

HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE
Monday, 23 March 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held at Committee Room 2 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 23 March 2015 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman)
Karina Dostalova
Ann Holmes
Clare James
Edward Lord
Professor John Lumley
Barbara Newman
Tom Sleigh
Alderman Ian Luder (Ex-Officio Member)
Councillor Sally Gimson (London Borough of Camden)
John Beyer (Heath & Hampstead Society)
Maija Roberts (Open Spaces Society/Ramblers' Association)
Philip Wright (English Heritage)

Officers:

David Arnold	Town Clerk's Department
Sam Cook	Remembrancer's Department
Nigel Lefton	Remembrancer's Department
Alison Elam	Chamberlain's Department
Edward Wood	Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
Sue Ireland	Director of Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Richard Gentry	Queen's Park and Constabulary Manager
Declan Gallagher	Operational Services Manager
Paul Monaghan	Department of the Built Environment
Richard Litherland	City Surveyor's Department
John Park	Public Relations Office

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Deputy John Barker, Revd Dr Martin Dudley, Deputy Alex Deane, Councillor Melvin Cohen (London Borough of Barnet), and Martyn Foster (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds).

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed John Beyer to his first Committee meeting as the new representative from the Heath and Hampstead Society.

The Chairman also informed the Committee that John Owen-Ward had recently retired from the Court of Common Council and added his thanks to Mr Owen-Ward for his work on the Committee during his three year term.

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

There were none.

3. MINUTES

3.1 Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee

RESOLVED – That the public minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2015 be agreed.

Matters Arising

East Heath Car Park

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath advised that designs were being undertaken for additional drainage at the East Heath car park. He added that the current drainage issues were due to the fairground and water run-off from the car park into the highway.

Park Champions

The Chairman advised the Committee that Councillor Melvin Cohen had agreed to be the Park Champion for the Heath Extension and Golders Hill Park, both of which fall within the London Borough of Barnet.

3.2 Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee

RESOLVED – That the public minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2015 be noted.

4. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

RESOLVED – That John Beyer (Heath & Hampstead Society) be appointed as this Committee's Observer to the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

The Committee received a report of the Remembrancer that advised Members of the provisions of the Infrastructure Act, which would introduce a new regime to facilitate the control of non-native invasive species when implemented in the next few months.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath verbally updated the Committee regarding the following matters relating to Hampstead Heath:

Savings

By the 2017/18 Financial Year, the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces Department would be required to find £2.2m of savings. To inform the decision to be made on savings, seven themes were being developed to help prioritise the work undertaken by the Open Spaces Department.

These included: a *Learning Programme* that would review the education 'offer' of the Open Spaces, looking at outcomes around education and play activities; a *Sports Programme* to provide a framework to define the purpose of sports provision within Open Spaces; a *Various Powers Bill* would be submitted to Parliament seeking changes to legislation governing Open Spaces to give clarity and flexibility to management of Open Spaces, enabling more efficient and effective services; greater effort made to *promote services* to raise awareness of the range of services provided, costs, and opportunities for income generation; savings to be made through greater *energy efficiency* in departmental business and management plans; a *fleet and equipment review* to establish how the existing fleet resources of the Open Spaces Department could be better utilised; and a more regular and structured approach to reviewing and management of *Wayleave* agreements

Property

Lido Café

The Superintendent advised that the programmed completion date for the works to the Lido roof had been delayed by six weeks to 18 May 2015. The Contractor had advised that to-date 16 working days have been lost due to weather conditions.

Members were advised that salvaged bricks from the perimeter wall would be used on the café building and, consequently, approved new bricks would be required for the reconstruction of the boundary wall.

Lido Leak

The Superintendent advised that The City Surveyor had engaged Consultants to investigate the loss of water from the Lido. A range of tests were carried out along with CCTV surveys of the pipework. Investigations were currently focused on the main sump access plate.

Golders Hill Park Toilets

Members were advised that the refurbishment programme had been completed by the City Surveyor's Department; the toilets had operated effectively since July 2014. He added that the toilets were redecorated and deep cleaned in early March 2015.

Parliament Hill Café

The planters outside the café at Parliament Hill fields had been replaced and planting would commence shortly.

Planning

53 Fitzroy Park

Members were advised that a planning submission was registered with the Planning Authority in February 2015. The development proposals comprised of the “erection of a three storey single family dwelling including basement level, green roofs at first floor and roof level, solar panels at roof level and associated landscaping following the demolition of the existing part-two, part-three storey dwelling (Class C3).” The submitted Construction Management Plan did not sufficiently address the constraints and highway / vehicle access considerations of the range of construction vehicles required to re-develop the site.

Athlone House

The appeal Inquiry was held from 10 – 27 February 2015. A decision from the Planning Inspector was expected by 12 June 2015.

Weddings & Civil Ceremonies at the Hill Garden & Pergola

The Superintendent advised that 16 confirmed bookings had so far been received, for which deposits had been paid. He added that a report regarding the impact and costs relating to holding weddings and civil ceremonies at the Hill Garden and Pergola would be submitted to the Committee meeting in September 2015.

