



Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee

INFORMATION PACK

N.B: These matters are for information and have been marked * and circulated separately. These will be taken without discussion, unless the Clerk has been informed that a Member has questions or comments prior to the start of the meeting.

Date: TUESDAY, 20 MAY 2025
Time: 4.00 pm
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOMS - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Hampstead Heath

8. ***ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 3 - 18)

10. ***HEATH HANDS UPDATE**

To receive a report of Heath Hands.

For Information
(Pages 19 - 24)

13. ***TRANSFORMATION FOR THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITIES – PROJECT UPDATE AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION PHASE**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment and the Chamberlain.

For Information
(Pages 25 - 32)

Highgate Wood & Queen's Park

14. ***ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT (HIGHGATE WOOD)**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 33 - 38)

15. ***ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT (QUEEN'S PARK)**

Report of the Executive Director, Environment.

For Information
(Pages 39 - 46)

19. ***HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEENS PARK KILBURN TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL
REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH
2024**

Report of the Chamberlain.

For Information
(Pages 47 - 86)

20. ***REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN**

Report of the Town Clerk.

For Information
(Pages 87 - 92)

Agenda Item 8

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee	Dated: 29 April 2025 20 May 2025
Subject: Assistant Director's Report	Public report: For information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	-Diverse engaged communities -Leading sustainable environment -Vibrant thriving destination -Providing excellent services -Flourishing public spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£0
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment Department
Report author:	Bill LoSasso, Superintendent, North London Open Spaces

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since the last meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee on 14 January 2025 and last meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee on 4 February 2025.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Report format

1. The Assistant Director's Report aligns with the four strategic themes and ten priorities of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy. Additional matters of interest and importance will be covered in an "Additional Relevant Matters" section as needed.

We protect and conserve the Heath

Priority 1: A mosaic of natural habitats is maintained and flourishes

2. Further to Officers' report on dog swimming and pesticides, signage has now been installed at the dog swimming areas with QR codes directing dog owners to information that will help them reduce the use of these chemicals and mitigate the contamination of the Heath's water courses.
3. The Natural Environment Division has commissioned an external consultant to evaluate the potential of biodiversity net gain (BNG) off-setting at Natural Environment sites. In England, BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021), and ensures the development projects result in an overall improvement to biodiversity, either on-site at the development site or off-site. This would create potential opportunities for sites to engage with developers completing projects elsewhere and enter into agreements where biodiversity enhancement projects funded by the developers would gain equivalent BNG credits, enabling the developers to satisfy planning requirements set out in the Environment Act 2021. The consultant visited Hampstead Heath mid-February, and they identified areas on the Hampstead Heath Extension where there may be potential for the creation of wildflower meadows, but these need to be given careful consideration before any decisions can be made. Epping Forest – which has 750 hectares of buffer lands, much of which is agricultural land - has the greatest potential for BNG agreements.
4. The Model Boating Pond project to remove the causeway and create an authentic island is now underway. Site visits by potential contractors have taken place and we are awaiting quotations. As a precautionary measure, we are also

submitting a planning application as there was some controversy over the usage and purpose of the island at the design stage in 2014 and a petition eventually resulted in the decision to designate the island as a refuge for wildlife. If the planning application is approved, works will involve removing the causeway and repurposing the removed soil to create over 100m² of new reed beds on the Pond's eastern bank. We are working towards completing the works in summer 2025.

5. The City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy is now in its fifth year, and there are several significant resilience works planned on the Heath between now and the end of March 2027. Over £120,000 has been allocated to Hampstead Heath including the creation of 10 new small ponds, and clusters of natural construction leaky dams. Leaky dams are small barriers that help create small pools and retain water in areas longer which helps wetland plants, such as brooklime, and invertebrates, to flourish. They help to enhance wetland habitat by slowing down water through the creation of small, natural, woody barriers, and also helps to reduce erosion and improves the diversity of habitat on the Heath. New reed beds are planned on the Highgate chain of ponds, and at Golders Hill Park.
6. A series of training workshops for managing wildfires has been facilitated by the Climate Action's Resilience Team and a number of Conservation Rangers and Heath Rangers will be taking part in the training sessions later this month. The training covers both the practical and safety aspects of managing fires, but also the drafting of fire management plans, alongside the deployment of firefighting equipment. Although we have not experienced any protracted hot dry spells and drought conditions in the last few years in London, we anticipate hotter drier conditions as part of climate change and higher risk of wildfires, especially in periods of high visitor numbers, and this training ensures that offices remain equipped to manage the Heath.
7. The Conservation Team has carried out cyclical coppicing and vegetation management at various locations, including the Old Orchard next to Kenwood Nursery Yard, the banks around the Viaduct Pond, along the Seven Sister's Pond on the Heath Extension, the eastern side of the Bird Sanctuary, and the gorse patches at Sandy Heath. The Team has also focused on managing bramble spread at Pryor's Field, South Meadow, the Ladies' Pond and the Bellmore slopes at the Vale of Health. Bramble has spread significantly since the pandemic. Although it provides excellent habitat for a wide range of species, including nesting birds, it was starting to establish in important grassland areas at multiple locations, and last autumn saw a concerted effort to cut back the last few years' growth.
8. The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) are producing a report this spring which analyses all the Hampstead Heath hedgehog data collected since 2018. They

will use this information to calculate population density and trends. This report will also enable us to understand whether the hedgehog population on the Heath and surrounding gardens and open space is stable, increasing or decreasing. Further surveys are planned this year at Highgate Wood and surrounding gardens. The project also involves community engagement, which will include Heath Hands volunteers and a survey of local areas close to Hampstead Heath.

9. Winter tasks have been carried out, which includes hedge cutting before the start of bird-nesting season, clearing gullies, ditches, grids and outlets to prevent flooding and to assist with drainage of the Heath in preparation for the first cuts on amenity, fine turf and sports areas.

We protect and conserve the Heath

Priority 2: Heritage aspects and landscape character are maintained

10. The Conservation Manager walked the English National Cross-Country course after the event to assess the ground damage. Due to the very wet conditions, there is surface ground damage, but we are confident that this will recover as it always does, with the worst areas fenced off to allow recovery. The Team will carry out chain harrowing to regulate the soil surface when the ground conditions are drier.
11. Structural repair and timber strengthening works continue to take place on the Pergola, with weekly surveys being carried out. Eleven tilt monitors and crack gauges were installed on 12 and 13 December 2024 and were live almost immediately. They record positional data every 15 minutes and are regularly used to monitor the structure. There has been a history of structural movement on the site, and whilst movement has been less severe, secondary steel installation, crack repair and reinforcement have been regular occurrences, particularly around the rotunda. 11 separate emergency works were identified at the Pergola, and these remedial, safety works commenced before Christmas. Some works are complicated by weather restrictions, but the works are progressing well. The Belvedere roof repairs have been completed. Contractors are currently erecting bracing timbers for the red brick section of the Pergola, and this section will be closed locally whilst the remedial works are carried out to ensure the work is not disrupted and visitors are safely diverted elsewhere. Contractors are also working on the bridge and replacing loose balustrade bottles. Graffiti removal and re-painting works to the Pergola are scheduled to commence soon. New shrubs and plants will be planted in the spring to

complement the existing planting, to enhance the landscape value and ensure the heritage and landscape character of the structure is maintained.

12. Officers are collaborating with colleagues in the Natural Environment Heritage Team and City Surveyor's Department to submit an expression of interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for funding to enable the Pergola's restoration.

We protect and conserve the Heath

Priority 3: A balance is maintained between visitor activities and the conservation of natural, built and heritage values

13. The City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy is funding small scale natural flood management (NFM) in the form of leaky dams while restoring existing ponds and creating a number of new small ponds across the Heath. These leaky dams and ponds have been mapped by the Carbon Removals Team, who are supporting the Heath's Ecologist and the Conservation Team to construct these structures between now and the end of March 2027. Works will be starting on the Hampstead Heath Extension later this month. The Heath Ecologist is engaging with London Borough of Barnet's Resilience Team to identify whether 'Ordinary Watercourse Consents' are required for installing leaky dams along the mainstream that flows through the site. There are five clusters of leaky dams planned for the Heath Extension.
14. Small-scale works are also planned in the East Heath area to help address water flows on the Heath, which will also reduce surface water flow during heavy rain onto the East Heath Road that can result in localised flooding outside the Hampstead Heath overground station. Surface water will be deflected off pathways onto grass areas, where the water will infiltrate and dissipate. Officers are also looking at the area to the north of the locking gate at Parliament Hill, and similar measures will be employed to deflect surface water into grassland to reduce flooding on and off the Heath. This work will start this summer and has been part of a consultation process between Camden Resilience Team and residents.
15. As previously noted, the Head of Conservation and the Tree Team are reviewing the site closure thresholds that are used during windstorms. Please see Appendix 1, showing tables on wind speed closure events at Hampstead Heath. Officers have carried out benchmarking with other City Corporation sites and the Royal Parks, analysed tree failure data across NLOS, and are consulting with the corporate health and safety and insurance teams. Officers plan to submit a report with proposals at the next committee.

16. Climate Action Strategy funds have been made available to the Tree Team which will enable them to now monitor and address serious soil compaction issues at Hampstead Heath, which continues to threaten the health of many trees. This work is long overdue and mirrors a wider national issue of soil health and soil impoverishment, with a direct link to plant health and habitat degradation. The funds will cover soil sampling and the purchase of specialist decompaction equipment that will be shared between Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath. The Tree Team is continuing their programme of protecting veteran trees around Hampstead Heath; the most recent works have focused on the line of veteran oak trees that run alongside the southern side of the Zoo enclosures. This location has suffered from long-term compaction, and it is hoped that the rope and post enclosures will allow the rooting zones of the old oaks to gradually recover.

17. At Golders Hill Park Zoo, new interpretation boards have been designed and delivered, which will educate and inform visitors about the Zoo and the species it holds. The interpretation boards will be installed on each of the enclosures.

The Heath enriches our lives

Priority 4: Improved physical health, mental health and emotional well-being

18. We continue to regulate forest school activity on Hampstead Heath with the collaboration of the Learning Team. Work continues to license a small number of forest school groups and increase the use of the Old Orchard Garden at Kenwood Nursery Yard to reduce the pressure on woodland sites on the Heath. New licences for 2025 are being issued, and at least one of the three forest schools will be using the Old Orchard Garden.

