

HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE
Monday, 22 July 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 22 July 2013 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Michael Welbank
Karina Dostalova
Revd Dr Martin Dudley
Professor John Lumley
Barbara Newman
Alderman Robert Hall (Ex-Officio Member)
Alderman Ian Luder (Ex-Officio Member)
Martyn Foster
Tony Ghilchik
Maija Roberts

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerk's Department
Esther Sumner	- Town Clerk's Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Alison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Simon Lee	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Richard Gentry	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy John Barker, Clare James, Deputy John Owen-Ward, Tom Sleigh, Councillor Melvin Cohen and Councillor Sally Gimson.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

3.1 **Public Minutes and Non-Public Summary of the Meeting Dated 9 May 2013**

The public minutes of the meeting held 9 May 2013 were agreed with the exception of the fifth paragraph of Item 8. The minutes will be tabled at the 23 September 2013 meeting of the Committee for final agreement.

Matters Arising

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)

The Director of Open Spaces updated the Committee on recent funding of £1.5million from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and £500,000 from the Forestry Commission had been made available for the treatment of OPM across London. She reported that spraying had been completed and that she was attending a meeting to discuss OPM later that week. She reported that no trace of OPM had been detected thus far across the North London Open Spaces or across wider City of London sites.

2013/14 Committee Vacancies

The following Members were appointed to vacancies in the following bodies:

Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee

Deputy Michael Welbank

Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group

Karina Dostalova

3.2 **Minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee Meeting Dated 8 July 2013**

The minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee meeting dated 8 July 2013 were noted, subject to amendments to item 4.1, page 11, second paragraph, ninth line 'take place.'; eleventh line, delete 'would'; item 4.2, page 12, fourth line amend to 'Trees'.

NOTED

3.3 **Minutes of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group Meeting held on 12 June 2013**

The minutes of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group meeting held on 12 June 2013 were noted.

NOTED

Part A – Hampstead Heath

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

Summer Weather

The weekend of 20/21 July had proved the busiest thus far this year. The recent spell of warm weather had seen a significant increase in visitors and income compared to the same period last year: between April and July 2012 there had been 20,000 'swims' at the Lido and £76,000 of income. During the same period this year there had been 40,000 'swims' and £159,000 of income. The hot period of weather had led to operational pressures, with the need to deal with 12 tonnes of rubbish over busy weekends; the stationing of Constabulary within the Lido; the installation of a knife arch, and random bag searching. The Superintendent noted that overall his staff had had positive feedback from the public about the measures to promote customer welfare at the Lido.

In response to a question from a Member, the Superintendent confirmed that staff were issued with extra water, energy snacks, sun cream and hats during the hot weather. Furthermore he reported that he would be giving consideration to issuing a lighter, summer top in future given that the current polo-shirts were not suitable for long periods of warm weather.

In response to a question from a Member on the impact of increased visitor numbers and the amount of litter left on the Heath, the Superintendent confirmed that some complaints regarding litter had been received but that given staff resources he was satisfied that litter management over the weekend had been satisfactory, noting the helpful comments by the Chairman in his regular Ham & High column and the fact that there were over 60 rubbish bins on the Heath, and to increase their number would begin to impact on the natural character of the Heath.

In response to a question from a Member, the Superintendent confirmed that fire remained a hazard during hot weather given the risk from BBQs and discarded cigarettes. Nevertheless a zero tolerance approach to BBQs had proved successful, with only one minor fire on West Heath that was dealt with promptly by the London Fire Brigade.

The Chairman expressed thanks on behalf of the Committee to the Superintendent and his staff for their hard work and commitment during the recent spell of hot weather, noting that many of them had been on duty every weekend for the last month.

Garden House

The Superintendent informed the Committee that he had appointed a planning consultant to assist in placing an objection against the proposed Garden House application at the current Planning Inspectorate inquiry, noting the policy of replacement developments not being allowed to be materially larger than their current footprint. In response to a question from a Member the Superintendent confirmed that the footprint of the proposed planning application was in the region of three or four times larger than at present. Furthermore in response to

a question from the Chairman the Superintendent reported that he had appointed a consultant given that much of his own time was being given to the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project, and that the consultancy costs were being met out of his local budget.

Sports

The Superintendent noted that Richard Sumray was the new Chairman of the Hampstead Sports Advisory Forum. He updated the Committee on recent events, including the recent Highgate Harriers inaugural 'Night of 10,000m Personal Bests', and the Tug of War Championships. He reported that the Duoathlon was forthcoming in September and thus far the event had received over 200 applications.

