

Committee(s)	Dated:
Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Committee	18 November 2015 23 November 2015
Subject: Queen's Park – Superintendents Update, November 2015	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Information

Summary

This report provides an update on the operational work, accomplishments and successes of the Queen's Park Team and the Park in delivering an award winning Open Space since the last update report in June 2015.

The report provides information and updates on activities in the Park for the following areas: ecology and environment, sport and recreation, conservation and heritage, children's play area, landscape management, operational management, and visitors and community.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report.
- Recognise the success and achievements of the Queen's Park Team and their contribution towards maintaining the Park to a high standard.
- That the views of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at their November 2015 meeting.

Main Report

Background

1. Queen's Park is a popular Open Spaces situated within the London Borough of Brent. The Park currently receives in excess of 1 million visits per annum. There are a number of facilities within the boundaries of the Park including; a Children's Play Area, Children's Farm, Tennis Courts and a Pitch & Putt course.
2. The North London Open Spaces Division (NLOS) and the Open Spaces Department continues to face challenges as it progresses with the Service Based Review, and its change programme through it various Projects and Programmes.
3. Operationally, the Park Manger is considering how to continue to provide a high quality green space by doing things differently. The Queen's Park Team are encouraged to engage with their colleagues across NLOS and seek out

expertise, knowledge and experience to assist with the completion of projects in the Park.

Current Position

4. There are currently a number of Open Spaces Department projects and programmes which include input from Queen's Park and may have an outcome on the operational management of the Park.
5. Queen's Park café is currently out for tender as are; Highgate Wood Café, Golders Hill Park Café, Parliament Hill Café and Parliament Hill Lido Café. The timescale for completion of this tender process will be 28 February 2016, with a tenant taking on a three year lease at the café from 1 March 2016 until 28 February 2019.
6. The learning programme has an identified Service Based Review project involving Golders Hill Park Zoo and Queen's Park Children's Farm. The primary aim is to deliver high standards of welfare to the animals, align the collections to the learning framework and to ensure the facilities available relate to the conservation of Hampstead Heath and Queen's Park. There are currently three full time equivalent posts at the Zoo and Farm. Employees are currently in consultation with regard to the proposed changes which includes the reduction of animals at Queen's Park Children's Farm and refocusing the collection towards a 'small holding' and the Department Learning Framework.

Ecology and Environment

7. The Park Manager is seeking a solution to the issue of collecting green waste and recycling from Queen's Park. The Park Manager has contacted Veolia and is seeking satisfactory solution as to how this could be facilitated in the future. The Park Supervisor has been tasked to seek alternative methods of disposing of green waste and recycled materials. Consideration will be given to a cost effective and environmentally sustainable solution.
8. The Park Manager has contacted Veolia to co-ordinate the collection and recycling of Christmas trees left by LBB residents, to ensure that they are disposed of at no cost to the City of London. The Park can receive 100s of trees during the weeks following Christmas and New Year.
9. Earlier this year hedge laying (Figures 1-3) was carried out in the woodland walk with the assistance one the Hampstead Heath Ecologists. Further hedge laying will be carried out early 2016. This task proved to be a huge success with the new thicker growth creating a corridor and habitat for the local wildlife.
10. The City of London's preferred waste collection contractor continues to collect general waste from the Park. Due to the delay in resolving the collection of green waste by other means the waste contractor have provided open top skips to assist the Park in the removal of green waste. The Park Supervisor is considering options for the removal of green waste, this includes consulting with colleagues from within the Division and Department to seek a suitable solution.

Figures 1-3: Hedge laying in progress



Sports and Recreation

11. Queen's Park continues to provide good quality sports and recreational facilities in the Park. The tennis courts and Pitch & Putt are popular with our visitors and continue to provide an income to the Park.
12. A Project to introduce online tennis bookings has recently involved consultation with tennis players at our Open Spaces; this has included face to face interviews, online surveys, stakeholder interviews and focus groups. The City of London's Open Spaces Divisions with tennis courts rely on their staff to book and administer the booking of tennis courts. This process requires staff to be in attendance when users want to book, pay or play for a tennis court or be at the end of a phone for set periods of time. In excess of 5,400 hours of staff time are spent in the facilitation of tennis booking and the collection of fees.
13. The objective is to develop and introduce an online booking system that can be accessed by the user on a variety of devices (smart phone, PC or tablet). The saving associated with staff time and an increase in income would contribute to the Service Based Review savings.
14. There are further opportunities identified in the Project which includes access to funding for the refurbishment of tennis courts via the Lawn Tennis Association.
15. Summer tennis courses for adults and children continued to run in 2015. 57 people participated in these courses, compared to the 36 that participated in 2014. The courses were marketed on the City of London's website, and via poster, flyers and banners in the Park.
16. The knowledge and skills of colleagues from Hampstead Heath were utilised in the Park to carry out maintenance work on the Pitch & Putt course in-house over a period of two days.

Conservation and Heritage

17. The Park retained the Green Flag Award for the 19th consecutive year and also retained the Green Heritage Award. Queen's Park is one of few Open Spaces that have retained the Green Flag Award since its inception.



Figure 4: Queen's Park Staff with their 2015 Green Flag Award

18. This year Queen's Park entered the London in Bloom Awards for the first time. The Park was visited by two external judges in July, and achieved a Silver Gilt award. The Queen's Park Team are working towards achieving a gold award in 2016.

Children's Play Area

19. The Park Supervisor is working with a colleague from Hampstead Heath to source a suitable replacement safety surface for the sandpit area of the children's play area. Due to its deterioration the existing pathway around the sandpit is in need of replacement.