19. The football and rugby season is underway, and the pitches are in full use and games are being played on the Heath Extension when conditions allow. It has been a very wet season, so the pitches are extremely soft and muddy.

20. London Heathside Athletics Cross-Country event was held on the Heath Extension on Saturday 18 January 2025, which was very well attended and very popular. Hereward House School Cross-Country also held an event on the Extension on Friday 7 March 2025, with over 200 runners attending from local schools.

21. The National Cross-Country Championships was held at Parliament Hill Fields on Saturday 22 February. It was a great success, with over 6,000 competitors from

juniors to adult runners, with the men's adult race having over 1500 entrants. The Ranger Teams from Parliament Hill and East Heath joined forces to set up, steward, and break down the event. Competitors and spectators from all over the country attended and enjoyed the day. Work was carried out after the event to ensure the Heath will recover quickly.

22. Parliament Hill Athletics Track continues to be well used by many clubs, schools, colleges and universities for athletic meetings, sports days and training sessions, and is very popular since its refurbishment. Bookings are underway for the 2025 athletics season.
23. A grant was awarded from England Athletics to help purchase a new hammer net at the Parliament Hill Athletics Track, which will be purchased in March along with new starting blocks and some new competition hurdles.
24. Phase two of the Ladies' Pond maintenance project started on 24 February 2025 and will take six weeks. The planned completion date is April 2025. The Ladies' Pond has relocated operations to the Mixed Pond for this duration. The work includes refurbishment of the indoor showers and changing space, refurbishment of the staff accommodation, improving the boiler and hot water systems, resurfacing the lower rescue deck, refurbishing the outdoor shower and resurfacing the approach path and lower meadow steps. As part of this project, the Mixed Pond has had temporary showers installed in the changing rooms and the staff kitchen area has been refurbished.
25. Drainage channels have been installed at the entrance to the Mixed Pond to prevent rainwater running into the facility. Further drainage and levelling of the approach path is scheduled for April.
26. The Men's Pond main jetty is being refurbished. A new concrete base has been laid at the end of the jetty and the diving board recured in place. Handrails around the edge have been replaced and the concrete slabs re-laid and pointed. During this work, the accessible steps attached to the new accessible changing space are being used. This enables swimmers to access the bathing pond safely whilst works are ongoing.
27. Funding was secured to install new roller shutters on the lifeguards' observation huts at the Men's and Mixed Ponds. The shutters will safeguard and protect the windows and provide better security for the huts from out-of-hours activity and

any anti-social behaviour. This work is scheduled to start before the peak summer season.

28. Successful events have been held at the Lido and Ponds. In December the Lido hosted a British Red Cross charity swim and in January 2025, a Crisis Icebreaker charity swim. Both events were well attended. The Men's Pond hosted the traditional Christmas Day Lifebuoys race, which was also very well attended.

The Heath is inclusive and welcoming
Priority 5: Increasing social inclusion

29. The Zoo offers work experience placements to students throughout the year, and they have received numerous requests for this spring and summer and are now fully booked. Their first student joined the Team on 24 March 2025.
30. The Zoo Team took part in interviews to help celebrate National Apprenticeship Week, which took place from 10 - 16 February 2025. It highlighted the benefits of apprenticeships and the work of apprentices and other employees at Golders Hill Park Zoo.
31. Meetings have been arranged with Capital Kids Cricket to discuss getting more kids and local schools involved in playing cricket and using the facilities at Parliament Hill Fields.
32. The Learning Team have engaged over 27,000 learning participants on Hampstead Heath so far this year (April 2024 – February 2025). This includes school, play and youth engagement. Special projects have included a careers day at Hampstead Heath, as part of the London Careers Festival. Participating students had the opportunity to meet inspiring role models from across the Environment Department and explore various job roles in fields such as ecology, learning, environmental resilience, and carbon removal. The City Corporation is a partner of the London Careers Festival, an annual event that connects young people with career opportunities across a range of sectors, while raising awareness and building aspirations.

The Heath is inclusive and welcoming
Priority 6: Diversity and equality

33. The Ponds Access Project has been completed and the final snagging at the Men's Pond is due for completion in April.

34. The sandpit area at Golders Hill Park remains closed to the public. A NCIL funding application for £65,000 to Barnet Council was submitted in December 2024. The NCIL funding was successful and the funding will ensure the sandpit area is completed, the adjoining playground is renovated, access is improved with five pieces of play equipment to be replaced with DDA-compliant play items. This will ensure the playground is inclusive and welcoming and meets play safety standards. An external contractor will be appointed, and it is hoped the work can be completed by the summer holidays. Officers are grateful for this new partnership with Barnet Council and look forward to continuing to work together.

Together we care for the Heath

Priority 7: Increased sense of collective ownership and personal responsibility

35. The Golders Hill Park Zoo Team have been running a competition at the Zoo for children to submit a drawing of the Scottish wildcats. The winners will be announced shortly, and they will win a year's adoption and their pictures will be displayed on the enclosure.

36. A separate report provides an update on Heath Hands' work on the Heath since the last committee meeting.

Together we care for the Heath

Priority 8: Visitor behaviour is pro-environmental

37. Practical volunteer sessions continue to be popular with Heath Hands in both Golders Hill Park and the Hill Garden, with three sessions a week being hosted by the Gardening Team. The tasks have included canopy reductions, clearing compartments and a hard prune of the apple trees in preparation for the renovation works taking place at the Pergola.

38. The Great British Spring Clean, a Keep Britain Tidy campaign to encourage people to get involved with litter picks, took place between 21 March to 6 April. There were three litter picks organised by Heath Hands with around 20 volunteers. The groups consisted of a mix of public, Heath Hands volunteers and youth volunteers focusing on the Parliament Hill area.

Together we care for the Heath

Priority 9: People treat the Heath and other visitors with respect

39. Officers have provided updates to both committees on ongoing public health and safety matters occurring on West Heath, including the accumulation of litter that must be collected and disposed of by officers, including litter from sexual activity, used drug needles, and drugs. Officers continue to liaise with the Metropolitan Police as appropriate to address illegal activities, in addition to increased patrols by the Hampstead Heath Constabulary, and are working with local stakeholders to inform our further actions. Officers continue to carry out daily patrols of the Heath to ensure visitors adhere to the byelaws and to assist with any public enquiries.
40. On Sunday 2 March, a planned event occurred in West Heath that was organised to protest posters that had recently been hung by members of the public in West Heath that were in opposition to West Heath's use for cruising. The Hampstead Heath Constabulary did an excellent job engaging with the participants, supported by the Metropolitan Police. The event finished by 3:00pm.

Together we care for the Heath

Priority 10: Responsible management

41. Following an extended disinfection and descaling of the outlets in 2024, a report confirmed that Legionnaires is no longer detected at the Heath Extension changing rooms. Units that were installed take accurate readings of the site usage, flow and the temperatures provide 24/7 monitoring. All the water running into the changing rooms is now fed by the mains, bypassing the header tanks, which is aiding the flushing system, and avoiding problems with stagnation which contribute to the occurrence of Legionnella. Weekly flushing also takes place to prevent any build-up of contamination, and sampling will occur every six months to align with the end and the start of the rugby season.
42. The Lido sauna closed at the end of October 2024 for essential maintenance work, as the wooden benches and supporting structures needed to be replaced. This is due to the high demand and usage of the facility (approximately 180 swimmers per day). Work was delayed because of the long lead-in times for the materials over the festive period. The sauna reopened on 7 January 2025.
43. The Lido was closed between 3 - 14 February for the complete replacement of the electrical switchgear for the building. The new installation was completed successfully within the timescale and will now allow other projects to move forward, such as the installation of more PVs on the Lido roof.

44. During the Lido closure, further works began on the terraces, which included resurfacing the concrete in front of the cafe and gym. The perimeter walls to the north of the building have been inspected and require repairs to tackle the cracks and subsidence. This work will be addressed in the autumn.
45. A lot of identified works were scheduled in the Cyclical Work Programme for Golders Hill Park and will be completed in the coming months. This includes a new Lemur shed which has been installed and completed. Other works include repairs to the staff yard, re-wiring of the office, sheds and new electrics, lighting and CCTV, repairs to the pathways, resurfacing many of the tarmac paths throughout the park and refurbishment of the cafe toilets. The toilet works commenced on 24 February 2025 and will take six weeks. Portaloos are in-situ for the duration of the works.
46. A report on the Heath five-year business plan is the subject of a separate report to this committee.

Additional relevant matters

47. Appointments have been made for the roles of Head Gardener at Golders Hill Park, Operative Ranger at Golders Hill Park, Operative Rangers at Parliament Hill, Operative Rangers at West Heath, Kenwood and Heath Extension. The Head of Development & Partnerships and Constabulary Sergeant positions have been posted, and the annual recruitment for seasonal lifeguards is underway.
48. A new Project Manager was appointed in January 2025 to oversee, build and manage the new bespoke Leisure Management System with XN Leisure for the swimming facilities on the Heath. The work will ensure the existing booking systems are maintained and remain operational until the new system is live, which we hope will be in autumn 2025.
49. The English National Cross-Country Championships returned to Parliament Hill Fields on 22 February, attracting thousands of runners to the iconic and challenging course. Known for its demanding terrain, the recent heavy rains made conditions particularly muddy and treacherous, testing the endurance and skill of all participants. Parliament Hill has a long-standing connection with the National Cross-Country Championships. The venue first hosted the Women's Championship in 1950 and the Men's Championship in 1957. Since then, it has remained one of the most revered locations known throughout the athletics world as the home of cross-country running, hosting either the men's or women's championships on multiple occasions. The Championships follow a three-year rotation between the South, Midlands, and North, meaning Parliament Hill

typically hosts the event once every three years. This rotation helps preserve the land while giving different regions the chance to experience the National.

50. The English National Cross-Country Championships is more than just an elite sporting event; it is a powerful platform for inspiring young people, promoting lifelong fitness, and supporting the national health and well-being agenda. For many young athletes, the National Championships serve as their first experience of high-level competition, igniting a passion for running and personal achievement. Schools and clubs across the country use this event to engage young runners, encouraging them to set goals and experience the thrill of competing on an iconic course. The Highgate Harriers put in a phenomenal effort to secure third place in the team standings—a fantastic achievement on home soil. The club's hard work and determination shone through, and the atmosphere was electric as they battled it out for a well-deserved podium finish.