Stumpery – Golders Hill Park

Following a recent staff visit to Highgrove, the Superintendent noted that staff had been inspired to convert part of the park into a stumpery, which he believed to be the first of its kind in a public park for a century. Its installation has been conducted in partnership with the former Head Gardener at Highgrove and has allowed a formerly under-used area of the park to be opened up and turned into a uniquely attractive habitat.

National Grid Works

Fencing on both the Heath Extension and Parliament Hill had come down, and where fencing is required elsewhere this has been installed as sensitively as possible.

Dogs

The Superintendent noted that he was currently consulting local groups on the outdoor provision for dogs at Parliament Hill Café to ensure the area was welcoming for all users of the Heath, and that a report would come before the Committee in the Autumn.

5. REVENUE OUTTURN 2012/13 - HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK

The Group Accountant introduced the Revenue Outturn 2012/13 Report for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park, noting the underspend in the Additional Works Programme (AWP) and the worse-than-budgeted position of £39,000. She acknowledged concerns voiced by Members over the lack of detail around the AWP underspend and confirmed that Open Spaces, Chamberlain's and City Surveyor's staff would be working together to produce additional detail in future outturn reports.

The Superintendent similarly acknowledged the underspend in the AWP and noted that his team enjoyed a good working relationship with the City Surveyor's Project Team. He stated that the underspend was partly the result of internal staff restructuring and the fact that some projects were delayed because of requirements to assist his Division with projects including the RSPB and east Heath car park works and others were subject to public consultation, thus delaying the allocation of APW funds.

The Committee thanked the officers present from the City Surveyor's and Chamberlain's Departments for the provision of additional information on the AWP subsequent to the publication of the Committee report, and noted that the new format for future outturn reports would be agreed in due course.

RECEIVED

6. UPDATE ON THE HAMPSTEAD HEATH PONDS PROJECT

The Superintendent introduced the update report on the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project, noting that the project was now subject to a wider and longer period of consultation, including stakeholder workshops. Arising from these would be an Options Paper for consideration by the Committee in November 2013. Subject to the decision of the Committee, the preferred option would then be subject to public consultation between November 2013-February 2014. The Superintendent concluded his introduction by remarking on some current topics:

- He drew attention to the Ponds Project Communications Plan, noting that the project had been 'branded'.
- The procurement process for the project had been restarted and included four bidders.
- Efforts were underway to arrange a meeting between the City of London and the Heath and Hampstead Society, with their respective legal advisers, to discuss the concerns of the Society over the legal issues surrounding the project.
- The extended consultation period had concomitant additional costs that would require delegated authority within the next few weeks.
- The Ponds Project was a once-in-a-generation opportunity to mitigate a strategic risk by way of a bold solution, provided the natural aspects of the Heath lay at the heart of the Project.

The Committee then discussed the update report and the following observations were made:

- The Chairman agreed that the Ponds Project was a unique opportunity: it could be considered against the backdrop of the Heath as an evolving open space and it was probably appropriate for the more interventionist measures to take place in areas that were already more formal, such as the Boating Pond.
- In response to a question from a Member, the representative from the Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department explained that any application for a Judicial Review would require permission from the Court to proceed. If this were refused, the matter should be dealt with relatively swiftly. If it were granted, and the matter went to a full hearing, this

would delay the Ponds Project by a period of months. In response to a further question about why the City had not shared the advice it had received from counsel, he replied that he felt that the City's general position on the legal issues was clear. What had been resisted was the release of detailed written advice regarding individual arguments, such as the interpretation of particular cases. It was not normal practice to share this information with a potential litigant. He added that it was important to remember that a previous meeting had been held with the Heath & Hampstead Society in chambers to discuss the legal arguments – the outcome of that meeting had been that the City and the Society would have to agree to disagree. From the City's perspective, nothing had changed since that previous meeting – however the Comptroller was happy to attend the further planned meeting with the Society.

- A Member registered his thanks to both the Superintendent, his team, and the Chairman for their progress on the Ponds Project thus far, noting that progress was arguably impeded by the threat of a Judicial Review. He stated that he agreed with a creative interventionist approach as outlined by the Superintendent but cautioned that the period for consultation must not under any circumstances be reduced.
- A Member noted that City of London Members and staff must be included in the Ponds Project Communications Plan to allow them to act as advocates should the opportunity arise. Further to this comment the Chairman and Deputy Chairman agreed that an all-Member visit to the Heath would be appropriate at some point in Autumn 2013.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- Adopt the revised programme;
- endorse the Communications and Engagement Strategy, subject to comments made by Members; and
- delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman to approve budget adjustments to fund additional professional fees, that are currently being evaluated, to cover the expanded consultation, extended programme and other additional works to meet the revised schedule of appointment, that will fall within the agreed budget envelope of £15.2m (+/- 20%).

