

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group – For Discussion Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Committee – For Decision	18 November 2015  23 November 2015
<b>Subject:</b> Proposal to introduce Zippos Circus to Queen's Park	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

This report outlines a proposal to introduce Zippos Circus to Queen's Park. Circus shows would give the City of London an opportunity to promote the Open Space for the recreation and enjoyment of its users and to generate revenue. Zippos Circus has been operating in the United Kingdom for over 25 years. The Park Manger is seeking the view of members regarding the feasibility and suitability of Zippos Circus holding circus shows in Queen's Park over a number of consecutive days in May 2016.

### Recommendation(s)

- That members of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group provide feedback on the proposal to enter into a licence agreement with Zippos circus to hold circus events at Queen's Park, as outlined as Option 1 & 2 in this report.
- 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 meeting in November 2015.
- That members of the Hampstead Heath Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee endorse Option 1, as outlined in the report, at their meeting in November 2015.

### 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. It has a number of facilities within the boundaries of the Park including; Children's Play Area, Children's Farm, Tennis Courts and a Pitch & Putt course.
2. The City of London and the Open Spaces Departments continue to face challenges financially, and the Queen's Park Manager is looking at new ways of generating revenue for the Park.
3. Zippos Circus is one of the UK's largest touring circuses and has been touring the country for over 25 years.

4. Hampstead Heath's Leisure and Events Manager has previously negotiated an Annual Licence with Zippos Circus. This event takes place annually at the end of September or in early October at East Heath, which is on the western side of Hampstead Heath, within walking distance of Hampstead village and the Hampstead Heath Overground Station. The licence arrangement in place, at Hampstead Heath, with Zippos generates revenue for the City of London and supports the maintenance and upkeep of Hampstead Heath.
5. It is proposed to introduce Zippos Circus to Queen's Park. The proposed area for the circus would be on the main field in the Park (Figure 1).

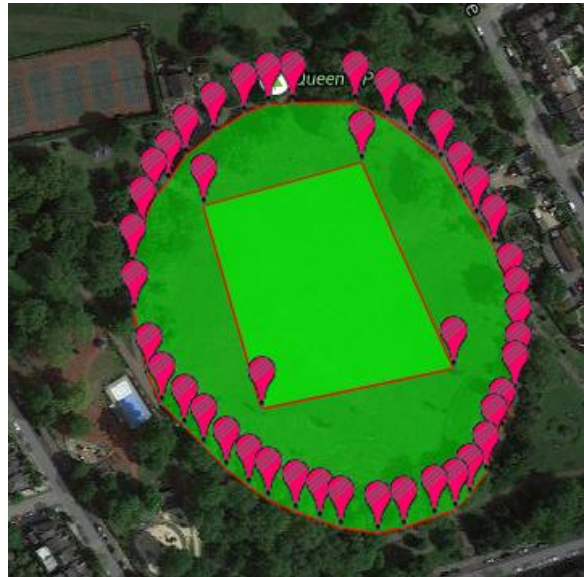


Figure 1: Proposed Area for Zippos Circus

### Current Position

6. Queen's Park already hosts a number of successful events in partnership with other organisations and groups. These events include; 'Where is the Nomad' Outdoor Cinema Screenings, Queen's Park Day, Queen's Park Book Festival and Queen's Park Open Gardens and Studios.
7. Attendance of these events varies, the outdoor cinema events can attract up to 6,000 attendees over four screenings and Queen's Park Day can attract 15,000 visitors in one day.
8. People value their local green spaces; almost nine out of 10 people use their local parks and green spaces. Of the people who use these spaces, 48% do so at least once a week. 81% of respondents had used their local park or Open Space in the last six months. This compares with 32% who had used concert halls, and 26 % who had visited galleries. In 2007, 91% of people thought it was very/fairly important to have green spaces near to where they live, and by 2009 this had risen to 95%. In the largest survey of its kind conducted with those living in deprived communities, residents saw the provision of green space as essential to their quality of life alongside housing, health, education and policing. (CABE Space, 2010).