51. We have several significant events taking place at the Heath between now and the next committee in June. Between 9 April and 21 April we will be welcoming back the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain's Easter Fair at Parliament Hill Fields, a traditional Easter fair featuring a variety of rides, games, and food stalls suitable for all ages. From 7 – 11 May, the Affordable Art Fair will take place at the Lower Fairground Site. The event showcases contemporary art from over 100 galleries. Finally, there will be a Race for Life event starting at East Heath, featuring 5k and 10k runs to support Cancer Research UK. Details of events taking place in late summer will be provided at June's committee.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Financial implications

52. No implications.

Resource implications

53. No implications.

Legal implications

54. No implications.

Risk implications

55. Risks are monitored and recorded through the various risk registers, including the Division and Departmental Risk Registers.

Equalities implications

56. No implications.

Climate implications

57. Included within the business plan for 2025-26 are a series of projects which contribute towards achieving the City of London's Climate Action Strategy, which was launched in October 2020. A key part of the strategy is conserving and enhancing biodiversity alongside reducing carbon emissions.

Security implications

58. Security implications are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk register.

Conclusion

59. This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since the last meeting of the respective committees.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Tables on wind speed closure events.

Bill LoSasso

Assistant Director (Superintendent)

North London Open Spaces

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Appendix 1: tables on wind speed closures events

Table 1.1: the number of wind events (with gusts of over 40mph) leading to site closure for each year since 2010.

Annual Occurrences over Threshold	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Mean
Hampstead Heath	0	1	2	3	6	5	6	4	7	9	13	2	7	5	8	5.2

Table 1.2: instances of site closure (predicted and actual) due to wind speed thresholds reached since 1 January 2025.

Date	Event	Wind speed prediction (gust)	Wind speed actual (gust)	Length of time closed
01-Jan	No name	53 mph	45 mph	GHP & Heath Playgrounds closed all day
06-Jan	No name	46 mph	38 mph	No closure
23-Jan	Eowyn	41 mph	23 mph	No closure
24-Jan	Eowyn	52 mph	40 mph	GHP & Heath Playgrounds closed am
26-Jan	No name	48 mph	31 mph	No closure
27-Jan	No name	44 mph	40 mph	No closure despite 40mph gusts after risk assessment

				undertaken by the Tree Team
23-Feb	No name	43 mph	38 mph	No closure



Heath Hands Activity Update: 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

Report to: Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee and Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee.

Author: Colin Houston

Heath Hands overview

1. Heath Hands is a registered charity delivering conservation, community, learning and wellbeing programmes across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Keats House and at the Kenwood Estate.
2. This short report summarises the charity's main activities on NLOS during this financial year according to its strategic and charitable objectives and Strategy and pursuant to the Partnership Agreement signed with the City of London Corporation through until 2029.

Highlights

3. The involvement of volunteers has been growing on Hampstead Heath over the last twelve months with over 14,000 hours contributed compared to a usual annual average of 10,500. For a breakdown of activity across the sites, compared against the average please see the graph on page 3.
4. Our current number of active volunteers is 191. Over the past 12 months, we recruited 51 new volunteers, with 38 individuals leaving, meaning our overall number of registered volunteers involved this year was 242.
5. In 2024 Heath Hands celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Strategic Objectives

6. The Heath Hands' Strategy (2021 - 2030) provides strategic direction, and outlines our aims and objectives and priorities through 2024/5. This report outlines below our work in furtherance of these four strategic aims (Community, Conservation, Learning, and Wellbeing) since our last report to this committees.

Conservation

7. Heath Hands' practical volunteering sessions are running across all parts of Hampstead Heath, with involvement of teams and sites as shown on graph 1 on page 3. The Ranger Team restarted sessions on the Heath Extension in December, and we provided support for the Heath and Hampstead Society-led grazing project on the Extension in September.
8. The annual wildlife monitoring projects surveying reptile, butterfly, dragonfly and phenology transects have been very successful, the latter in collaboration with LNHS. We supported several hedgehog surveys in 2024, and detailed reports on all this activity can be found on our website: www.heath-hands.org.uk/ecology-wildlife. The launch of the 2025 season begins in early April with plans for the addition of a new reptile transect covering Sandy Heath and the upper Hampstead pond chain.



9. Around the Hive, our efforts to improve biodiversity have continued this year with more than 50m² of new wildflower meadow created and 150m of new native hedgerow created. Across the Heath, we have installed 9 grass snake breeding sites, 28 hedgehog nest boxes, 10 house sparrow terraces and 5 stag beetle loggeries.
10. This year our Hedgehog Friendly Heath project has seen continued collaboration on wildlife connectivity with organisations such as Growing Green, Highgate Cemetery, Highgate Neighbourhood Forum, Froggnal Gardens, Kentish Town City Farm and more. We held a workshop with these groups in February to share knowledge and prepare for the hedgehog surveys in Highgate Wood later this year.
11. Since April 2024 we have run 50 corporate volunteering events, with over 700 individuals contributing almost 2,500 hours to conserving Hampstead Heath.

Community

12. We have welcomed over 2,700 participants across our community outreach and events programmes in the last year, including at our 6th annual Community Fun Day and the Conker Championships.
13. To engage different audiences and bring new visitors to the Heath we collaborated with a range of local organisations including QCCA, Umoja Health forum, GOAL youth club and New Citizen Gateway. Our Community Newsletter now reaches over 500 organisation and members of the public, and you can find out more here: www.heath-hands.org.uk/community-activities
14. In the coming weeks, we will launch of more informal drop-in volunteering sessions to provide more opportunities for a wider range of participants from the local community.

Learning

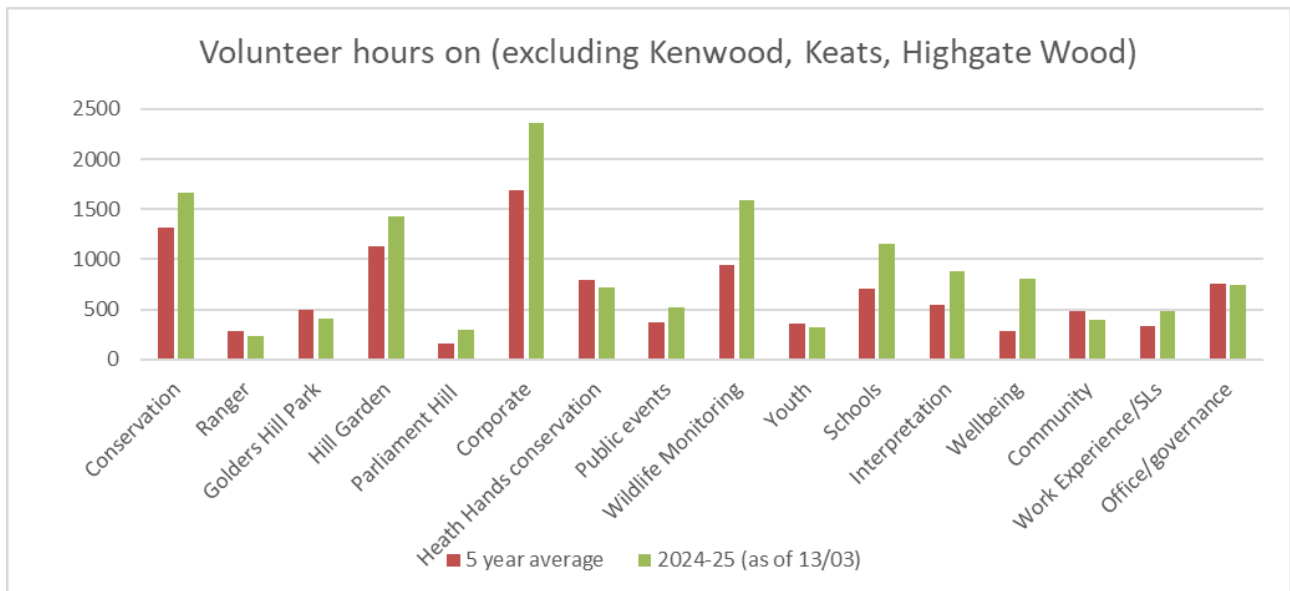
15. Our free family-friendly weekend nature interpretation sessions have engaged over 5,000 visitors to the Heath on a variety of topics. The regular opening of Dairy Interpretation Centre in partnership with English Heritage has been an ongoing success, providing a good basis for opening the former tennis hut at Parliament Hill, once repairs are completed.
16. We have over 20 active Heath Friendly Schools and our regular Youth Volunteering sessions have enabled over 900 young people to learn about nature conservation and volunteer. We have a particular focus on young people with SEN, and host weekly sessions for Swiss Cottage School. Further information on our youth activities can be found here: www.heath-hands.org.uk/youth
17. The Heath Hands staff team have led 37 guided walks and workshops for the public over the last year. Topics are varied, and have included history, geology, trees, bats, the River Fleet, nature poetry, butterflies and nature journalling. Our nature photo exhibition at the Dairy and Hive, featuring photos from the 2025 Hampstead Heath calendar, welcomed over 500 visitors.
18. Heath Hands funded two paid work experience placements this year, providing development opportunities for those seeking a career in the environmental sector.



Wellbeing

19. Our free health and wellbeing programmes including health walks, social prescribing and forest bathing workshops have welcomed over 2,000 participants across the year.
20. We launched a third health walk in Spring 2024, and there are now three each week for varying fitness abilities. Further information on our wellbeing activities is here: www.heath-hands.org.uk/health-connections
21. We completed a pilot project providing nature therapy sessions for parents/carers of young people facing a significant diagnosis this winter and are applying for grant funding in collaboration with the Brandon Centre to continue the programme.

Graph 1



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Heath Hands Update – April 2025

Heath Hands is a registered charity delivering conservation, community, learning and wellbeing programmes across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Keats House and at the Kenwood Estate.

Heath Hands and the City of London Corporation have a partnership agreement until 2029.

Summary of activity in line with our strategy and charitable objectives in Highgate Wood (since 1st October 2024)

- 452.5 volunteer hours contributed on practical conservation and habitat management sessions run by staff team.
- Webpage with information about Highgate Wood created, including the historical leaflet.
- Promotion of Wood's Ranger led walks programmes on Heath Hands website, social media and newsletter.