7. **MANAGEMENT WORK PLAN FOR THE SANDY HEATH RIDE**

The Superintendent introduced the Management Work Plan for the Sandy Heath Ride, noting that it formed part of a process of continual intervention to promote the natural aspect of the Heath. A Member commented that it would be useful in future for such reports to include a definition of terms such as 'Ride' in this context.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- Approve the detailed management work plan for the Sandy Heath Ride.

8. **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE LANDSCAPING WORKS TO THE BULL PATH AND SURROUNDING AREA AT PARLIAMENT HILL FIELDS**

The Superintendent introduced the progress report on the enhancement landscaping works to the Bull Path and surrounding areas at Parliament Hill Fields, noting that the enhancement works were an attempt to extend the natural aspect of the Heath down onto the Bull Path so that visitors could experience the Heath immediately upon entry.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- Note the successful implementation of the landscape enhancement scheme; and
- approve the future works for 2013/14 as set out in the report.

9. **PROGRESS REPORT ON SUSTAINABLE PLANTING IN THE WALLED GARDEN - GOLDERS HILL PARK**

The Superintendent introduced the report on sustainable planting, noting that it was inspired by the need to identify £55,000 of savings. Staff had been tasked to replace expensive seasonal bedding and had been inspired in large part by the American Ambassador's Residence in Regent's Park to adopt sustainable planting. The new approach reduced bedding costs, staff time, water usage and promoted a more diverse habitat, as well as being aesthetically pleasing.

RECEIVED

10. **UPDATE ON RECENT SPORTS ACTIVITIES**

The Superintendent introduced the update on recent sports activities on the Heath, noting that Richard Sumray was the new Chairman of the Sports Advisory Forum. He concluded his introduction by summarising both recent forthcoming high-profile events. In response to questions from Members he confirmed that harrowing was carried out on areas of the Heath subject to intensive use by large scale events to promote regeneration.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- Note the success of the various sport events held over the last few months; and
- approve the use of 'pop up' flood lights on a one year trial basis to help accommodate winter training sessions and improve turf management within the Parliament Hill area of the Heath.

Part B – Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park

11. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Superintendent provided an update on current issues affecting Highgate Wood, primarily the forthcoming installation of photovoltaic cells on the roof of the Machine Shed that will enable staff to meet their electricity needs.

The Queen’s Park Manager then provided an update on recent issues in Queen’s Park, noting:

- The Park had seen 1.2 million visits between May 2012 and April 2013.
- The Hampstead Heath Tree Team were undertaking weekly inspections and had identified a number of Plane trees with Massaria, but that no Ash Dieback had been detected. The potential for volunteers to assist with inspections was being explored.
- The annual Queen’s Park Day was forthcoming on 15 September and would attract an estimated 15,000 visitors.
- There would be a series of Open Cinema events in the Park during August and September, run by a local independent cinema. Details were advertised on the City of London website.

The Committee then addressed some remarks to the Superintendent and Queen’s Park Manager:

- In response to a comment from the Deputy Chairman, the Superintendent noted that he has asked the Conservation and Trees Manager to prepare a report on the impact of pest inspections on the time and resources of the Tree Team.
- In response to a question from a Member the Superintendent confirmed that branch failure was a risk in areas of North London Open Spaces heavily used by the public.

12. QUEEN'S PARK DRAFT CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Queen’s Park Manager introduced the draft Queen’s Park Conservation Management Plan noting that it had been drafted in conjunction with focus groups held in November and December 2012, and following meetings with staff from Queen’s Park and the wider North London Open Spaces Team. He noted that it was proposed to consult on the draft plan within the Park itself during the busy summer period. The Committee then put forward some comments:

- A Member requested that the Contents page of the draft plan include page numbers.

- A Member said that the history of the Park should reflect the fact the John Lyons catering empire had been established through sales within Queen's Park.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Open Spaces opined that the Park already enjoyed protected status through its foundation legislation, and so an application to English Heritage for a listed status was not a high priority.
- In response to a request from a Member the Superintendent confirmed that consultation would be undertaken during the Summer and into November, but that this may be extended until January 2014.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- Endorse the draft Conservation Management Plan and the proposals for wider public consultation.

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

There were no questions.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as follows:-

Item No.

Paragraphs in Schedule 12A

16-20

3

16. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The Committee approved the non-public minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9 May as an accurate record.

17. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk.

18. NEW LETTING - 1ST FLOOR HEATHFIELD HOUSE, 430 ARCHWAY ROAD, N6

The Committee approved a report of the City Surveyor.

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

There were no questions.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm

Chairman

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