Staff

Two new Constabulary Officers started in December 2014 and had completed the first stage of their induction. One further vacancy had been filled, leaving one vacant post currently being advertised.

Members were also advised that the Ponds Project and Management Support Officer was successfully appointed to the role of Open Spaces Department Business Manager and also left the Heath at the end of January. Fortunately, the Officer was continuing to provide support to the Ponds Project.

Golders Hill Park

A redesign and landscaping had been undertaken at the Eagle Owl Enclosure at the Golders Hill Park Zoo, where 6 volunteer work placements had been introduced to assist with daily work.

Parliament Hill

The Superintendent advised that work was being carried out to increase the diversity of the hedge lines by gapping up and adding mixed native species. He added that the Bull Path project had been progressed, with further removal of the hawthorn hedge and turfing to be laid by the end of March 2015.

Constabulary

Members were advised that the Constabulary had recorded 411 incidents since 1 January 2015, including 28 relating to cycling and 46 relating to dog control. The Superintendent added that three prosecutions were currently being processed, one each relating to dog control, cycling, and the other relating to Highgate Wood, and Constabulary Officers had to attend an incident of suicide on the Heath in January 2015.

Tree Team

Members were advised that the Tree Team had carried out some partnership working at Burnham Beeches helping staff there to manage Veteran beech pollards. The Team also hosted a group of Arboricultural students from Capel Manor, two of whom had since gained work experience in tree inspection and tree maintenance on the Heath. The Committee commended this collaborative work and the Chairman added his thanks to the Tree Team for their contribution to the informative Committee walk on Friday 20 March.

Parliament Hill Outdoor Gym Proposal

The Superintendent advised of a proposal by the London Borough of Camden (LBC) to install outdoor gym equipment at Parliament Hill. The proposal was subject to LBC undertaking an assessment of need based on the demographic of the area to ensure that their investment had the greatest impact on physical activity within the borough. Members were advised that the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee were supportive of the proposal but anxious about the location of the equipment, which would be identified within the business case.

In response to a Member's question, the Superintendent advised that the City of London Corporation did not intend to make a capital contribution towards the outdoor gym equipment, which would be aimed at people who had been advised to carry out additional exercise for their health and wellbeing. He added that a report would be submitted for consideration once the proposals had been finalised.

Members noted that an evaluation of outdoor gym equipment carried out by the LBC would be circulated to the Committee courtesy of Councillor Sally Gimson.

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

Members were advised that support had been received from several members of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee for the sculpture to remain at Golders Hill Park a while longer.

Finally, a Member noted that it would be preferable for Superintendent's Update reports to be circulated as written reports in the main agenda packs. This would enable Members to declare an interest in the item if they were aware of the content in advance of the meeting. The Superintendent agreed to consider the possibility of incorporating a written update report in the agenda for future meetings.

RESOLVED – That the Superintendent's update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath be noted.

7. **HILL GARDEN PERGOLA**

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor regarding the issues affecting the condition of the Hill Garden Pergola and the works that were currently planned to address safety.

Members noted that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Resource Allocation Sub Committee should be made aware in advance of the sum of £2.56 million in the forward maintenance plan 2017-2022 that would be subject to Operational Property Review and the Project Gateway approval process. The Director of Open Spaces added that external funding towards this sum should be sought.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH PONDS PROJECT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided Members with an update on the progress of the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project.

The Superintendent advised that site clearance work had finished and timber had been retained on site due to recent wet weather. Some of the timber would now be removed and other parts would be milled for use at the Catchpit dam crossing point. He added that an additional site meeting regarding the Stock Pond had taken place on 30 January 2015 with members of the Ponds Project Stakeholder Group. It was agreed that the Project Board would meet again to look at alternative options but it was decided that the original spillway design would go ahead.

Members were advised that a Community Working Group had been established as part of the Section 106 Agreement of the planning permission. The Group had met once in February 2015 and would continue to meet once a month throughout the project. The Superintendent advised that signage had been installed at Pond Projects sites to inform users of the Heath of the works being undertaken. He added that the next substantial works to the cofferdam would start in April 2015.

In response to a Member's question, the Superintendent advised that a small protest that involved 20 people took place on 14 February 2015 at the Mixed Pond. He added that complaints were being monitored by Heath staff and presented to the Community Working Group for their information. The Hampstead Heath Ecologist and BAM Nuttall Contract Manager had recently led a walk with the Heath & Hampstead Society to audit planned tree-felling. Members noted the effective management of complaints by Hampstead Heath staff.

In response to a further question, the Superintendent advised that the Conservation Manager takes regular photos of work at each pond and that time-lapse pictures of the Model Boating Pond were being considered. Members suggested that a slideshow of photos of the project be presented at the next appropriate Committee meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project update report be noted.

9. **ANNUAL REPORT ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSTABULARY FOR 2014**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that reviewed the work carried out by the Hampstead Heath Constabulary (HHC) during the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014. The Queen's Park and Constabulary Manager advised that 2,157 incidents/occurrences had been recorded during this period but that figure did not take into account the 17,000 general engagements with Heath users throughout the year. Members were also advised that there had been a focus in control during the period as the Dog Control Action Plan was implemented in March 2014.

