

## **HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Monday, 13 March 2017**

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held at Parliament Hill Conference Room, Parliament Hill Staff Yard, Parliament Hill Fields, Hampstead Heath, NW5 1QR on Monday, 13 March 2017 at 7.00 pm

#### **Present**

##### **Members:**

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)  
Karina Dostalova (Deputy Chairman)  
Nick Bradfield (Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee)  
Dan Braverman (Heath Hands)  
Tony Ghilchik, representing Colin Gregory (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association)  
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)  
Dr Gaye Henson (Marylebone Birdwatching Society)  
John Hunt, representing John Etheridge (South End Green Association)  
Helen Payne (Friends of Kenwood)  
Thomas Radice (Heath and Hampstead Society)  
Susan Rose (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)  
Steve Ripley (Rambler's Association)  
Ellen Solomons (Vale of Health Society)  
Ellin Stein (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee)  
David Walton (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath)  
John Weston (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee)

##### **Officers:**

Fern Aldous	-	Town Clerk's Department
Carl Locsin	-	Town Clerk's Department
Bob Warnock	-	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Laura Fergie	-	Open Spaces Department
Declan Gallagher	-	Open Spaces Department
Meg Game	-	Open Spaces Department
Lucy Gannon	-	Open Spaces Department
Richard Gentry	-	Open Spaces Department
Tom Lowry	-	Open Spaces Department
Esther Sumner	-	Open Spaces Department

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Harunur Rashid (Black and Ethnic Minorities Community Representative) and Simon Taylor (Hampstead Rugby Club).

The Chairman welcomed Tony Ghilchik (Hampstead Garden Suburb Resident's Association in place of Colin Gregory) and John Hunt (South End Green Association in place of John Etheridge) to the meeting.

The Chairman also welcomed Ellen Solomons who had replaced Stuart Purvis as the representative for the Vale of Health Society and thanked Stuart for his hard work on the Committee over the past three years. The Chairman also thanked Joanne Mould who had retired from the London Wildlife Trust.

It was noted that the meeting was being filmed by students from City, University of London.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

3.1 **Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee Minutes**

**RESOLVED** - that the minutes of the meeting held on the 9 January 2017 be approved as an accurate record, subject to the following amendments:

**Heath Hands Age Profile**

- "those 54-65 made up 28%" *to become* "56-65 made up 28%"
- "those under the age of 55 had risen from 39% to 44%" *to become* "those aged 55 and under had risen from 44% to 61%".

**Matters Arising**

**Walks**

An expanded programme of guided walks had been introduced, including management and conservation walks and walks for those new to the area.

**Fundraising**

A variety of fundraising activities to commemorate Glyn Roberts and to raise money for the British Heart Foundation were being planned including Lifeguards running the London Marathon and concert on the 9 July at the Parliament Hill Bandstand.

3.2 **Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee Minutes**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes from the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee be noted.

3.3 **Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum Minutes**

The Superintendent informed the Committee of an amendment to the Sports Advisory Minutes from the meeting on the 6 February to correct the number of current members from 19 to 25. A Member (London Council for Sport and Recreation) reported that there was concern about the long term sustainability of the clubs given current membership levels.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Sports Advisory Forum held on 6 February 2017 be noted.

4. **HEATH HANDS SUMMARY REPORT FEBRUARY 2017**

A Member (Heath Hands) updated the Committee on recent Heath Hands activity. It was reported that a Special General Meeting had taken place on 23 February 2017. At the meeting Members had unanimously approved the proposal for the group to become a “Charitable Incorporated Organisation”, and this was due to come into effect during 2017. The Member reported that the Trustees had approved a policy on the use of reserves, most of which would be allocated to cover risks and the remainder of which would be spent over the next three years on ordinary course activities and specific projects. Grants had also been sought for the delivery of an outreach project to increase the diversity of users of the Heath and membership of Heath Hands.

It was further reported that Heath Hands had surpassed 10,000 hours of volunteering in a year for the first time and had been able to deliver more sessions than the previous year, making the sessions less crowded and more enjoyable.

Members discussed potential reasons behind the increase in Membership which was not obvious and seemed to be for a variety of reasons. It was felt that this area that would be worth Heath Hands investigating to capitalise on the reasons and further increase the number and diversity of members. Advertising would be increased on a small scale in the coming months, including better utilising existing noticeboards.

