

HIGHGATE WOOD CONSULTATIVE GROUP
Wednesday, 9 October 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group held at Highgate Wood Offices, Highgate Wood, Muswell Hill Road, N10 3JN on Wednesday, 9 October 2019 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Anne Fairweather (Deputy Chair)
Deputy John Tomlinson
Stephanie Beer (Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association)
Jan Brooker (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Peter Corley (Tree Trust for Haringey)
Councillor Bob Hare (London Borough of Haringey)
Alison Watson (Friends of Queen's Wood)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerk's Department
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Jonathan Meares	- Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Karina Dostalova, Councillor Julie Ogierhor (Muswell Hill Ward) and Lucy Roots (Muswell Hill Friends of the Earth).

Anne Fairweather was in the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2019 be approved as a correct record, subject to Alison Watson being deleted from the list of apologies, and Stephanie Beer marked as present.

4. MINUTES - HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE

RESOLVED, that the public minutes and non-public summary of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 11 September 2019 be received.

5. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Members considered a report of the Town Clerk regarding outstanding actions from previous meetings and the following points were made.

1 – Walking Guides

- Members noted that the Highgate Society would liaise with the Highgate Wood Manager and agreed therefore, that this action could be closed.

2 – Contact TfL regarding old line between Finsbury Park and Alexandra Palace

- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that a homeless person had chosen to camp on the land in question, an issue which had been the main focus of Highgate Wood staff to date.
- Members felt that there was potential, if TfL were minded to dispose of the land, that it could be turned into a wildlife corridor that would protect the Wood from encroaching development.
- The Superintendent agreed to contact TfL to establish their position on disposals.

3 – School Representative on the Group

- The Superintendent noted that the Head Teacher of Highgate Primary had been invited to the meeting but had been unable to attend that day.

4 – Oak Processionary Moth Risk

- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that he would provide an update under Item 6 (Superintendent's Update – Highgate Wood).

RESOLVED, that the report be received.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE - HIGHGATE WOOD

Members considered an update report of the Superintendent regarding Highgate Wood and the following reports were made.

Roman Kiln Project

- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that the cost of the extension and conversion of the information building was higher than anticipated and stood at £150,000. An application would be submitted by the Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln to the Heritage Lottery Fund in May 2020.

Green Flag and Green Heritage

- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that the Wood had undergone its Green Flag and Green Heritage inspection on 7 June 2019. One of the inspectors was on the Board of Directors for the Forest Schools Association, who had particularly welcomed the City's efforts to increase the number of Forest Schools using the Wood.

Sustainability

- The Highgate Wood Manager drew Members' attention to efforts to reduce the level of food waste at the café facility.

Volunteer Activity for 2018/19

- The Highgate Wood Manager placed on record his thanks to Heath Hands for their work following the summer holiday period to pull thistle from the meadow area on the southern edge of the sports field.

Tree Disease and Biosecurity Issues

- The Highgate Wood noted that the Wood was, alongside the Heath, subject to a target-based approach to combating identified Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) nests. 110 nests had been found in the Wood, of which half had been removed.

Forest Schools and Events

- A Member commented that it would perhaps be useful for the Superintendent to develop a baseline of officer capacity against which to measure the likely impact of events within the Wood. The Member added that officers should be mindful of ensuring that a diverse range of stakeholders should be able to access the Wood as possible, balanced against the likely impact of noisy activity in open areas e.g. the sports field versus the Wood proper.
- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that the Community Heritage Day had been a success and well attended. The Day had featured a Climate Change Hub with a number of stalls representing Population Matters and Extinction Rebellion.

Sports Field

- The Highgate Wood Manager noted that the football pitch had been affected by a combination of compaction, poor drainage and damage by dogs resulting in a letter of complaint from a long-standing football team. The Highgate Wood Manager had undertaken to commission an independent assessment of the pitches by the Institute of Groundsmen. In response to a question, the Highgate Wood Manager noted that likely mitigation measures would include re-seeding and aeration of the soil, with a potential review of the efficacy of the existing drainage systems.

RESOLVED, that the report be received.

7. FEES AND CHARGES 2020/21& 2021/22

Members considered a report of the Superintendent regarding Fees and Charges 2020/21 & 2021/22 and the following points were made.

- The Superintendent noted that proposed increases were in response to the Retail Price Index (RPI). That said, fees for sports activities had been frozen following a benchmarking exercise against similar sports venues within London.
- The Superintendent noted the consultations he was undertaking regarding the introduction of licences for commercial dog walking. Measures under consultation included whether an individual walker could walk four or six dogs.
- The Superintendent undertook to circulate the findings of those consultations to Members of the Group.
- The Superintendent advised that the increase in charges for engraved benches at the Pergola & Hill Garden reflected the fact the benches at these locations were more ornate compared with other locations on the Heath.

RESOLVED, that the views of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at its 13 November 2019 meeting.

8. **HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK CAFÉ UPDATE**

Members considered an update report of the Superintendent regarding the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Café's and the following points were made.

- The Superintendent noted that the Highgate Wood Café was currently operated by Hoxton Beach under a tenancy at will. Longer term, a tender would be launched offering a longer lease period. The methodology for assessing bids could be shared with the Group, and there was potential for members of the Group to be involved in the tender interview process.
- The Superintendent noted that the Queen's Park Consultative Group had at its meeting earlier that day highlighted the risk of tenders providing an excellent presentation but then failing to deliver on their promised level of service.
- In response to a comment, the Superintendent agreed to liaise with a counterpart at the Barbican Centre regarding their catering offer.
- In response to a question, the Superintendent noted that a longer tenancy period would allow for more investment from the successful tenant.
- The Superintendent noted that a ban on single use plastics had been included in the tender brief.

RESOLVED, that the report be received and the revised tender timeline (concluding March 2020) be noted.

9. **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no other business.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Members noted the provisional dates of the next meetings on 22 April 2020 and 21 October 2020.

The meeting ended at 5.01 pm

Chairman

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