
2. As a registered charity, Queen's Park is required to submit an Annual Report and Financial Statement, detailing its activities and to ensure compliance with the Charities Act 2011. The draft report included at Appendix 1, forms the basis of this report for the first six months of 2020/21, i.e. April to September 2020.

Current Position

3. All of the reports referred to above contain very similar information but, due to the different purposes and timescales, the information in particular requires updating and re-writing for each report, which is both time consuming and sometimes confusing for a relatively small charity.
4. Since the end of March 2020, Queen's Park has been focussing on its response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, ensuring that the Park and its facilities are managed in a COVID secure way, enabling its visitors to enjoy the open space.
5. As a Division, the staff have supported the revision of Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work, enabling them to work within a COVID secure environment.
6. Although data is unavailable due to defective counting equipment (which is under repair), anecdotally the Manager reports a significant increase in visitor numbers over the spring and summer, as visitors make use of their local open space in line with COVID-19 guidance and regulations.
7. The Park Manager will provide an update on the plans going forward regarding the tender of the Park Café.
8. Pests and Diseases continue to be managed through planned inspections by the arboricultural Team. In July 2020 three sites visits/inspections were carried out for Oak processionary Moth. Two nests were found and removed by hand. No biological spraying took place in 2020.

Options

9. In recent years, Queen's Park Consultative Group meetings have received a written report prepared by the Park Manager, summarising recent achievements at Queen's Park.
10. In addition, updates are provided to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at their 4 meetings throughout the year.
11. It would be more efficient to use the autumn meeting of the Queen's Park 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.

Proposals

12. The Queen's Park Manager recommends that the following revised priorities for April 2021 onwards are included in the Plans for Future Periods section of the annual report once submitted in spring 2021:
13. The proposed overarching priorities which will guide all of our objectives and activities from April 2021 are:
 - Refurbishment of the Queen's Park Children's Sandpit.
 - Improve provision of equipment in the Children's Play Area.
 - Consult on, finalise and implement the Queen's Park Woodland Walk Management Plan, 2020-23.
 - Consult on the Cyclical Works Programme for the Queen's Park Toilets refurbishment.
 - Review of the Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan.
 - Develop a Park Activity Plan to gain understanding of who currently visits the Park and who doesn't and why; identifying barriers to access and seeking opportunities to overcome these.
 - Deliver the tender for the Queen's Park Café.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. The activities and projects included within this report contribute to the three objectives and outcomes set out in the Open Spaces Business Plan 2020-21:
 - (a) Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible,
 - (b) Spaces enrich people's lives and
 - (c) Business practices are responsible and sustainable.
15. 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).

Implications

16. There are no legal, financial, property or HR implications arising from these proposals.

Conclusion

17. If accepted, aligning the City Corporation's reporting requirements with the requirements of the Charity Commission will provide Members with improved oversight of the plans and activities of the Queen's Park charity and how these help to deliver the Corporate Plan.
18. It will also facilitate better strategic focus, planning, data collection and reporting procedures within the Queen's Park team as well as greater efficiency across the Department and City Corporation.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Draft Annual Report for Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn Charity 2020/21, April – September 2020 update.

Background Papers

- City of London Corporate Plan 2018-2023
- Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2020/21

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