In response to a query from a Member it was reported that Heath Hands did want to increase their work with those training to work in open spaces and in conservation, but that Heath Hands was not set up to work on its own with children under 16 years of age.

The Committee thanked the Heath Hands for their ongoing work.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent updated the Committee on recent management and operational activity at the Heath since January. The following points were noted:

**Management Plan**

It was reported that consultants have been appointed to undertake the engagement process to develop a community vision for Hampstead Heath. This is a key stage in the preparation of the 2018 Plan. John Beyer (Heath & Hampstead Society representative on the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee) and Richard Sumray (London Council for Sport and Recreation representative) had volunteered to provide local advice to the consultants as they undertake the community engagement project during April and May 2017.

### **Capital Projects**

The three capital projects reported to the last meeting of the Committee, including the East Heath Car Park, had cleared Gateway 2 of the City Corporation projects process at the Project Sub-Committee.

### **Golders Hill Park Zoo**

The Committee considered recommendations in regards to the regeneration of the Golders Hill Park zoo. Members were informed that the current stock at the zoo was a mix of native and non-native species, and had been compiled from what was available from surplus stock lists when vacancies occurred. The proposal was to renew the collection to create a narrative of British natural history, with species that were or are native to Britain alongside invasive species which were now resident. There would be a particular focus on wildlife that can be found on the Heath. It was noted that there was only a small number of mammals that would fit into this narrative (30 native mammals to the British Isles, of which 17 were bats). Examples of the species that would be included in the programme were Muntjac deer (introduced/invasive) and reindeer (native but no longer resident).

Members were supportive of the proposal and believed it was unique to the London area. It was felt there was more work to be undertaken on the desired outcomes from the renewal.

In response to a query from a Member in relation to the number of school trips that visit the zoo it was reported that although it was not possible to predict that the number of visits would increase, the quality of the visits would be greatly improved. It was confirmed the curriculum for Key Stage 2 and 3, which dictated that adaptation to the environment be taught, could be covered by almost any species.

It was asked that the zoo promote the wider ecological corridor and importance of wildlife supporting measures beyond the Heath. Officers reported that interpretation would make up a large part of the regeneration, and the Department's Learning Team had had critical input into the proposal.

In response to a query from a Member (Heath & Hampstead Society), the Committee discussed the disposal and replacement of the existing exhibits. It was reported that the Lemurs would be kept until they died of natural causes as they could not be rehomed. Members queried what would happen when there was a single lemur left, and were informed that a number of options would have to be considered.

The redevelopment of the zoo would take between five and ten years to complete and careful planning would be required to ensure enclosures were suitable for current exhibits during the transition. A Member (London Council for Sport and Recreation) proposed that fundraising for the scheme be sought from external sponsors. They further proposed that the outcomes expected from the renewal be strengthened in the face of growing opposition to keeping animals in captivity.

### **Cross Country Running**

The Superintendent reported that both the Southern Counties Cross Country Championships and the North West London Young Athletes Cross Country League fixture had been successful and favourable weather had reduced the impact on the Heath. The Sports Advisory Forum would be reviewing both events at the May meeting.

### **Cycling**

Members considered access for cyclists on the Heath and the maintenance and design of dual access paths. There was a discussion on whether commuter cyclists should be encouraged on to the Heath, and the pros (reducing vehicle numbers and pollution levels on roads surrounding the Heath along with encouraging healthy lifestyles) and cons (disruptive and potentially dangerous to pedestrians using shared use paths) were debated. Consequently, the Superintendent suggested that the wider issue of cycling should be considered under the discussion on the development of the new Management Plan, and proposed that the specific proposal that had been received should be deferred until this had been finalised. It was recognised there were strong lobby groups on both sides of the argument. A Member (Heath & Hampstead Society) believed that the issue was being revisited too soon after a long debate and conclusion on the matter had been reached approximately 10 years ago, however the Superintendent felt that the matters had not been formally concluded and the context of the discussion needs to be broadened and therefore the issue may warrant further consideration.

It was asked that both Transport for London and the Royal Parks be consulted on any future discussion.

### **Eruv**

The Superintendent had met with the applicant to discuss the reservations of the Committee (and the Grand Committee) about an increase in the visible built environment around the Heath. The applicant was investigating revising the proposal so that the wire would be attached to existing lamp columns, with a single column required at Judge's Walk, the planning application for which would be monitored.

