

HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Monday, 30 October 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held at
THE GREENWOOD CENTRE, 37 GREENWOOD PLACE, NW5 1LB on Monday, 30
October 2023 at 5.30 pm

Present

Members:

William Upton KC (Chairman)
Liz Andrew
Nick Bradfield
John Foley
Merlin Fox
Colin Gregory
Dr Gaye Henson
Susan Rose
Richard Sumray
Jeff Waage
David Walton
John Weston

Officers:

Richard Chamberlain	- City Surveyor's Department
Jonathan Meares	- Environment Department
Paul Maskell	- Environment Department
Martin Smith	- Athletics Track PM, Burke Hunter Adams LLP
William LoSasso	- Environment Department
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department
Charlotte Williams	- Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from John Etheridge, Michael Hammerson and Ellin Stein.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

MATTERS ARISING

The Committee were introduced to the new Assistant Director of North London Open Spaces and Head of Operations and Parks for North London Open Spaces.

The Assistant Director noted his recent experience working as the Chief Executive for Crystal Palace Park Trust, in South London. He also mentioned his previous role in the New York City Parks Department, specifically in the community gardens division, where he supported thousands of volunteers and managed hundreds of open spaces across the city. The Assistant Director expressed excitement about the role, emphasising positive interactions with stakeholders, the team, and the community in North London.

The Head of Operations and Parks for North London Open Spaces noted she oversees various parks, including parts of Hampstead Heath including Parliament Hill and Golders Hill Park, the Lido, ponds within Hampstead Heath, as well as West Ham Park, and Queen's Park. The Head of Operations and Parks for North London Open Spaces noted her 20 years of experience in land and project management, specialising in ecology and conservation, having worked for local authorities and charities, such as wildlife trusts and the Woodland Trust. She expressed her eagerness to work with the team and stakeholders including involvement in projects such as the Parliament Hill track, Hampstead Heath Extension, cricket nets, sandpit projects, and collaboration on pond projects.

3.1 **Draft minutes of Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 19 June 2023**

MATTERS ARISING

Members raised concerns about the lack of information regarding the Target Operating Model (TOM), which was discussed in the previous meeting. The Consultative Committee recalled requesting a paper to be presented at the current meeting to describe what was happening with the TOM. Members expressed the importance of this information because the Consultative Committee, with the exception of the Constabulary, had not been involved in any aspect of the TOM. Members highlighted the need for information and discussion on the fundamental changes brought about by the TOM. The Chair agreed that concerns raised should be brought back to the next meeting, and Officers agreed to provide an overview of how North London Open Spaces fits within the new Environment Department.

RESOLVED – That, the minutes of the meeting held on the 19 June be approved as a correct record subject to amendments to attendance.

3.2 ***Draft minutes of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held on 17 July 2023**

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held on 17 July 2023.

MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman highlighted that the current draft minutes contained errors which the Town Clerk would resolve before the next Management Committee.

Members expressed interest in understanding the areas of overspending and the nature of discussions surrounding it. Officers noted that based on historical

information, a significant portion of the overspending was related to the time spent filling vacancies created.

The Town Clerk agreed to investigate the possibility for Members of the Consultative Committee to receive non-public reports in the future.

RESOLVED – That, the Public and Non-Public summary of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2023 be noted.

4. ***HAMPSTEAD HEATH SPORTS ADVISORY FORUM MINUTES**

The Committee received the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum Minutes.

Members expressed concerns about a discussion in a previous meeting where it was mentioned that the city's parks should move towards a break-even balance sheet regarding sports on the Heath, noting the focus should be on improving the balance sheet rather than achieving break-even. Members acknowledged that the Heath had historically operated on a deficit and that legacy funding had been a significant source of financial support, however, there was concern about a potential shift away from this model. Members underscored a broader discussion about the long-term financial strategy for the Heath was needed.

RESOLVED – That, the minutes be noted.

5. **ASSISTANT DIRECTORS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning the Assistant Director's Update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since June 2023.

The Committee were provided with updates on various events and projects by the Assistant Director, North London Open Spaces. Members noted the success of recent events, such as the duathlon, Deep Conquer festival, and Zippo's Circus, with positive feedback on attendance.

Regarding upcoming events, Members discussed the Youth Games, and it was noted that preparations for courses were underway. Officers noted that the World Cross Country Championships would take place on January 19, 2024, noting a new addition with a shorter course.

The Assistant Director noted that despite challenges and surprises, the athletics track project was nearing completion. Members were informed that the entire surface has been installed, and lines were being painted on the track. Officers emphasised the goal of creating a world-class facility, enabling personal bests and official times. It was noted that certification was the next step, and the project was expected to be completed in November 2023. Members were told that the track would offer opportunities for increased youth activity and wider community participation.