In response to a Member's question, the Queen's Park and Constabulary Manager advised that a good relationship existed between the HHC and Kenwood House. The Member of the Committee representing English Heritage at Kenwood House agreed and thanked the HHC for their continued support.

RESOLVED – That the work of the HHC during 2014 and the continued effort being made to strengthen links with other agencies, helping to ensure that Hampstead Heath remains a safe, appealing and enjoyable place for millions to visit each year, by reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, be noted.

10. **UPDATE REPORT ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH - PUBLIC SEX ENVIRONMENT OUTREACH WORK**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath regarding the continued partnership work undertaken by the City of London Corporation, HHC, and the Terrence Higgins Trust to provide outreach sessions on the West Heath Public Sex Environment area of Hampstead Heath. The Committee commended this partnership work.

The Queen's Park and Constabulary Manager advised that litter pollution on West Heath had reduced but there had been an increase in drug paraphernalia which was being monitored. In response to a Member's question, he added that an increase in knowledge and awareness of the definition of the public decency and propriety byelaw had contributed to the increase in number of incidents reported since 2010. No prosecutions had been issued; the HHC had mainly provided an advisory role when incidents were reported.

The Chairman informed Members that the next Sexual Activity Working Party meeting was taking place on Thursday 26 March 2015.

RESOLVED – That the continuation of partnership work on Hampstead Heath during 2015 by the HHC, Terrence Higgins Trust, and other stakeholders and partners, be supported and approved.

11. **LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT WORKS AT THE NORTH END ROAD ENTRANCE INTO GOLDERS HILL PARK**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that sought approval to the proposed hard and soft landscape improvement works at the North End Way entrance to Golders Hill Park. Members were informed that these improvement works formed part of the 2015/16 Annual Work Programme and would be carried out in autumn 2015.

RESOLVED – That the proposals to improve the hard and soft landscaping works at the North End Way entrance to Golders Hill Park be approved.

12. **LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT WORKS AT PARLIAMENT HILL (KITE HILL)**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that sought approval to the proposed landscape and infrastructure improvement works at Parliament Hill, also known as Kite Hill. Members were advised that the following works were proposed and would form part of the ongoing Annual Work Programme:-

- Relocation of litter bin away from the crest of the hill;
- The existing stainless steel interpretation sign to be moved;
- A new sign consisting of a photograph with key landmarks identified and a QR code to be commissioned;
- Grass renovation works;
- Removal of benches and vegetation from new view cone zone;
- Review of the layout of benches.

John Beyer noted that the Heath & Hampstead Society would provide a capital contribution to the creation of the new sign.

In response to another Member's question, Philip Wright (English Heritage) advised that Senior Managers and the Head Gardener at Kenwood House were currently negotiating funding for the installation of a new interpretation stand that identified new and historical buildings from the protected view at Kenwood House. It was hoped that these arrangements would be finalised by 5 April 2015.

RESOLVED – That the proposals to carry out works at Parliament Hill as part of the on-going Annual Work Programme be approved.

13. **UPDATE ON TREE SAFETY MANAGEMENT AT THE NORTH LONDON OPEN SPACES DIVISION**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update on Tree Safety Management across the North London Open Spaces Division. Members were advised on tree risk management guidance, the tree inspection process, tree incident reporting, tree health, and the external review.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Open Spaces advised that the Forestry Commission had not yet provided any additional news regarding Oak Processionary Moth emergence this spring.

The Committee thanked the tree team for their excellent work which was carried out with a high degree of detail and expertise.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

14. **ELEVEN YEARS OF PLANT MONITORING ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that summarised the results of the long-term programme of plant monitoring. The Committee commended the report and long-term nature of the programme.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

15. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath verbally updated the Committee regarding the following matters relating to Highgate Wood:-

- the cricket score hut front fascia had been completely renewed ready for the new cricket season starting in April 2015;
- a licence had been issued for a weekly story telling event for the under 5s, which had proved to be very popular and a positive new income stream for the site;
- The Highgate Wood Manager was meeting with Officers from the Forestry Commission at Highgate Wood to discuss UK Woodland Assurance Standard.

The Superintendent verbally updated the Committee regarding the following matters relating to Queen's Park:-

- a donations post was installed at the Children's Farm on 14 March 2015;
- the hedge laying along the woodland walk had been completed;
- new bins were installed and there has been good progress with the installation of granite bases for the park benches;
- events: the "Big Dig" took place on 21 March 2015 and 80 children took part in the Queen's Park Easter Egg Hunt on 22 March 2015.

RESOLVED – That the update on matters relating to Highgate Wood and Queen's Park be noted.

16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were none.

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

There were two items of urgent business, as follows:

The Chairman and Members of the Committee thanked Tom Sleigh for his contribution to the Committee as this was his last meeting before his term ended and he would not be standing for re-election.

The Superintendent advised Members that he was negotiating a fee with a filming company who had asked for permission to film on the Heath during April 2015.

The Chairman added his thanks to Members of the Committee and Officers for their support during his three year term.

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: David Arnold
david.arnold@cityoflondon.gov.uk