Wider Heath Hands activity (since April 2024)

Conservation

- Over 17,000 conservation volunteering hours contributed across the green spaces, including conservation and garden and estate maintenance sessions
- Ongoing projects focusing on wildlife monitoring and habitat improvement and connectivity projects

Community

- Over 2,700 participants across our community outreach sessions
- Ongoing collaboration with local organisations to increase participation from underrepresented groups
- 52 corporate volunteering sessions with over 700 participants taking part

Learning

- Regular school sessions with over 900 children from our twenty Heath Friendly Schools taking part
- Free weekend interpretation activities – with over 5,000 visitors engaged about nature
- 40 guided walks and workshops for public on history, trees, bats, nature poetry, nature journaling, butterflies, wreath-making and more
- Weekly sessions with SEN children and weekend youth volunteering

Wellbeing

- over 2,000 participants on our free wellbeing programme
- Three weekly health walks run each week for varying abilities and regular nature mindfulness sessions each month

For further information please visit: www.heath-hands.org.uk

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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s) Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee – For Information Natural Environment Board – For Information West Ham Park Committee – For Information Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen’s Park Committee – For Information Epping Forest & Commons Committee – For Information	Dated: 29/03/2025 01/05/25 01/05/25 20/05/25 29/05/25
Subject: Transformation for the Natural Environment Charities – Project Update and Governance Arrangements for Implementation Phase	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides business enabling functions 	Flourishing Public Spaces Leading Sustainable Environment Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment & Caroline Al-Beyerty, Chamberlain
Report authors:	Jack Joslin, Central Funding and Charity Management Team

Summary:

The Natural Environment Charities Review (NECR) is a pivotal transformation project seeking improvements to the governance and management of the NE Charities to ensure that the CoLC (as trustee) can demonstrate compliance with its various legal obligations, and that the charities can operate in a more self-determining and financially sustainable way into the future. This report provides an update on project governance arrangements as the work transitions to implementation phase.

Recommendations

Having regard to the City of London Corporation's (CoLC) trustee responsibilities for the 'NE charities' and in that case being satisfied that it is in the best interests of each relevant charity and its beneficiaries, Members are asked to:

1. Note the work to date on implementation of improvements identified by the NECR across four areas; assets, grant funding, governance and income generation.
2. Note the upcoming reporting schedule bringing detailed updates on these four areas.

Main Report

Background:

1. As part of the CoLC's wider initiative to review and transform its approach to its role as trustee of a wide range of charities operating across the Square Mile and beyond, the Natural Environment Charities Review (NECR) is a major transformation project that was initiated by the Finance Committee in December 2023. It is set within the context of an evolving national policy and governance landscape, as well as work within the Environment Department to bring greater rigour to the management of services and assets (encompassing functions of the CoLC acting in its local authority, general corporate, and charity trustee capacities).
2. As a reminder to each Committee, a charity trustee has a duty to keep their charity's objects, administration and governance under review, and take relevant steps to ensure that their charity is operating effectively to achieve the charity's intended purposes. This will include regularly reviewing a charity's objects, governing documents, governance arrangements, policies and activities, and so on.
3. A charity trustee must act only in furtherance of the purposes (or objects) of the charity and operate it independently and not for their own purposes or the purposes or interests of any other organisation. As such, decisions made by CoLC in its capacity as a charity trustee must be made in the interests of the charity alone, rather than to give effect to the policies and objectives of the CoLC, although their interests can be aligned.
4. In February Members were asked to make decisions, in relation to their corporate responsibilities, as relevant to their individual committee terms of reference, to:
 - Approve that all NE Charities move to a defined Grant Funding Model in a phased approach. Epping Forest Charity (Ch. No. 232990) and West Ham Park Charity (Ch. No. 206948) will move to a grant funding model for local risk with the CoLC in April 2025, with the other 6 Charities moving to this new approach in April 2026.
 - To facilitate this change and for the review team to continue to implement governance, asset management and income generation improvements a budget of £1,570,000 was sought over 2 years, with the project budget managed across key departments.

These recommendations were approved by the Policy and Resources Committee, Finance Committee and Resource and Allocation Subcommittee.

Current Position:

5. The NECR has reviewed the model for the future management of the NE Charities along four dimensions: funding model; income generation, asset management and governance (both the charities' governing documents, and the internal governance framework adopted by the CoLC in effectively administering each charity as trustee having regard to its trustee duties).
6. The review and its implementation is a cross departmental collaboration, mobilising new posts and existing expertise to implement improvements at the NE Charities.

Project Update

7. Implementation funding was agreed in February and since then recruitment has been undertaken in Natural Environment, with offers being accepted by successful Business Manager and Project Manager candidates. The Business Manager is expected to be in post in mid-April with the Project Manager start date still to be confirmed.
8. Between the decision to agree the implementation and this report, the work of the review has progressed in the following ways:

Assets

9. Work has continued to fully document land and built assets ownership, and a quality assurance exercise has been undertaken using detailed Land Registry data to help ensure that all registered land held by the NE Charities has been identified.
10. Complementary Land Policy Working Group and Terms of Reference have been drafted (covered in Complementary Land report). Site-by-site assessment of Complementary Land is to be undertaken in autumn 2025 with a report being presented to all the key Natural Environment committees for consultation.

Grant Funding Model

11. Both Epping Forest and West Ham Park Charities have moved to the new grant model covering local risk budgets. The underlying processes, changes and longer-term planning for all the charities will continue through the summer. A comprehensive update on this work will be provided after the summer recess with an interim update report being provided beforehand. The Chamberlain's Department has updated financial regulations to retain grant surpluses in the Charities; this should be approved by Finance Committee on 29th April 2025.

Income Generation

12. To build on the comprehensive analysis of income generation potential for each charity which was produced as part of the NECR, fundraising consultants have been appointed to support the NE Division to build its capability and policy frameworks to take this work forward.
13. A Biodiversity Net Gain consultant has been working with the NE Division for the last 6 months and has provided in depth analysis of the potential for this work across NE land.

Governance

14. A draft of the Governance Handbook for all NE charities has been created and a final review is being coordinated by the Comptroller & City Solicitor.
15. Work on creating an implementation plan for managing the business of the NE charities is underway including updating; agendas, reports, terms of reference, and standing orders.
16. Exploring advice relating to best practice concerning member tenure and selection to sit on charity committees.

Implementation Arrangements and Project Governance

Officer Governance

17. The agreed project sponsors for this work are the Executive Director of Environment (Katie Stewart) and the Chamberlain (Caroline Al-Beyerty).
18. Given the cross-cutting nature of the work, and different reporting lines across the 4 key work areas, there are 2 project sponsors for this phase of work. This reflects the dual aims of the review being financial changes to the funding model, and operational and governance changes to the management of the charities.
19. The NECR Task and Finish Group ensures effective oversight across the programme of work. This is being chaired by Emily Brennan, Director of Natural Environment, as the client lead. Jack Joslin, Head of the Central Funding and Charity Management Team, will act as deputy, having chaired through scoping and development phases of the project.
20. Following the same pattern as the scoping and development phase each of the four key areas will continue to have an assigned lead into implementation phase. The Chamberlains' Department will be responsible for delivering the change to a new grant funding model. Natural Environment will lead on Income Generation and Assets. The Central Funding and Charity Management Team (CFCMT) will lead on the Governance workstream.
21. Each workstream lead will also be responsible for managing and chairing an officer group positioned under the relevant area, which should include all relevant stakeholders as identified and documented by the Task and Finish Group. This approach is recommended to ensure collaboration and engagement across the

programme of work and should ensure cognisance of other relevant CoLC activity.

Member Governance

22. Regular meetings with the NE Chairs will continue to be held bi-weekly. Additional meetings with the NE Chairs and the Finance Committee Chair and Deputy Chair have been diarised.
23. Decisions will be taken to Members Committees as relevant to the matter and terms of reference to each grouping.

Committee cycles that will need to be considered include:

- a. Finance Committee
- b. Policy and Resources Committee
- c. Resource Allocation Sub Committee
- d. Natural Environment Board
- e. Epping Forest and Commons Committee
- f. Hampstead Heath, Highgate Woods and Queens Park Committee
- g. West Ham Park Committee
- h. Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee

Area of Work	For Information/ Discussion	For Decision
Assets Lists	NE Committees	NA
Complementary Land	NE Committees	P&R
Income Generation Plans	NE Committees, P&R, Finance	Case by case
Grant Funding Model	NE Management Committees	Finance Committee
Governance Changes	NE Committees	P&R or NE Committees as appropriate
Project Resourcing	NE Committees, P&R	Finance Committee

Communication Strategy

24. A high-level Communication Strategy will be produced for the whole programme, detailing a timeline up to the 'formal' completion date of March 2027. It will identify key milestones and deliverables, clarifying how we plan to proactively engage with the key stakeholders – both internal and external.

Committee Reporting Schedule

25. To ensure transparency on project reporting, and to support members with forward planning, a breakdown of upcoming reporting plans across different workstreams has been provided below. Please note, this may be subject to

change as work develops. There will be ongoing reporting on most of these areas through to the end of March 2027, the below outlines reporting plans into the 2025 summer recess in the first instance.

Reporting Topic	Details	Report of	For Information/Decision	Committee Dates
Update on the work of the NECR	Update on the NECR and Governance Plan	Katie Stewart & Caroline Al-Beyerty	For Information: HH Consultative Committee, NE Committees	May April/ 2025
Complementary Land Policy governance and work plans	Decision on TORs for Complementary Land Policy work and Land Use Assessment.	Katie Stewart	For Information: HH Consultative Committee, NE Committees, For Decision: P&R	April/ May/June 2025
Transition to Grant Funding Model Update	Update on the work of transitioning to Grant Funding Model	Caroline Al-Beyerty	For Information: NE Committees, HH Consultative Committee, Finance Committee	June/July 2025
City Corporation Governance changes, including Governance Handbook	Update on work planned through 25/26 of changes being made to CoLC governance following external advice. Final draft Governance Handbook will also be brought to committees.	Katie Stewart, Simon Latham	For Information: HH Consultative Committee, NE Committees	June/July 2025
Assets Lists	Report detailing outcomes of the work on ownership of land and built assets to be brought for information.	Katie Stewart	For Information: NE Committees	June/July 2025
Income Generation Update	Update on work year to date, including outcomes from BNG consultant work and update on engagement of	Katie Stewart	For Information: NE Committees, HH Consultative Committee	June/July 2025

	fundraising consultant.			
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Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – The work of the NECR aligns to the Flourishing Public Spaces and Providing Excellent Services outcomes of the Corporate Plan, specifically to ‘ensure our open spaces and historic sites are thriving, accessible and enrich people’s lives’ and ‘Supporting people to live healthy, independent lives and achieve their ambitions is dependent on excellent services.’ Additionally, the NE charities are participants in the CoLC’s CAS and are implementing valuable projects to enhance carbon removal and increase biodiversity, contributing to the ‘Leading Sustainable Environment’ outcome.

