

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	7 th October 2013	
West Ham Park Committee	7 th October 2013	
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	9 th September 2013	
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	23 rd September 2013	
Subject: Green Flag Awards 2013	Public	
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Decision	
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>Once again the City of London Open Spaces have been successful in the Green Flag and London in Bloom award schemes. This report provides information about the process and the value of these awards.</p>		
Recommendation		
<p>(i) That the great success achieved by the City of London's Open Spaces in the Green Flag and London in Bloom Awards is noted and reported to the Court of Common Council on the 24th October 2013.</p> <p>(ii) That the members of staff and volunteers at all the Open Spaces are congratulated on their contribution to the success in the awards.</p>		

Main Report

Background

1. The Green Flag Awards are designed to recognise the best green spaces in the country. The Green Flag Scheme is owned by the Department of Communities and Local Government, who license the management of the scheme to a consortium led by Keep Britain Tidy.
2. Since 1997 the Awards have set the standard for the management of parks and green spaces. Awards are made on an annual basis, and sites must re-apply each year to maintain their status.
3. Parks and green spaces are judged against the following eight criteria:
 - **That it is a welcoming place** (judges will look for good access and good signage)

- **That it is healthy, safe and secure** (for example equipment and facilities are safe, dog fouling is addressed, adequate health and safety policies are in place)
- **That it is clean and well maintained** (policies on litter, vandalism and maintenance are in place and in practice)
- **Sustainability** (that environmentally sound techniques are used in the management)
- **Conservation and heritage** (natural features, landscapes, building and structural features are appropriately managed).
- **Community involvement** (the site should actively pursue the involvement of members of the community and have knowledge of the patterns of use of the site)
- **Marketing** (a marketing strategy should be in place and the space should be promoted as a community resource)
- **Management** (a management plan should be in place, actively implement and regularly reviewed)

2013/14 Green Flag Awards

4. All of the City of London's Open Spaces were successful in retaining their Green Flag status. Nine sites received additional Green Heritage Awards: Epping Forest, Ashted Common, Kenley Common, Burnham Beeches, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, West Ham Park, Bunhill Fields and the Cemetery and Crematorium.
5. Feedback reports from judges have been received for a majority of the sites for the green flag awards. A summary of the feedback received is attached as an appendix.

Other Awards

6. Open Spaces sites have once again taken part in London in Bloom. City of London was also nominated by London in Bloom to be a finalist in Britain in Bloom for 2013. Results of both these competition were not available at the time the report was prepared, but will be available at the time of the committee meeting.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

7. The achievement of Green Flag Awards supports many of the themes of the City Together Strategy relating to supporting communities, protecting, promoting and enhancing the environment and ensuring that the City is vibrant and culturally rich.

Conclusion

8. The achievement of these awards provided independent recognition of the successful work of volunteers, members of staff and elected members in ensuring the Open Spaces are well managed. The Green Flag Award Scheme provides the impetus for on-going improvement at each site and

provides a good benchmark against which the quality of our sites can be measured.

9. The Open Spaces' success in winning these awards will be reported to the Court of Common Council on the 24th October 2013.

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Appendix One

Summary of feedback received from Green Flag Award Judges for Hampstead Heath, Queens Park and Highgate Wood

Highlights

Considering the scale of Heath, the maintenance is excellent, little evidence of litter and the standards of maintenance of the grassland, turf, trees, shrubs and ornamental plantings is very good.

There is clearly a strong interest in, and a detailed programme for the conservation of the natural features on the Heath.

We witnessed some works being done to a veteran tree and saw the comprehensive programme they work to.

The restoration of built features e.g. the Pergola, the viaduct, the lido and that of the overall landscape is really good programme.

Simon and the Team at the Heath are doing a great job. The scale of the Heath with all its complexities is being managed well and delivering good quality results on the ground. New ideas are being introduced and exciting features are being developed thereby maximising the visitor experience alongside the conservation of the natural and built environments.

The [Highgate Wood] Conservation Management Plan is a pleasure to read. It demonstrates good management of the site and provides a clear understanding of aims and objectives. A lot of thought has gone into managing the site in a sensitive way, addressing the needs of site users, whilst mitigating the impact on the natural environment.

[At Highgate Wood the] community are actively encouraged get involved in the site. Many events held and different groups engaged with.

Voluntary groups from nearby linked sites actively involved. Strong input from knowledgeable local residents.

Visitor surveys show extensive consultation with site users

The Queens Park residents association seems to have a big impact on the running of the Park along with the Queens Park Joint Consultative group.

[At Queens Park] Rainwater storage underground is an innovative way of reducing water usage from the mains and recycling grey water.

Areas for future development

Perhaps some signs indicating how far it is to walk to different areas of the Heath would be helpful ie a plan of the heath with radiating circles indicating 5, 10, 15, 20 minutes walking distance.

Perhaps some interpretative materials [at Golders Hill Park] about the built heritage of the site would be a welcome addition eg the Pergola

[At Highgate Wood] Continue to investigate the local heritage – much has already been discovered, but there is obviously more to be found in such a rich site.

Continue to develop Highgate Wood Friends group.

Continuing the ecological surveys [at Highgate Wood] will further the local knowledge of species migrations and population dynamics, that will continue to be of great value to the site and local area

It would be ideal to train the staff [at Queen's Park] to enforce the by-laws through joint training with PCSO's and SNT.

The interpretation signs [at Queen's Park] and signs which detail the features in the park need to be updated, i.e waste recycling points within the park. Consistent design language.