9. The Local Residents Association (QPARA) are responsible for the running of the Queen's Park Day, Book Festival and Open Gardens / Studios events. As these are run as community events there is little revenue generated directly from these events to support the cost of running the Park. A peppercorn fee is charged for use of the Open Space. However, QPARA continue to be generous with donations towards specific projects in the Park.
10. In September 2015 the Park Manager and a member of QPARA visited Zippos Circus at Twickenham Green, a green space managed by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, which also has a Friends of Group.
11. The QPARA representative spoke with the Friends of Group's Environment Officer regarding various issue, including the impact on the environment. It was advised that a bond be put in place to guard against any ground damage. A bond would be agreed in any licence arrangement.
12. The QPARA representative also spoke informally with local families in the Queen's Park area, on their opinion of Zippos Circus coming to Queen's Park. Responses were largely supportive, and some comments were made about the affordability of tickets.
13. Following our visit to the set up of the circus at Twickenham Green the QPARA representative attended a show with their family, and following the visit said, "I found Zippo's to be a professional outfit who have given a lot of thought to all possible outcomes and offer solutions to mediate."
14. In proximity to Queen's Park, Zippos hold circus shows at Hampstead Heath, Hyde Park and Brent Cross at different times of the year.

## **Options**

15. There are two suggested options, these are:
  1. To permit a licence for one year with a review after the event and consideration for further circus events to be permitted in Queen's Park on an annual basis;
  2. To consider a licence agreement over a longer period, e.g. three years. This agreement could include a break clause for either party.
16. Both options would provide revenue for the Park.
17. It is possible with the offer of a longer licence (Option 2) that a higher revenue figure could be negotiated.

## **Proposals**

18. It is suggested that the Committee considers Option 1 and the City of London, Queen's Park enters in to a one year licence arrangement with Zippos Circus.

19. It is proposed to permit Zippos Circus to operate an events programme in Queen's Park in May 2016, permitting access to the site for a number of shows over a five day period (Friday – Tuesday).
20. This is an opportunity for revenue generation and promoting the Open Space. The objective behind the proposal is to enable the City of London and Queen's Park to increase the number of events it holds throughout the year, which can provide an income to support the wider events programme as well as ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the Park and its facilities.
21. The big top would be erected on the main field of Queen's Park; this area of amenity turf is 6.63 acres. The foot print of the Zippos Circus, including accommodation, vehicles and animal rest areas is 1.85 acres (dimensions taken from the Twickenham Green Circus set-up).
22. An observation following the visit to Twickenham Green in September 2015 was how organised the set-up of the area was. Screening could be used in Queen's Park to reduce the visual impact of any vehicles or accommodation/caravans. The circus uses its own power source from silent generators.
23. Zippos Circus use horses and budgerigars in their shows. When visiting Twickenham Green it was clearly visible that the horses used in the circus were well cared for and housed in suitable accommodation.
24. The introduction of Zippos Circus could encourage people who are not familiar to Queen's Park to attend a circus event in the Park, and possibly use other facilities in the Park.
25. When the Park Manager visited the set-up at Twickenham Green the Managing Director of the circus said that they engaged with the local community, visiting local schools, facilitating school trips to the circus and offering a ticket pricing model which was inclusive making the shows affordable.
26. The event would be marketed through a number of streams including the City of London website, social media and local publicity, e.g. banners.
27. Public transport would be promoted as the preferred mode of transport to get to and leave from the events with excellent bus and rail links close to Queen's Park.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

28. Should the Committee grant permission to proceed with a licence arrangement the Comptroller and City Solicitors Department will be consulted with to assist in the preparation of this document.
29. Introducing Zippos Circus in Queen's Park meets with the City of London Corporate Strategic Aims 2015 – 19; *To provide valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure, to London and the nation.* It meets with Key Policy Priorities 2015 – 19; KPP5 *Increasing the outreach and impact of*

*the City's cultural, heritage and leisure contribution to the life of London and the nation.*

30. A Zippos Circus event in Queen's Park meets with the Departmental Objective of; *Improve the health and wellbeing of community through access to green space and recreation.*

## **Implications**

31. Risk factors to consider for an event of this nature include;

- The over commercialisation of the Open Space
- Environmental damage to the park unless the event is managed carefully
- Animal welfare
- Reputational risks
- The impact on the local neighbourhood.

32. There would be costs associated with City of London resources for this event; any resourcing costs would be accounted for and recovered through a licence fee agreement.

33. A licence agreement would be entered in to between Zippos Circus and the City of London, there would be a fee associated with the issue of this licence.

## **Conclusion**

34. 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 to generate revenue.

35. A circus, which remains popular with families, could be a welcome addition to Queen's Park and its community.

## **Background papers**

- CABE Space, 2010.

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