Financial implications – This project has been fully resourced by the Finance Committee.

Legal implications – The eight Natural Environment charities in scope of the matters contained in this report are all registered charities as follows: Ashtead Common (1051510), Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common (232987), Coulsdon and Other Commons (232989), Epping Forest (232990), Hampstead Heath (803392), Highgate Wood & Queen’s Park Kilburn (232986), West Ham Park (206948), West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood (232988). The CoLC’s overall duties and obligations as a charity trustee are noted at paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 above. The Comptroller & City Solicitor’s Department is supporting the NECR and advising on individual workstreams as required.

Risk implications – There is a project risk register that is regularly reviewed by the Task and Finish group and feeds into individual charity risk registers.

Equalities implications – Robust frameworks for the charities will enhance positive equalities outcomes for the communities who benefit from their work. Equalities implications will be assessed, as appropriate, in relation to the proposed actions and projects arising out of the NECR.

Conclusion

The implementation of the outcomes of the Natural Environment Charities Review (NECR) is a pivotal transformation project seeking improvements to the governance and management of the NE charities to ensure that the CoLC (as trustee) can demonstrate compliance with its various legal obligations, and that the charities can operate in a more self-determining and financially sustainable way into the future. This report provides Members with an update on the work of the NECR as the project enters implementation phase.

Jack Joslin

Head of the Central Funding and Charity Management Team

Background papers

1. Report to Policy and Resources Committee entitled Transformation for the Natural Environment Charities – Outcomes of the Natural Environment Charities Review dated 13 February 2024
2. Report of the Finance Committee, entitled Resourcing additional time-limited support to complete the Natural Environment Charities Review, dated 12 December 2023
3. Report of the Finance Committee, entitled Resourcing additional time-limited support to complete the Corporate Charities Review & support the scoping of the Natural Environment Charities Review, dated 14 December 2022
4. Report to Epping Forest and Commons Committee entitled Climate Action Strategy – Open Spaces ‘Carbon Removal’, dated 8th March 2021.

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	Dated: 20 May 2025
Subject: Assistant Director's Report (Highgate Wood)	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	-Diverse engaged communities -Leading sustainable environment -Vibrant thriving destination -Providing excellent services -Flourishing public spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£0
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment Department
Report author:	Bill LoSasso, Superintendent, North London Open Spaces

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Highgate Wood since the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting on 4 February 2025.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Report format

1. This report is formatted in alignment with the five strategic themes of the Highgate Wood Management Plan. Additional relevant items, if any, are included in an “Additional Relevant Items” section.

Sustainable woodland management

2. Officers are reviewing the existing closure thresholds in Highgate Wood during high winds as part of the review of the Extreme Weather Policy. A paper will be submitted with recommendations in the next committee cycle.

Culture & heritage

3. Designs for the proposed new visitor centre for the Roman Kiln have been developed and are in the process of being costed and consulted on with all parties.

Facilities & access

4. The football season ended the weekend of 19/20 April. The single pitch at the lower part of the field has held up well after a long, wet winter. It has been quite a challenge to keep the pitch playable, but we have only had to cancel two games to date due to waterlogging.
5. The cricket season started on the weekend of 26 April. This season we have the advantage of a new ride-on roller to help with levelling and firming the square to an acceptable standard. The same four teams are scheduled to play again, with the bonus of Metro Blind Cricket Club returning, which draws in a lot of support from the locals and anyone passing through.
6. The English Cricket Board have funded two new cricket practice nets at the north end of the field. These were installed during early March and are currently closed

off to allow the new surfaces to cure. These will be a valuable resource for local schools and the current teams who have booked for this coming cricket season.

7. In February 2025, works were completed in the play area to replace all the damaged and decayed timber sections around the larger items of play equipment in the centre of the playground. Works were completed to replace over 180 square metres of the safety surface in both the main play area and the under-fives section. The largest area requires a new foundation, as the old, rubberised surface has subsided.

Community & Education

Roman Kiln

8. The 'Firing London's Imagination' education programme has continued to engage young people with the history of the Roman kiln. 529 school-aged students from Haringey schools and neighbouring boroughs with high pupil premium rates have participated in our KS2 programme between September 2024 and March 2025. In the beginning of this year, two local schools took part in our new workshop – KS2 Hands on Archaeology and local Roman history workshop – where students handle Roman artefacts and visit the Roman kiln exhibition in Highgate Wood. In the summer term of 2025, we are continuing our KS1 Roman woodland adventure session which is facilitated by Forest School practitioner Sally Bailey.
9. The successfully piloted Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEAM) structured work experience, which was piloted in July 2024 in collaboration with 'Turning Earth', will be repeated in summer term 2025. This course received excellent feedback from students, exposing them to the range of employment possibilities in the heritage field and further opportunities such as volunteering for the replica kiln firing event.
10. 'Firing London's Imagination' social media platforms have continued to expand, boosted by the Roman kiln activities in September 2024, with increasing reach and engagement with social media content. The social media posts continue to focus on promoting and showcasing work done in the learning and outreach programmes, offering behind-the-scenes progress of the project and providing new followers with an insight into the project's history.

Volunteers and Conservation work

11. Since 24 October 2024, the Highgate Wood Team hosted 20 Heath Hands volunteer sessions. One of the new staff members of the team at Highgate Wood

is a skilled hedge layer and has led the volunteers on several sessions to help create several living hedge habitats by laying trees growing on the field edge and fringes of conservation areas. Materials were harvested from a coppiced area to create stakes and binders for the hedges. We also worked with the volunteers on other tasks, including laying holly to create enclosures around two large beech trees to protect root zones from foot traffic. Volunteers helped with tasks to reinforce the dead hedging around the bluebell area, cut back bramble to expand the area and repair sections of fencing around the conservation area.

12. Highgate Wood and Queen's Wood will be carrying out a follow-up hedgehog survey in June this year which will feed into Zoological Society London (ZSL) population assessment for hedge hogs.

Working with the TreeHouse School

13. TreeHouse School, a local school for people with autism, hosted an Autism Awareness Course in December 2024. Members of staff from Highgate Wood, Parliament Hill, Golders Hill Park, and Parliament Hill Lido attended the training course, which will help teams better understand autism and be better informed to support people with autism when they visit our various sites and facilities. The TreeHouse School bring their students into Highgate Wood regularly for nature walks and these interactions with nature provide important therapy for the students.

Forest Schools in Highgate Wood

14. Currently there are two commercial forest school groups operating in Highgate Wood: 1) Into the Woods Outdoor Nursery Ltd, and 2) Wild Learning and Development Ltd. They have both been operating under licence for the last eight years. Both groups have specific areas designated for their activities which are rotated every six months to reduce the ground damage and compaction. Updated commercial licences for Highgate Wood, including for the forest schools, are being issued during April.

Climate resilience

15. The North London Open Spaces Tree Team has recently taken delivery of new compaction alleviation equipment, funded by the Climate Action Strategy. The Tree Team is currently setting up a trial site in West Ham Park to measure the effects of compaction on individual trees. They will be starting a similar project in Highgate Wood to monitor the health of some of the older standard oaks which are part of the twelve-year oak decline study group. Compaction remains a major concern for many of the older more vulnerable trees in Highgate Wood, and

combining compaction monitoring and the continuing conservation of the ancient woodland through the cyclical creation of enclosed conservation areas will be critical in building resilience going forward.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

16. No implications.

Financial implications

17. No implications.

Resource implications

18. No implications.

Legal implications

19. No implications.

Risk implications

20. Risks are monitored and recorded through the various risk registers, including the Division and Departmental Risk Registers.

Equalities implications

21. No implications.

Climate implications

22. No implications.

Security implications

23. Security implications are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk register.

Conclusion

24. This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Highgate Wood since the last since the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting on 4 February 2025.

Bill LoSasso

Assistant Director (Superintendent)

Noth London Open Spaces

Environment Department (Natural Environment Division)

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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	Dated: 20 May 2025
Subject: Assistant Director's Report (Queen's Park)	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	-Diverse engaged communities -Leading sustainable environment -Vibrant thriving destination -Providing excellent services -Flourishing public spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£0
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment Department
Report author:	Bill LoSasso, Superintendent, North London Open Spaces

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Queen's Park since the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting on 4 February 2025.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

General Park Update

1. The team appointed a new Operative Ranger in February 2025. The team are currently recruiting a new Operative Ranger (Farm), who will split their time between ranger duties and looking after the Queen's Park Children's Farm.
2. The updated 10-year management plan for Queen's Park was completed in January 2025. The plan has identified the short-, medium- and long-term objectives for the park.
3. A lot of renovations and refurbishment works have taken place in the Park in the last six months. This includes the public toilet block adjacent to the playground, which was renovated and opened to the public in late November 2024.
4. Hoxton Beach, who manage the café at Queen's Park, have decided to extend their opening hours. The café will now close 30 minutes before the Park closing time.
5. New heritage signs have been installed for the bandstand, the hawthorn tree, the Lynch gate and the veteran oak. Content was also helpfully provided by London Borough of Brent, Brent Archives, and QPARA. These new signs focus on four key heritage features and provide visitors with further information and history of the site, which are key to the Park's long-standing Green Heritage status.
6. Work is underway to create volunteer sessions in the park. The local team have met with Heath Hands and are currently working with them to design volunteer sessions.

Trees/Grounds/Horticulture

7. Queen's Park has been entered into the three accreditation awards again this year: Green Flag Award, Green Heritage Award and London in Bloom. The new ten-year management plan was submitted with the Green Flag Award application.
8. Queen's Park is one of the original sites awarded a Green Flag in the Award's inaugural year, so it is hoped these awards will be retained for yet another year. The judging will be carried out by a mystery shopper this year, so the date of their visit will not be known beforehand.

