

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	18 May 2015
<b>Subject:</b> Superintendents update for May 2015	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	<b>For Information</b>

### Summary

This report provides an update to Members of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee on management and operational activities across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park since March 2015.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report.

### Main Report

#### Property

1. Contractors working for the City Surveyor are expecting to complete the works to repair the Lido café roof on 8 May 2015. An architect has been appointed to design the replacement railing for the Lido's east and west boundary walls.
2. A team of divers completed a full underwater survey of the Lido on 27 April 2015. Possible leaks were detected from the four deep-end outlet pipes, with a significant draw being reported by the inspection diver. The blanking plate in the centre of the pool, which had been suspected as the potential source of the leak, was thoroughly tested and no leaks were reported. Therefore, the recommendation is that the outlet pipe work is pressure tested to confirm that this is the point of water loss from the pool tank. Gas detection could also be used to pin point the leak to a specific location for future repairs to the pipe work.
3. The Lido paddling pool is currently out of action pending the appointment of a specialist contractor to make good the non-slip safety surface.
4. Major works to the tanking around the Hill Garden Shelter are scheduled to start on 21 September 2015, for a period of 10 weeks.

## Fleet

5. The new 'identify' has started to be applied to the Hampstead Heath vehicle fleet (see figure 1). Further roll out to cover all outstanding vehicles will commence in the next month.



Figure 1: New vehicle livery

## Planning

6. **The Water House (2011/4390/P and 2011/4392/C).** Camden Council has re-consulted on an updated version of the Basement Impact Assessment, Construction Management Plan and the Ecological Assessment for the Water House development. The Superintendent commissioned consultants to review the documents and a representation was submitted to the Planning Authority on 30 April 2015. The Conservation Manager and Senior Ecologist reviewed the Ecological Impact Assessment.
7. **Athlone House (2013/7242/P) Appeal.** We are awaiting the Planning Inspector's decision which is expected by 12 June 2015.
8. **Parliament Hill School, William Ellis School and La Swap Sixth Form (ref. 2014/7683/P).** This planning application was recommended for approval on 12 March 2015, subject to the agreement of a section 106 agreement. Work is scheduled to commence in the autumn and the schools have been required to establish a Community Working Group. The Operational Services Manager and Ponds Project Liaison Officer recently met with the Camden Planning Officer to discuss the issues relating to the impact of vehicle movements along the Highgate Road, in relation to crossover with the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project.
9. **53 Fitzroy Park (ref: 2015/0441/P).** This application refers to 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. The Superintendent registered a representation with the Camden Planning Authority on 17 April 2015 in relation to this planning application.

## **Events**

10. The Heath once again hosted the Camden Schools Cross Country Championships on 29 April 2015. 1,500 runners from 30 schools took part, an increase in participation from last year.
11. The second Highgate Harriers 'Night of the 10,000 metre Personal Bests' is scheduled for the 16 May 2015. This year's races will include elite British Champions and the GB trials for the European Cup and provides a free opportunity for Heath visitors to watch top class athletics.
12. The Affordable Art Fair will return to the Heath for a fourth year from 11 – 14 June 2015, with GROW London returning shortly after for a much anticipated second year between 19 – 21 June 2015.
13. The City of London Festival Hampstead Heath Family Day returns to Parliament Hill for a seventh year on 28 June 2015, 11am - 6pm.
14. The Give it a Go! Festival is now in its fourth year. This year's event, held in partnership with the London Borough Camden, will take place on 12 July 2015, 1pm - 5.30pm.
15. 17 weddings are currently booked for 2015. The first ceremony of 2015 took place on Saturday 28 March 2015.

## **Personnel Issues**

16. The year-end Performance Development Reviews have been completed and objectives are being set for 2015/16.
17. The Division is currently holding the following vacancies: 2 Constabulary Constables, 1 Arborist and a Projects Support Officer.
18. As part of the Ponds Project Planning Conditions and the Section 106 agreement, the City agreed to employ three apprentices. Camden Council has supported the recruitment process and apprentices will be recruited to join the Heath's Conservation, Arboriculture and Communications Teams.

## **Heath Hands**

19. A new Volunteer Development Manager has been appointed by the Trustees and will be responsible for developing and implementing the volunteering strategy for the Heath.
20. The volunteers hours for 2013/14 were 6,562, this comprised of 318 sessions and Heath Hands have 231 active volunteers. The Superintendent will provide 2014/15 data at the meeting.

## **Constabulary update**

21. A total of 705 incidents were dealt with by the Constabulary from 1 January 2015 to 1 May 2015. Of these, 106 related to cycling enforcement actions and 26 to dog control enforcements.

22. A total of six prosecutions have been brought to Court so far in 2015; two relate to cycling, three to dog control and one to obstructing staff in Highgate Wood.
23. Tragically, there have been two suicides on the Heath so far this year.

### **Men's Pond Fatality**

24. On Wednesday 15 April 2015 a group of young men entered the Men's Pond from its northern bank, outside the designated swimming area. One young man got in to difficulties and sadly failed to surface. His body was recovered after 11pm the same night by divers from the Metropolitan Police, Marine Policing Unit.
25. The young men had entered the pond after closing time and from a fenced-off area that is not designated for swimming. Warning signs clearly stating that swimming is not permitted were in place at this location.
26. A combination of Lifeguards, Constabulary, Rangers, Keepers, Technical Staff and Officers worked with the Emergency Services during the rescue and recovery phases of the incident. Many members of staff returned to work after their normal hours to assist. This gave continuity to the management of the incident and vital support to the Emergency Services and to the family of the deceased.
27. The tragedy resulted in a great deal of interest from the media and we took the opportunity to emphasise that the public must only swim in the designated lifeguarded areas, during the advertised swimming hours. The Heath bathing ponds offer an opportunity to swim close to nature, but the waters are deep, cold and opaque. This is an important message for us to continue promoting amongst Heath visitors, especially as we are entering the summer season.