A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) queried which thickness of wire had been confirmed for the scheme, as, unlike the thicker wire available, the thin wire was not visibly intrusive. The Superintendent undertook to confirm this with the applicant.

### **Drones**

A guidance document for the use of drones of the Heath has been developed after consultation with both internal and external parties. The document has been designed to be easy to use by staff and distribute to our visitors and interested parties. The guidance stated that if a drone carried surveillance equipment then permission for its use would need to be sought from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the landlord (the City of London Corporation). If the drone did not carry surveillance equipment, was below a certain weight and

was being used responsibly then its use on the Heath was permitted in line with the relevant Air Navigation Order Schedule.

Members expressed concern that the noise generated from drones had not been considered in the guidance. Officers suggested to the Committee that any drones creating noise could possibly be dealt with under the nuisance byelaw, officers would investigate this option further. It was asked that if it was considered a nuisance, this be stated in the guidance. Members felt that the City Corporation should have a policy above that of the regulations which did not permit any drone usage except in exceptional circumstances. The Superintendent clarified that the guidance could not state anything that was not enforceable, and it was decided that a statement explaining that drones were banned in most circumstances be included at the forefront of the guidance, and that the Heath was a place of peace and tranquillity for the enjoyment of all.

The Superintendent undertook to amend the guidance prior to the Management Committee meeting in May.

### **Benches**

Recommendations to be included in a policy for the provision and management of bench dedications were presented. It was proposed that the standard period of sponsorship of memorial benches on the Heath should continue to be ten years. Dedications that were not renewed after ten years would be offered to applicants on the waiting list. It was felt that an initial exercise to contact the families of current dedications would significantly reduce the current waiting list of 120 applicants. The Superintendent confirmed that the waiting list was closed in 2016 and that a cap would remain in place in the interim, pending finalisation of the policy. In response to a query from a Member, it was thought that bench dedications made over twenty years ago would extend for the life of the bench. The majority of these benches have reached the end of their functional life and will be replaced with new benches which will be made available for re-dedication. A member queried the report's recommendation that the total number of benches across the Heath continues to be limited at current levels (approximately 550) and suggested that this may need further consideration. It was felt that the report's recommendation for regular review of the schedule of locations would enable timely consideration of the placement, distribution and number of benches in each area. The Superintendent confirmed that overall, current provision is adequate.

### **Planning**

The following points were noted:

- **Heath House:** Representations had been sent in against the development and the application had subsequently been withdrawn.
- **Water House:** the development had been due to go to appeal, however the applicant had withdrawn shortly before as the house was being sold.
- **114 West Heath Road:** The City had submitted an objection to the London Borough of Barnet Finchley and Golders Green Area Planning Committee; however the application had been approved. There was concern about the effects of the development of the roots of a veteran

tree within Golders Hill Park, with a higher level of tree root protection being advised by Corporation Officers.

- **84 West Heath Road:** The London Borough of Barnet has issued a planning enforcement for the former care home to be converted into a school known as Heathside High. A change of use application was not required if the development included boarding; the school had until August 2017 to fulfil this criteria. There had been concerns about the use of Golders Hill Park by Heathside High schoolchildren, however, the Operational Services Manager reported they had caused no damage and were using the park in accordance with the principles set out in the Management Plan.
- **William Ellis School:** The works at the school would need re-scoping to allow it to be delivered within the £36.2million budget. Planning consent for the proposal will expire in June 2018. A request had been submitted for the use of the existing path to the side gate of the school whilst the work was ongoing.

Members expressed concern that the City Corporation's knowledge of planning applications was being restrained and that they were not being consulted on about major applications with a significant impact on the Heath. The example of Jack Straw's Castle was given, and Members felt that a significant Community Infrastructure Levy could be expected from the project. The Superintendent proposed developing closer links to Barnet Council and their Planning Officers to increase the intelligence the City Corporation held on upcoming developments.

### **Art Installation**

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly installation had now been removed. There had been a proposal for an installation named "*The Awakening 2*" to be displayed at the Heath, and further work was being undertaken with the artist to establish dimensions and logistics, before a proposal was put before the Committee.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted, and that the views of the Committee be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

## **6. CAFE OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath detailing the options for the café leases.

Over 2,000 people had completed a survey which had formed part of the engagement and consultation process, and this had assisted the Café Working Party in the development of the performance indicators. It was proposed that the existing tenant's leases be extended for a further 3 years.