9. Tree safety inspections and works were carried out in January and February. This included dead wood removal from the mature London plane opposite the yard gate, reduction of the hedge by the park office, works within the woodland walk and removal of the Christmas tree lights and cables on the mature trees opposite the café/office.
10. The sensory garden project was completed in December 2024. Access to the area has been improved at one of the entrance points and new fencing has been installed. The team reduced some of the large evergreen shrubs, removed some old plants and new plants were added. The aim is to encourage more visitors to use this area.
11. The patio area to the rear of the café has been renovated by external contractors to make the area more attractive, with new fencing, plant pots, and a new picnic table. Twelve new picnic tables in total have been installed around the outside of the café.
12. Officers are reviewing the existing closure thresholds for Queen's Park during high winds as part of the review of the Extreme Weather Policy. A paper will be submitted with recommendations in the next committee cycle.

Woodland Walk

13. In line with the new 10-year management plan, officers met in February 2025 to fully consider the proposal to expand the woodland walk. This process will necessarily begin with examination of the existing area. It was decided that before expansion could be considered, surveys needed to be undertaken to ascertain the presence and absence of species in the existing woodland walk. The area that makes up the existing woodland walk is subject to soil compaction and erosion from footfall numbers, so the immediate work is to focus on how to prevent further compaction and erosion to ensure recovery of the existing barren areas.
14. All the trees over 200mm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) within the woodland walk were surveyed on 6 February 2025 by our in-house Tree Team and are now plotted on the TreePlotter database. The trees have been categorised by species for aesthetic and ecological value.
15. There is reasonable ground flora diversity, which can, and will be, encouraged to develop through either naturally laid or constructed fencing. Species include foxglove, lords and ladies, bluebell, snowdrop, daffodil, cow parsley and crocus,

ivy and bramble. The bramble, whilst undesirable to many, provides an important food source and habitat and also prevents further erosion in this area.

16. GPS mapping was undertaken to identify the compacted areas, path networks and recovery zones. This mapping has helped officers to target areas needing the most attention. A number of dead standing trees and dead branches were identified, and these were reduced and stacked for dead hedging and/or habitat piles in February. The mapping will be used to survey and monitor the areas going forward.
17. There will be a number of enclosed areas created, using a combination of stock fencing and tree branches/hedge laying to cordon off vulnerable areas to reduce compaction, allowing natural regeneration of the vegetation and protection to the ground flora. Some areas have been identified for planting. This includes plant varieties within the woodland walk, which are suitable for lifting, dividing and transplanting.
18. The network of paths and desire lines, which have developed over time, will also be reduced. This will be achieved by laying ash, elm, acer and field maple to demarcate conservation compartments with live hedging. Candidate trees for the hedging will be selected from along the edge of the golf course; lifting these trees will also allow more light into the woodland walk. This work will be carried out in late autumn/early winter with our in-house Tree Team.
19. Surveying and monitoring of the area is also being undertaken. The existing bird and bat boxes will continue to be checked, and it is hoped that our Senior Ecologist will be able to carry out some breeding bird survey visits. Wildlife cameras have been installed, which will pick up some of the bird species as well as the smaller and larger mammals using the site.

Sports and Leisure

20. Renovations have been undertaken on the pitch-and-putt course. All the greens were spiked, overseeded and top dressed and new tee-off stands and mats have been installed.
21. The tennis huts have been renovated by contractors. The tennis courts continue to be well used and busy throughout the year, with evenings and weekends booked. All the tennis courts were professionally cleaned earlier in the year, ready for the peak season of tennis.

22. Regular meetings continue to be held with the LTA and the tennis coach at Queen's Park to ensure the City of London Corporation is maximising potential income whilst ensuring tennis provision remains accessible to everyone.
23. Contractors were appointed and a new fence has been installed around the toddler swing in the playground to create a safe zone for children. A new basket swing has also been installed.
24. Annual ROSPA inspections are carried out in October each year. Monthly inspections are also carried out by the team, which recently identified some issues with the timber wood tangle and the zipline equipment. These items are currently out of operation and fencing has been erected to ensure they are not used. The company who installed the play equipment has been contacted and will carry out timber tests and inspections on all the playground equipment to ensure it remains safe and accessible to use.

Queen's Park Farm

25. In March 2025, Bella the goat fell ill and tragically died despite the efforts of our vet and the Queen's Park Team. The cause of death was the public feeding her plants that are toxic to goats. Signs have been erected reminding visitors not to feed the animals. The goats receive a carefully balanced diet, and even well-meaning treats can make them very sick.
26. Public feeding was discussed at length at the last Zoo Ethics Board meeting and what can be done to prevent this incident from happening again. Topics included public opening hours, staffing, communication and using volunteers to help educate and talk to visitors.
27. In line with our collection plan for Queen's Park Farm, three new pygmy goats from Merris Wood College in Surrey have been sourced. The team are in liaison with Merris Wood so the pygmy goats can be collected as soon as possible.
28. A lot of renovations have been undertaken at the Farm by the in-house team. This includes a new roof on the hay store to prevent water ingress, a new roof on the quail enclosure to protect the enclosure from any bird flu outbreaks, the chicken house has been renovated, the lawn in the duck pond has been re-laid and new planters have been installed to add some horticultural interest. It is hoped that it will make the area more aesthetically pleasing and attractive to visitors.

Events

29. Christmas Carols organised by QPARA took place in the park on 14 December 2024. Queen's Park singers provided the festive chorus around a Christmas tree that was donated by Kensal Pines. The event was very successful with plans to repeat it again for Christmas 2025.

30. A number of events are being held in the Park again this year. The provisional dates are:

- Kilburn State of Mind: Saturday 14 June 2025
- Shakespeare in the Squares: Sunday 29 June
- Queen's Park Book Festival: Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 August 2025
- Queen's Park Day: Sunday 14 September 2025

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

31. No implications.

Financial implications

32. No implications.

Resource implications

33. No implications.

Legal implications

34. No implications.

Risk implications

35. Risks are monitored and recorded through the various risk registers, including the Division and Departmental Risk Registers.

Equalities implications

36. No implications.

Climate implications

37. No implications

Security implications

38. Security implications are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk register.

Conclusion

39. This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Queen's Park since the last meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting on 4 February 2025.

Appendices: none

Bill LoSasso

Assistant Director (Superintendent)

North London Open Spaces

Environment Department (Natural Environment Division)

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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee – For Information	Dated: 20/05/2025
Subject: Highgate Wood and Queens Park Kilburn Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties • provides business enabling functions 	Flourishing Public Spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	The Chamberlain Executive Director Environment
Report author:	Niranjan Shanmuganathan, Chamberlain's Department

Summary

The final version of the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 for Highgate Wood and Queens Park Kilburn (charity registration number 232986) are presented for information in the format required by the Charity Commission.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the 2023/24 Financial Year be noted.

Main Report

Background

1. The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Highgate Wood and Queens Park Kilburn charity for the year ended 31 March 2024 are presented

for information having been signed on behalf of the Trust by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Finance Committee and the auditors, Crowe U.K LLP.

2. Members may also wish to note that a draft unaudited version of the 2023/24 Annual Report and Financial Statements was previously presented to your Committee in October 2024. In addition, the information contained within the Annual Report and Financial Statements has already been presented to your Committee via the outturn report in July 2024.
3. The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2023/24 was previously approved by Finance Committee in November 2024 on behalf of the Trustee in line with the arrangements in place for other charities in which the City is trustee.
4. A previous review of the charities for which the City is responsible, detailed key reports that should be presented to your Committee. The Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements was one of these reports. Information from these statements also forms part of the Annual Return to the Charity Commission which was filed by the regulatory deadline of 31 January 2025. Additional external audit and non-financial checks meant that we were unable to file earlier than the 31 January 2025 statutory deadline. As a result of filing on this date, this is the earliest opportunity to present the final version of this report to your Committee.

Strategic implications - N/A

Financial implications - N/A

Resource implications - N/A

Legal implications - N/A

Risk implications - N/A

Equalities implications - N/A

Climate implications - N/A

Security implications - N/A

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Highgate Wood and Queens Park Kilburn Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

Niranjan Shanmuganathan

Chamberlain's Financial Services Division

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Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the
year ended 31 March 2024

Charity registration number 232986

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ORIGINS OF THE CHARITY

Queen's Park and Highgate Wood were acquired by the City of London Corporation from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners under the Highgate and Kilburn Open Spaces Act 1886 on condition that the City of London Corporation maintained them in perpetuity for the benefit of Londoners, for exercise and recreation. The Court of Chancery agreed at that time that the late William Ward's bequest should be used towards the maintenance of Queen's Park and this capital fund is still used for this purpose. From April 2002 the Assistant Director Natural Environment Hampstead Heath, formally known as the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath, had overall responsibility for both sites.

The Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn charity was registered in 1962.

TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

The governing document is the Highgate and Kilburn Open Spaces Act 1886. The charity is constituted as a charitable trust.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of the City of London (also referred to as 'the City Corporation' or 'the City of London Corporation'), a body corporate and politic, is the trustee of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn. The City Corporation is trustee acting by the Court of Common Council of the City of London in its general corporate capacity and that executive body has delegated responsibility in respect of the administration and management of this charity to various committees and sub-committees of the Common Council, membership of which is drawn from 125 elected Members of the Common Council and external appointees to those committees. In making appointments to committees, the Court of Common Council will take into consideration any particular expertise and knowledge of the elected Members, and where relevant, external appointees. External appointments are made after due advertisement and rigorous selection to fill gaps in skills. Elected Aldermen and Members of the City of London Corporation are appointed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee governing Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn by the Court of Common Council of the City of London Corporation.

Members of the Court of Common Council are elected by the electorate of the City of London and are unpaid for support provided to the Charity. The Key Committees which had responsibility for directly managing matters related to the charity during 2023/24 were as follows:

- **Policy and Resources Committee** – responsible for allocating resources and administering the charity.
- **Investment Committee** – responsible for the strategic oversight and monitoring of the performance of the charity's investments which are managed by three separate sub-committees, namely the Financial Investment Board, the Property Investment Board and the Social Investment Board.
- **Finance Committee** – responsible for controlling budgets, support costs and other central charges that affect the charity as a whole.
- **Audit and Risk Management Committee** – responsible for overseeing systems of internal control and making recommendations to the Finance Committee relating to the approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the charity.
- **Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee** - responsible for the activities undertaken at Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn, approving budget allocations for the forthcoming year and acting as Trustee of the charity.

