

## **Appendix 1 – Draft Annual Report for Highgate Wood Charity 2020/21**

### **1. Objectives and Activities**

The City of London protects and manages, by charitable trust, almost 11,000 acres of open spaces within and around the capital for the benefit of local communities and visitors.

Highgate Wood is a 28-hectare ancient woodland site opened to the public in 1887. Situated in north London between Highgate Village and Muswell Hill, it is bounded by Muswell Hill Road to the East and Transport for London land to the west and the north west. The site was once part of a 1,000-acre hunting estate belonging to the Bishop of London and is one of group of ancient woodland sites in the Highgate and Hornsey area.

**Acquisition:** Highgate Wood was acquired in 1886 by the City of London Corporation from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners under the provisions of the Highgate and Open Spaces Act 1886.

**Administration:** Formerly administered by the Corporation's Coal and Corn and Finance Committee 1886-1966, Highgate Wood is now managed by the City of London Corporation through the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee. There is also a Highgate Wood Consultative Group, which comprises Members from local community groups (including the Friends of Queen's Wood), local Ward Councillors and a schools liaison representative.

The purpose of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group is devising and implementing the City Corporation's policies and programmes of work in relation to Highgate Wood and Queen's Park in accordance with the provisions of the Highgate Wood and Kilburn Open Spaces Act 1886.

#### **The purpose of the Charity is:**

*'the preservation in perpetuity by the City of London Corporation of the open spaces know as Highgate Wood, Highgate and Queen's Park Kilburn for the use by the public for exercise and recreation.'*

#### **Explanation of Aims and objectives for the year including the changes or differences it seeks to make through its activities**

The activities of the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn charity are guided by its Charitable Objective, as stated above, and are developed within the framework of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan 2018-23, the Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2021-22 and the Highgate Wood Divisional Plan 2021-24.

The contribution which Highgate Wood makes towards supporting the aims and objectives of these is set out in section 2.

### **2. Highgate Wood Achievements and Performance**

The key priorities for 2020/21 were:

- Development of policies and procedures linked to the City of London (Open Spaces) Bill, including Licencing Schemes for Professional Dog Walkers, Forest Schools.

Achievement against the key priorities for 2020/21 were:

- Short Term Licenses for two Forest Schools have been issued. Unfortunately, Forest School activity has been impacted by the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, and Forest School activities have only resumed in March 2021, in-line with Government Guidance. Development of Licencing schemes for Professional Dog Walking and Fitness Training have also been impacted by the pandemic during 2020/21.

Other achievements during 2020/21 were:

- The Highgate Wood Team have ensured that the Wood has remained open and accessible throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. During the Spring, the Highgate Wood Team have worked to mitigate the impacts of increase visitor numbers by closing off a number of desire line pathways which have increased in size, due to social distancing and visitors attempting to find quieter, less busy areas, within the woodland.
- Pests and Diseases continue to be managed through planned inspections by the Arboricultural Team. In July 2020 sites visits and inspections were carried out for Oak Processionary Moth. A number of nests were found and removed by the Team. No biological spraying took place in 2020.
- In early December 2020 contractors completed refurbishment of the Pavilion Café toilets.
- Green Flag and Green Heritage awards have been successful retained during 2020.
- The Superintendent and Highgate Wood Manager have engaged with the London Borough of Haringey regarding a housing development proposal (Cranwood House) in Muswell Hill which will boarder the Wood. The main concern are around light pollution and potential impacts on the Wood's bat population. A number of mature trees on the site boundary may also be impacted. Moving forward, the Wood Manager will continue to liaise with the Design Team regarding the application.
- The Friends of the Highgate Wood Roman Kiln have successfully launched their website.

**Plans for Future Periods 2021/22**

The proposed overarching priorities which will guide all of our objectives and activities from April 2021 are:

- Continue the works for green recovery and restoration of woodland erosion and compaction, linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and increased visitor numbers.

- The creation of the 2021/22 Conservation Area next to the Play Area will form a major area of recovery after many years of intensive usage. A review of the policy of conservation area creation and the timescales of enclosure will also be carried out.
- Increasing operational efficiencies and income generation as a response to budget cuts to be implemented in 2021/22.
- Deliver the tender for the Pavilion Café.
- Develop an ecological monitoring methodology to measure visitor pressure on sensitive areas within the woodland and build on the data provided by the oak decline survey which is now in its twelfth year.
- Forest School activity review.
- Increase volunteering including ecological monitoring.

### **Performance Measures for 2021/22**

- Achieve budgeted income and expenditure targets for Highgate Wood and Queens Park Kilburn Charity. Income from events and café rental is reduced this year. The café tenant is in discussion with the City Corporation regarding the current rental arrangement.
- Maintain Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Accreditation for 2021.