A Member (London Council for Sport and Recreation) queried the indicator for the café being a "community hub", and felt this was hard to define and potentially unfair on the leaseholders. A Member (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee) who was a member of the Café Working Group reported

this was an important indicator to the group, and that it encompassed how welcome customers from diverse backgrounds felt in using the cafés. It was agreed this could be expanded and better defined.

The Superintendent undertook to investigate whether indicator 3.3 (“Prices benchmarked to 6-8 other local cafes ...”) could factor in a comparison of the rents the cafés paid, as this could skew the results in favour of those with low prices and low rents. It was further confirmed that the undertaking of surveys was factored into the Performance Indicators; the feedback of any survey would be discussed with the tenant, however the results of those surveys would not be considered as a measurement of performance as part of the property lease.

The Committee were supportive of the proposal to extend the leases of the current occupiers for three years, but considered the transition period to the new lease in January 2018 vital to the successful introduction of performance indicators with the existing tenants. It was noted that the current occupiers shouldn't be disadvantaged by the restriction on making large capital investments. The Superintendent confirmed that another engagement exercise would be held when the leases were due to expire

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted, and that the views of the Consultative Committee regarding the extension of the café leases be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

## **7. MODEL BOATING POND OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

The Committee discussed a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath which set out a number of options for the future management of the island in the Model Boating Pond. The report recommended Option 3b the division of the island for birds and people. There had been 5,333 supporters for a petition to reserve the island as a bird sanctuary. Members debated the options and the following points were made:

- The Marylebone Bird Watching Society supported Option 2 (creating a sanctuary) as the aim of the organisation was to protect birds.
- The Hampstead Heath Society also supported Option 2 as they felt that the heavy footfall of opening the island to people would damage tree roots, defeating the purpose of its creation. They were not supportive of a compromise.
- A Member (London Council for Sport and Recreation) was supportive of the recommended Option 3b and argued that flexibility should be built into the decision so reviews could be undertaken.
- However, another Member (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) argued that this strategy could cause reputational damage, if a decision that was taken needed to be reversed.
- A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Resident's Association) supported Option 1, as the Boating pond was the only one on the Heath exclusively for the people. However, he would also be happy to support Option 3b.



- The Highgate Society had been supportive of Option 3b, however the Member representing them was concerned about this approach given the arguments that had been made against it. The amount of use the island was likely to attract could result in a large litter problem, and it was concerning that birds that had roosted in the recovery period for the island could be disturbed in carrying out the scheme.
- A Member (South End Green Association) thanked the Officers for their consideration in deciding the future of the island. He felt that the reasoning given in the report for the creation of the causeway was not sufficient and felt that its presence contravened the management plan objective to “enhance the nature conservation value” of the ponds. The causeway was aesthetically out of place and users would not expect one to be there. He felt that the pond could still be used for fishing and model boating if the island were reserved for wildlife. He therefore supported Option 2.

In response to a query from a Member, Officers confirmed that the position of the reserve area under Option 3b had been determined by the position of the vertical edge, which was the only place suitable for angling.

The Senior Ecologist reported that the island had so far seen low levels of bird habitation.

In summarising the debate, the Chairman acknowledged the range of views on offer and noted that, due to the need for a recovery period for the plant life on the island to establish, the decision on its future was not pressing. It was acknowledged that further work needed to be undertaken on the impact of the proposals on the trees, and Members were supportive of deferring the decision for the time being.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted, and that the views of the Committee concerning the model boating pond island be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee.

## 8. **PONDS PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent updating them on the ongoing management of the ecological works which formed part of the ponds project. In response to a query from a Member concerning the mowing of the causeway, Officers confirmed that a meeting was due to be held with the Dam Supervising Engineer.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

## 9. **OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent presenting them with a proposed summary of the updated Business Plan. The Chairman reiterated that the commitment to the “golden thread” ensured that input from the Committee would inform the work of the Open Spaces Department.

A Member (London Council for Sport and Recreation) asked for greater consistency in quality being stressed as a deliverable.

**RESOLVED** – that the report be noted and that the views of the Committee be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

10. **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The dates of the next meetings were noted to be:

**The meeting ended at 9.25 pm**

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Chairman

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