20. Volunteers from the Queen's Park Area Residents' Association have applied for funding to install some swings in the children's sand pit area and play area.

21. Reparation work will be carried out on the amenity turf by the paddling pool and path way repairs will be carried out to the red tarmac over the winter.

Landscape Management

22. In June 2015 the Hampstead Heath Arboricultural Team discovered Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) in two oak trees within the Park. The trees were cordoned off from the general public and specialist pest controllers sprayed the affected trees. There have been no further sightings in the Park. A report has been submitted to the group updating them on OPM in the Division.

23. Massaria is a disease that affects the London Plane tree. The Hampstead Heath Arboricultural Team are continuing to monitor this disease in the Park and have removed infected branches and limbs from trees.

24. The Parks Groundsman was assisted with turf maintenance in the Park in the autumn by colleagues from Hampstead Heath. Who assisted with the slitting and seeding of the amenity turf in the Park over a number of days. Previously this would have been contracted out.

Operational Management

25. The Bandstand continues to be used for small gatherings and parties. The fee was held at £55.00 per session in 2015. The bookings generated revenue of £1,870.00.
26. Since its installation in March 2015, the donation post in the Children's Farm has generated £1,475.00. These donations help support the farm and go towards the purchasing of feed and bedding.
27. In April 2015 21 new bins were installed in the Park. Feedback suggests that the bins have been well received. The number of bins in the Park has been reduced by over half as the newly installed bins have a larger capacity.
28. A further four bins will be purchased and placed in areas of the Park where there is additional demand, e.g. café, play area.
29. The old cast iron bin were recycled, generating £830.40 for the Park.
30. The interior of the Aviary was refurbished by members of the Queen's Park Team. Works carried out included installing a newly painted backdrop and new bird shelters. Three quails have been introduced to the Aviary.
31. Additional Works Programme Projects over the winter include path repairs and repairs and refurbishment of the Lych Gate, this includes improving the drainage, painting and decorating of the render and timbers and replacing brick work due to movement in structure. A section of the exterior Park fencing will be painted. The exterior of the café will be painted and decorated.
32. The brick retaining wall at the Harvist Road entrance has been replaced by a wooden retaining wall.
33. The Park Supervisor will supervise a Project to return the Petanque rink (boulle) located at the north end of the Park back to grass. The Supervisor will involve colleagues from other teams within the Division to assist with the completion of this Project.
34. A licence for Weddings and Civil Partnership Ceremonies will be applied for in the New Year. The licence is for a three year period and submission in January 2016, will allow for sufficient time to market the bandstand for Weddings and Civil Ceremonies during the summer of 2016.

Visitors and Community

35. In September 2015 the Park hosted an art installation called 'Plants out of Place'. The event coincided with the London Design Week and Queen's Park Design District. A temporary structure was constructed on the main field and was host to a number of events over four days. The Project, developed by Studio Aikieu and Coloni, sought to engage with the wider communities to re-consider the value of wild plants and how we may utilise them to design for a better future. There was

good feedback from the community who asked for similar events to be considered in the Park in the future.



Figure 5: Plants Out of Place Event Structure (photo credit: Claridges Architects)

36. In August and September, 'Where is the Nomad' returned to Queen's Park. 1,830 people came along to see four films after dark in the Park. An income is generated as a percentage of the ticket sales for these events.
37. The return of a brass band on the Bandstand promoted a phone call from a local resident complimenting the Park Manager on his musical selection. The entertainment programme started in June and was well received by the Park users.
38. In August the Park facilitated 10 various entertainment shows for children. These shows continue to be popular and are provided free of charge.
39. The Queen's Park Area Residents' Association organised another successful Queen's Park Day on Sunday 13 September. The Park Manager and the Park staff worked alongside the event organisers to ensure that this event continues to be a successful community event. There were 13,000 people in attendance this year.
40. The Park Supervisor has organised a number of bulb planting events with local schools in November. School children will help with this task after the half-term holiday break. This was a great success last year with a dazzling display of daffodils during the spring. Next spring's display should be even better with the addition of another 3,000 bulbs. Queen's Park staff will be involved in the task and will assist the children with the planting.
41. There are occasions when the Park is used for filming and photography shoots. The Park has been used as a location on four occasions this year generating £1,620.00. Six requests to film were not progressed any further following an initial enquiry.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

42. This report will help fulfil the City of London Corporation's Corporate Plan 2015-19; *to provide valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure, to London and the nation.* The report also meets the Department's Strategic Goals and Objectives; *Protect and conserve the ecology, biodiversity and heritage of our sites, Embed financial sustainability across our activities by delivering identified programmes and projects, Enrich the lives of Londoners by providing high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities, Improve the health and wellbeing of community through access to green space and recreation.* The report also contributes to the Departmental values of *quality, inclusion, environment, promotion and people.*

Implications

43. There are no financial implications in this report, the operational requirements highlighted in this report have been funded from the Queen's Park Local Risk Budget.

Conclusion

44. Queen's Park is a very popular Open Space in a thriving area of Brent. Consideration should be given as to how the City of London can introduce new and exciting initiatives to encourage users to the Open Space and generate revenue during these challenging financial times. As Projects and Programmes continue to present an ambitious programme of change the Queen's Park Team will continue to deliver the Divisional and Departmental objectives efficiently and effectively, ensuring the services offered by Queen's Park and the Open Spaces Department remain sustainable.

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