All of the above committees are ultimately responsible to the Court of Common Council of the City of London. Committee meetings are held at the Trustee's discretion in public (except where it is not considered in the charity's best interest to do so), supporting a decision-making process that is clear, transparent and publicly accountable.

The charity is consolidated within City's Estate as the City of London Corporation exercises operational control over their activities. City's Estate, which was renamed from City's Cash during 2023/24, is a fund of the City Corporation that can be traced back to the 15th century and has been built up from a combination of properties, land, bequests and transfers under statute since that time. Investments in properties, stocks and shares are managed to provide a total return that:

- Allows City's Estate to use the income for the provision of services that are of importance nationally and internationally as well as to the City and Greater London;
- Maintains the asset base so that income will be available to fund services for the benefit of future generations.

The trustee believes that good governance is fundamental to the success of the charity. An initial review of governance has been undertaken to ensure that the charity is effective in fulfilling its objectives, and further more detailed work is currently being undertaken as part of a review of the City of London Corporation's Natural Environment charities. This review is due to be completed as soon as practicable and further significant progress is expected by December 2024. Reference is being made to the good practices recommended within the Charity Governance Code, with a focus on ensuring regulatory compliance and the ongoing maintenance of an efficient and effective portfolio of charities that maximise impact for beneficiaries.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The charity is administered in accordance with its governing instruments and the City Corporation's own corporate governance and administration framework, including Committee Terms of Reference, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Officer Scheme of Delegations. These governance documents can be obtained via a request to the email address stated on page 35.

Each Member by virtue of their membership of the Court of Common Council, its relevant committees and sub-committees, has a duty to support the City Corporation in the proper exercise of its functions and in meeting its duties as trustee of the charity by faithfully acting in accordance with charity law, the Terms of Reference of the relevant committee or sub-committee, and the City of London Corporation's agreed corporate governance framework as noted above, backed up by its standards regime.

As part of the City of London Corporation's restructure, the Open Spaces Department has merged with Planning & Transportation and Port Health & Environmental Services to form a new Environment Department. Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn became part of the Environment Department from 1 April 2022.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING OF MEMBERS

The City Corporation makes available to its Members, seminars and briefings on various aspects of its activities, including those concerning the charity, to enable Members to carry out their duties efficiently and effectively. Induction meetings are provided on specific aspects of the work of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn. If suitable seminars or other training options are identified that are relevant to the charity, Members are advised of these opportunities.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objective of the charity is the maintenance and preservation in perpetuity of the open spaces known as Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn, as public parks or open spaces for use by the public for exercise and recreation.

The Trustee has due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit when setting objectives and planning activities.

Lands were transferred to the City of London Corporation under the powers conferred by the Highgate and Kilburn Open Spaces Act 1886. The purpose of the charity is the maintenance and preservation in perpetuity by the City of London Corporation of the open spaces known as Highgate Wood, Highgate and Queen's Park Kilburn as public parks or open spaces, for the use by the public for exercise and recreation.

This charity is operated as a separate legal entity consolidated into the City of London Corporation's City's Estate. The City of London Corporation is committed to funding the ongoing net operational costs of the charity in accordance with the purpose, as stated above.

Investment Policy

The charity's investments are held in units of the City of London Charities Pool (registered charity 1021138). The investment policy is to provide a real increase in annual income in the long term whilst preserving the value of the capital base. The annual report and financial statements of the Charities Pool (which include an analysis of investment performance against objectives set) are available from the Chamberlain of London, at the email address stated on page 35.

Volunteers

Volunteering hours are estimated at 450 hours at Highgate Wood and 360 hours at Queen's Park which combine conservation activities delivered in collaboration with our partner organisation Heath Hands, and ecological monitoring by individual local residents.

Remuneration Policy

The charity's senior staff are employees of the City Corporation, and alongside all staff, pay is reviewed annually. The City Corporation is committed to attracting, recruiting and retaining skilled people and rewarding employees fairly for their contribution. As

part of this commitment, staff are regularly appraised and, subject to performance, eligible for the payment of recognition awards.

The above policy applies to staff within the charity's key management personnel, as defined within note 8 to the financial statements.

The charity is committed to equal opportunities for all employees. An Equality and Inclusion Board has been established to actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion in service delivery and employment practices. The Board is responsible for monitoring the delivery of the Equality and Inclusion Action Plan and progress against the Equality Objectives. This also includes addressing the City Corporation's gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

The City's Equality Objectives were recently reviewed in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 which requires public bodies to publish equality objectives every four years. The City's Equality Objectives were approved by Policy and Resources Committee in March 2024 covering the five year period from 2024 to 2029 to coincide with the City's Corporate Plan for 2024-29.

Senior staff posts of the City Corporation are individually evaluated and assessed independently against the external market allowing each post to be allocated an individual salary range within the relevant grade, which incorporates market factors as well as corporate importance.

Fundraising

Section 162a of the Charities Act 2011 requires charities to make a statement regarding fundraising activities. The legislation defines fundraising as "soliciting or otherwise procuring money or other property for charitable purposes". Although Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn charity does not undertake widespread fundraising from the general public, any such amounts receivable are presented in the financial statements as "voluntary income" including grants.

In relation to the above we confirm that all solicitations are managed internally, without involvement of commercial participators or professional fund-raisers, or third parties. The day to day management of all income generation is delegated to the executive team, who are accountable to the trustee. The charity is not bound by any regulatory scheme and does not consider it necessary to comply with any voluntary code of practice.

From December 2020 to June 2023 the Queen's Park webpage, invited and enabled the public to make on-line donations to the Queen's Park Sandpit and Playground Improvements campaign. From June 2023 the webpage invited the public to 'Donate to Queens Park' to help protect and maintain the park for future generations.

The charity has received nil complaints in relation to fundraising activities in the current year (2022/23: nil). Individuals are not approached for funds, hence the charity does not consider it necessary to design specific procedures to monitor such activities.

Public benefit statement

The Trustee confirms that it has referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn's aims and objectives and in planning future activities. The purpose of the charity is the maintenance and preservation in perpetuity by the City of London Corporation as open spaces known as Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.

Consequently, the Trustee considers that Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn operates to benefit the general public and satisfies the public benefit test.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The administrative details of the charity are stated on page 35.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The aims for 2023/24 for Highgate Wood were:

Continue to work on an ecological monitoring programme of the impact of visitors through the Heath Hands volunteers.

A new 0.8-hectare enclosed conservation area was completed in 2022/23, and vegetation recovery is now being monitored going forward. The understory is regenerating, and a number of bird species are using the area as a new refuge.

Continue to work collaboratively with the Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln and support their future Heritage Lottery Bid.

Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln (FOHRK, charity no. 1177405) Heritage Lottery Bid has been successful, and we have been working collaboratively with both FOHRK and the project management team to deliver a series of activities around the return of the restored kiln later in 2024.

Continue the notice board replacement programme.

This project has been delayed due to the retirement of the inhouse maintenance member of staff. We are awaiting the recruitment of a new member of staff to continue the work of building replacement noticeboards.

Implement the 2018 to 2028 Woodland Management Plan

The Highgate Wood Woodland Management Plan 2018 to 2028 continues to guide and inform woodland management on the site and the plan objectives will be incorporated into the new Highgate Wood Management Plan 2024 onwards.

Continue the work of nature recovery, building in resilience, and the protection of the ancient woodland, wildlife and its soil.

Work continues supported by volunteers from Heath Hands, to conserve and protect the more vulnerable conservation areas by rebuilding dead heading enclosures and also creating laid hedge sections to discourage access and improve wildlife refuge value. Work has continued to enclose areas damaged during the COVID19 pandemic to allow natural recovery.

Renew the 2013 to 2023 Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan.

This has been delayed and work will be prioritised in 2024/25.

The aims for 2023/24 for Queen's Park were:

Develop heritage outcomes and incorporate preservation and interpretation actions into the Conservation Management Plan and Annual Work Programme

The Conservation Management Plan and Annual Work Programme for Queens Park was reviewed and updated in 2023/24 to submit with the Green Flag and Green Heritage Applications and London in Bloom Award application in January 2024. Both the Green Flag and Green Heritage Awards were retained in 2023 and Queens Park was awarded a Gold Award for Large Park in London in Bloom.

The Management Plan and Annual Work Programme in 2023/24 ensured conservation and heritage was addressed. This included improving and implementing signage across the site to celebrate the heritage assets such as the Grade 2 Listed Bandstand and to improve understanding of their historical importance. Work was also continued by the Head Gardener to ensure planting regimes took into consideration the adapting climate and to ensure the historical character of the park was not lost. We continued with the veteran tree programme and extended and managed areas of wildflower meadow within the park.

Undertake surveys on visitor engagement and capture data to understand visitor trends and satisfaction.

Working with an external consultant, officers completed an analysis of the number of visits to the park in 2023, which totalled 910,264 visits. In addition, the consultation for potential improvement projects in the park engaged with approximately 500 park users and gathered helpful insights on user preferences and other information to support service improvements.

Maximise volunteering opportunities by offering a range of activities.

Community involvement and volunteering opportunities were maximised in 2023/24. We worked closely with a local residents' association, who volunteers annually to host Queen's Park Day in September, which is a very popular event that allows local businesses and groups to showcase their talents and products to the community. Approximately 10,000 - 15,000 people attended. The Park is also surrounded by ten schools within reasonable walking distance that engage with the park through independent visits using the Park as an outdoor classroom and use of sports facilities. Over ten sports days took place in 2023, along with bulb planting sessions with the Head Gardener, participating in volunteering sessions and as part of work experience placement programs within the farm. Transition Town also operated a free-to-use allotment plot at the rear of the cafe. Kensal Rise pickers picked their fruit from the apple and pear trees located in the on-site staff accommodation, and they operate with many volunteers to turn the fruit into juice, which is available at Queen's Park Day.

Complete the redevelopment of the Children's Sandpit via an agreed project through the City Corporation Gateway process. Seek capital funding through external and internal sources to enable the delivery of this project.

The project, whilst almost complete, encountered some issues over the course of its delivery, slowing down progress. This is due to be completed in June 2024.

Consult on, finalise, and implement the Queen's Park Woodland Walk Management Plan.