Regarding the Ponds Project, an Assistant Director from the City Surveyor's Department, who is managing the project, acknowledged the challenges faced during the process. Members noted that originally targeted completion was August, however, the project had encountered issues such as ground conditions, additional drainage works, and structural challenges. Officers informed Members that despite challenges, the buildings were now under construction, with an aim of completion by mid to the end of November. It was noted that there would be a brief stand-down period before the contractor returns to install mesh coverings on the jetties. This additional was expected to be complete by December 15 with the first usage of the facility anticipated to be in December, with the official Practical Completion date set for that time.

Members noted the increased focus on the nature of conservation and ecology in the report. Discussion was raised about various summer activities, including grazing, and a successful week on the Hampstead Heath extension including the expansion of wildflower meadows. Officers mentioned the planting at Branch Hill Ponds and ongoing work by the tree team across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and West Ham Park. Additionally, Members were informed regarding the positive news about the discovery of two new species of moth during moth surveying.

Officers agreed that they would explore reporting on trends of the Hampstead Heath Constabulary's performance dashboard

Regarding an update on the relocation of the cricket nets on the Hampstead Heath Extension, it was noted that the groundskeeper team at Golders Hill Park was working on finding a new location for the nets, with numerous on-site meetings involving city surveyors and contractors. Planning permission from the London Borough of Barnet was required for the relocation. Officers mentioned ongoing discussions with potential donors and the local Cricket Club (Cannons Cricket Club) to secure funding. It was noted that while some funding had been secured, additional funds were needed, and the relocation date is pending confirmation based on the approval of planning permission.

The Chair raised the topic of the City of London Corporation Corporate strategy review. It was noted that the Corporation is updating its corporate plan and developing a new five-year strategy. Members were informed that the start of the review process will align with developments to ensure coordination, however, an exact timeline was yet to be determined and was dependent on other ongoing strategies, including the Natural Environment Board's plan. The Chair suggested providing a paper in the future that summarised the strategies and how they fit together. Members stressed the importance of understanding how the Heath fits into the broader environmental context of the strategy.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

6. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSTABULARY UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning an update on the Hampstead Heath Constabulary and its restructure as part of the new TOM process.

In relation to the report Officers informed Members of the proposal to revise the structure of the constabulary by having six constables and one Sergeant, eliminating the assistant constable positions, all within the existing budget. The rationale behind this change is to enhance enforcement and create safer working practices for constables by having them work in pairs. It was noted this structure was believed to be more effective, particularly in addressing issues such as crowd control problems and antisocial behaviour. Officers noted the plan was contingent on management committee approval at the end of November.

Discussion was raised around the dog licensing scheme and its status. Concern was raised regarding how activities related to dogs, as mentioned in the report's appendix, align with the dog licensing scheme. In response, Officers shared that patrollers engage with dog walkers who have four or more dogs and advise them on the dog licensing requirements. Members were informed that there was a list of people who have registered for licensing, but there had been delays in processing due to personnel changes and illness in the team. Officers noted feedback from dog walkers indicated issues with the licensing process, and there were plans to discuss this further with the responsible personnel.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

7. PARLIAMENT HILL MASTERPLAN PROPOSAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning an update on the public consultation carried out in July on proposals for improvements at Parliament Hill. Regarding the proposals for improvements at Parliament Hill, Officers noted the focus remained on health improvements, with ongoing efforts to identify and prioritise projects and consider funding options. Members were encouraged to provide additional feedback for project refinement. The importance of considering projects like tree planting and the future of the Hive building was also highlighted. Members raised concerns about the increased use of Parliament Hill and suggested including a broad walk trees and further reflections be given for Hive buildings in the future. The Chair suggested further discussions within groups to determine next steps.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

8. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was one item of urgent business the Town Clerk raised.

It was noted that approval had been sought for the appointment of a new external Member of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, nominated

by the Heath Hands, to represent local interests at the next Hampstead Heath Management Committee meeting.

The Town Clerk noted consultation with the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee should take place and asked, that Rachel Chapman, nominated by Heath Hands, should be appointed as a Member of the Consultative Committee, in accordance with the London Government Reorganisation (Hampstead Heath) Order 1989 prior to the next Hampstead Heath Management Committee.

RESOLVED – That, Members endorse the appointment of Rachel Chapman, nominated by Heath Hands, to be appointed as a Member of the Consultative Committee, in accordance with the London Government Reorganisation (Hampstead Heath) Order 1989.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 15 JANUARY 2024

The meeting ended at 7.45pm

Chairman

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