### **Conservation and Ecology update**

28. The Conservation Team have re-built the Heath Extension bridge at Lamp Path (see figure 2). The wildflower meadows on Dukes Field, the Heath Extension and the Old Hockey Pitch have been cultivated and sown.
29. The Ecology Team have completed the Heath's annual amphibian survey and produced the schedule for bramble cutting across the Heath this season.

### **Golders Hill Park update**

30. The Operational Services Manager is preparing a planning application to seek permanent planning permission from Barnet Council to retain the art installation 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' in Golders Hill Park.



Figure 2: Re-built Hampstead Heath Extension Bridge.

31. The eagle owl and pheasant Zoo enclosures have been re-designed with replanting throughout. The Zoo toilets were out of action between 6 – 9 April 2015 due to items being flushed down the toilet blocking the macerators. Staff acted quickly to arrange contractors to attend at short notice and the toilets were reopened on the 10 April 2015.
32. The Butterfly House has been open to the public since the beginning of April and donations have already exceeded £400.

### **Parliament Hill update**

33. The renovations around the tennis courts continue, with new turfing replacing a section of hedging. The new Café planters have been restocked and have made a big difference to the outward appearance of the Café. The Athletics Track flowerbeds have also been replanted with perennial native species.
34. The Bull Path has been resurfaced with a tar and chip top coat to complete the programme of works to give this entrance to the Heath a more rural feel.
35. The mini roundabout at the Traditional Playground is currently out of action; replacement parts have been ordered from Finland and should be installed before the summer holidays. In addition, repairs to the sand pit at the One O'clock Club have been completed and staff continue to discourage foxes from using the area and causing further damage to the play surface.
36. The Parliament Hill Water fountain has been redesigned and relocated back from the main pedestrian path and is now operational.
37. Parliament Hill Tennis courts 5 -10 were resurfaced during the winter and now the temperature is peaking above 15 °C they will have a top-coat applied to complete the refurbishment. The courts will be out of action to be public from 11 - 20 May 2015.
38. The Parliament Hill vehicle barrier will be replaced in the week commencing 18 May 2015.

### Ranger Team update

39. The works to update and reconfigure the East Heath staff bothy have been completed. The Ranger Team has carried out maintenance in preparation for the summer season including bench maintenance, bin repairs and replacement, gate repairs and maintenance, re-painting the 'no cycling' path signage and preparing the Mixed Pond enclosure for the summer opening on 2 May 2015.
40. A sink hole (see figure 3) appeared on the Heath near the Vale of Health on Friday 24 April. The area has been cordoned off while investigations are being completed.



Figure 3: Sink hole at the Vale of Health.

### Tree Team update

41. The Tree Team have carried out Tree Risk Sequence Inspections at South End Green, West Heath Road and Highgate Road and have removed *Massaria* branches from plane trees located within Queen's Park and along West Heath Road and Highgate Road. Surveying for the caterpillar stage of Oak Processionary Moth has begun, with an emphasis around the Queen's Park, Golders Hill Park, West Heath and Spaniards Road areas.

### Swimming update

42. The swimming ponds opening and closing times have been reviewed and new arrangement put in place for the 2015 season. The updated and rationalised timetable will make it easier for both staff and members of the public to know when the swimming ponds are open.
43. The swimming summer season started on the 2 May 2015, coinciding with the opening of the Mixed Pond. The Lido is now operating its full opening schedule.

44. The diving board at the Men's Pond is currently out of action. An underwater survey has been completed and the Superintendent is working with the City Surveyors Department to co-ordinate repairs to the jetty-top structure and the diving board fixing. The survey has identified further works to the jetties at the Mixed Pond and Men's Pond but these will be scheduled for the autumn.

### **Highgate Wood update**

45. The Onslow entrance gate off Muswell Hill Road has been reconfigured to improve access to and from the Wood.
46. The Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee visited the Wood on 22 April 2015 for a walk followed by a meeting.
47. Soft market testing has been launched to establish the interest levels from potential businesses in operating the Highgate Wood café.
48. A near miss incident of an oak tree failing adjacent to the sports field has been investigated.
49. Highgate Wood was closed on the 5 and 6 May 2015 owing to wind speeds exceeding 40mph.

### **Queen's Park update**

50. The Park hosted the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee for a visit on the afternoon of 22 April 2015.
51. The Children's Farm goat enclosure has been re-turfed and a new planting scheme installed around the pond. The newly installed donations box in the Children's Farm has so far collected £494.15. Over the 52 days it has been in situ, that works out at an average of £9.50 per day, which will go towards supporting the upkeep of the farm.
52. Planters have been installed outside the café and the Harvist Road entrance has been replanted.
53. New playground equipment has been ordered, with installation expected prior to the school summer holidays.

### **Bob Warnock**

Superintendent / Open Spaces Department

T: 020 7332 3322

E: [bob.warnock@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:bob.warnock@cityoflondon.gov.uk)