Officer completed a public consultation on the woodland walk and other potential improvement projects in Queen's Park, which enjoyed good participation. In 2024/25, Officers will explore the feasibility of implementing the woodland walk and other potential projects, which does not currently have funding or officer capacity to implement.

Develop an updated Draft Conservation Management Plan.

A one-year management plans was developed for the park for 2024, and a 10-year management plan will be developed in 2024/25 in alignment with the updates to all management plans across North London Open Spaces.

Aims for 2023/24 for both Highgate Wood and Queen's Park were:

Achieve budgeted income and expenditure targets for Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn Charity.

Delivery of a balanced budget, and achievement of financial savings as required through a combination of reducing expenditure and appropriate income generation activities.

Deliver the phase 2 finalised restructure following completion of staff consultation process.

The final version of the restructure was implemented and adhered to successfully, within budget during 2023/24, with recruitment continuing into 2024/25.

Review the Café retendering programme with a review of income generation and market values.

This has been delayed and will be progressed during 2024/25.

Maintain Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Accreditation for 2023/24.

Both sites were successful in winning the Green Flag and Green Heritage awards for 2023/24.

Contribute towards the City Corporation Climate Action Strategy by achieving Net zero by 2027.

A key part of the strategy is conserving and enhancing biodiversity alongside reducing carbon emissions. The Climate Action Strategy will be embedded into future strategies which are currently being drafted within the Natural Environment Division and delivered at open spaces, including Queen's Park and Highgate Wood.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The proposed overarching priorities which will guide all of our objectives and activities from April 2024 are:

Highgate Wood

- Continue the work of nature recovery and the protection of the ancient woodland and its soil.
- Continue to work on an ecological monitoring programme of the impact of visitors, with volunteers from Heath Hands.
- Continue to work collaboratively with the Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln and provide support to realise the project's objectives of returning the kiln artifact to Highgate Wood in 2024, now funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Carry out repairs to the Highgate Wood play area rubberised bark safety surface which have been identified in recent play area inspections.

- Continue to implement the 2018 to 2028 Woodland Management Plan.
- Prioritise the renewal of the 2013 to 2023 Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan.

Queen's Park

- Review management plan in line with the new City of London Corporate Plan (implemented in April 2024)
- To increase the annual income generation through sports and rent.
- Explore the feasibility of implementing the potential projects that were consulted upon in 2023, which do not currently have funding or officer capacity to implement.
- Work with the conservation team, tree team and head gardener to improve the grounds conditions and habitat, continuing with the veteran tree program and managing areas of wildflower meadow.
- Refurbishment of toilet facilities after vandalism.
- Review paddling pool operations for 2025 season.
- Review exercise equipment within the park.

Both Highgate Wood and Queen's Park.

- Maintain Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Accreditation for 2024/25.
- Contribute towards the City Corporation Climate Action Strategy by achieving Net zero by 2027
- Review the Café retendering programme with a review of income generation and market values.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Overview of Financial Performance

Income

In 2023/24 the charity's total income for the year was £1,846,895, an overall increase of £358,775 against the previous year (£1,488,120). This variation was largely due to an increase in expenditure compared to the previous year and therefore a larger grant was received from the City of London to fund the deficit and income relating to the Sandpit and Playground Improvements project at Queens Park.

Income from Charitable Activities comprised £169,990 from fees charged (2022/23: £169,642) and £61,161 from rents (2022/23: £55,829).

Unrestricted donations received were £4,148 (2022/23: £30). The charity also received £27,597 in restricted contributions towards the Roman Kiln Project (2022/23: £nil). A contribution of £45,000 from CIL monies was provided by the London Borough of Brent towards the cost of the sandpit project (2022/23: £nil). During the year no campaign donations were received via the Queen's Park web page towards the Sandpit and Playground Improvements Campaign (2022/23: £1,125).

An amount of £1,533,369 (2022/23: £1,254,787) was received from the City of London Corporation's City's Estate as a contribution towards the running costs of the charity.

Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year was £1,771,783 (2022/23: £1,503,483) all of which related to charitable activities. The increase in expenditure can be explained by an increase in employment costs following pay rises awarded to staff as well as additional expenditure incurred on fees and services, grounds maintenance and costs recharged from corporate departments.

Funds held

The charity's total funds held increased by £91,761 to £396,156 as at 31 March 2024 (2022/23: £304,395).

The charity's designated funds consist of unrestricted income funds which the Trustee has chosen to set aside for specific purposes. Such designations are not legally binding, and the Trustee can decide to "undesignate" these funds at any time. Designations as at 31 March 2024 totalled £209,526 (2022/23: £120,059). These represent the net book value of fixed assets held.

The balance on the Queen's Park Sandpit and Playgrounds Improvement Campaign restricted donations fund of £14,754 held at 31 March 2023 was transferred in full to the designated fund during 2023/24 and used towards the cost of the fixed asset addition.

Details of all funds held, including their purposes, is set out within note 15 to the financial statements.

Investments performance

Over the course of 2023/24, the Charities Pool investment strategy delivered an absolute return (gross of fees) of +14.18% which was above the FTSE All Share Index benchmark return of +8.43% (2022/23: the investment strategy gained +2.22% versus +2.92% from the benchmark). Over the longer term three and five year horizon, the Charities Pool continues to outperform the FTSE All Share Index as shown in the table below. Investments, as displayed in the table below, was above the benchmark. The Charities Pool invests in the Artemis Income (Exclusions) Fund, which is an unconstrained, multigap strategy that aims to generate a rising income stream combined with long-term capital growth. The fund invests in UK equities and can also hold international equities and bonds. Shares in companies that derive more than 20% of their revenues from tobacco, gambling, weapons and fossil fuels are excluded.

Fund	2023/24		2022/23	
	3 year	5 year	3 year	5 year
FTSE All Share	9.0%	7.6%	14.1%	5.6%
Fund outperformance	8.1%	5.4%	13.8%	5.0%
	1.0%	2.2%	0.3%	0.6%

Reserves

The charity receives significant support from the City of London Corporation which is committed to contributing as necessary to the funds of the charity; it does so out of its City's Estate Funds. These Funds are used to meet the deficit on running expenses on a year by year basis. Consequently, a reserves policy is considered by the trustee to be inappropriate. The charity held free reserves of £186,630 at 31 March 2024, funds which will be used by the charity to further its objects, and which will be factored into financial plans.

The Trustee does not consider there to be any material uncertainty around going concern and further detail regarding this is set out on page 23.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The charity is committed to a programme of risk management as an element of its strategy to preserve the charity's assets. In order to embed sound practice the senior leadership team ensures that risk management policies are applied, that there is an on-going review of activity and that appropriate advice and support is provided. A key risk register has been prepared for the charity, which has been reviewed by the Trustee. This identifies the potential impact of key risks and the measures which are in place to mitigate such risks.

The principal risks faced by the charity, and actions taken to manage them are as follows:

Risk	Actions to manage risks	
Decline in condition of assets	<p>Inspections of operational property are managed, and records kept, by the City Surveyor's Department (CSD). Building defects are reported to CSD's Facilities Management Team to address.</p> <p>Longer term repairs and maintenance are managed through the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP), and where significant costs are likely to be incurred over and above the CWP, additional funding is sought through capital bids.</p> <p>A full review of Natural Environment assets is underway. The outcome will include a detailed asset management plan.</p>	
Budget Pressures	<p>Monitor budgets monthly and consider income generation opportunities.</p> <p>Appoint Head of Development and Partnerships.</p>	
Impacts of anti-social behaviour on staff and site	<p>An Environment Department reporting system is being trialled, following which a decision will be taken as to a permanent arrangement and departmental policy. Develop methods to ensure incidents are reported and actions taken as necessary.</p> <p>First-time or refresher training for staff on conflict management will be organised as part of a departmental arrangement.</p> <p>Build enforcement partnerships.</p> <p>The use of social media messaging, press releases, signage and face to face engagement with members of the public to encourage responsible behaviours is ongoing as appropriate.</p>	
Adverse impacts of extreme weather and climate change	<p>Met Office weather alerts are monitored and cascaded.</p> <p>Site plans are reviewed annually or following an incident, if appropriate.</p> <p>In accordance with the Extreme Weather Protocol, sites are closed during extreme weather events.</p>	
Risk to health and safety	<p>Proactive Health and Safety management, including audits, inspections, communications, and staffing.</p> <p>Department and Divisional Health and Safety Meeting are held regularly.</p>	

Recruitment of suitable staff	<p>Embed new operational structure. Support and training will be provided for existing and new staff to enable the creation of strong, supportive teams with consistent management support and good development opportunities.</p> <p>Recruitment of vacant posts.</p>
Tree failure	<p>Tree management systems are place, including regular inspections to identify any trees with structural or health issues.</p> <p>Highgate Wood and Queen's Park are closed in extreme weather conditions.</p> <p>An annual review of systems and inspections is undertaken by an independent external consultant.</p> <p>The Natural Environment Division's Tree Safety Policy is being reviewed in liaison with colleagues across the Division to ensure it is fit for purpose and updated as necessary.</p>
Negative impacts of pests and diseases	<p>Tree provenance is considered, and planting stock is sourced in accordance with best practice guidance.</p> <p>The threat of OPM across the North London Division is reducing, but we continue with the Forestry Commission led management on a targeted caterpillar spray in specific areas and nest removal in others. We are also looking at alternative, nature-based, management strategies. Staff remain vigilant for all tree pests and diseases.</p>
Negative of visitor pressure	<p>Additional monitoring and ecological assessments required. Messaging via social media asking visitors to use the site responsibly. Regular Ranger and Constabulary activity. Programmed restoration work is ongoing. Seeking ways to improve visitor infrastructure to encourage visitors to stay on designated routes and minimise damage. Carrying out educational and messaging campaigns to encourage the public to use the site responsibly. Very severely affected areas are temporarily fenced off to enable recovery. Target set for 2025 as we expect this to be a long-term mitigation exercise.</p>
Outbreak of fire in woodland/heathland	<p>Staff are made aware of extreme weather events and 'Trigger Events.'</p> <p>The Emergency Action Plan and Fire safety audits are reviewed and updated annually.</p> <p>Signage and social media messaging is used to remind visitors not to light fires or barbecues.</p>

TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustee is responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Charity law requires the Trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under charity law the Trustee must not approve the financial statements unless the Trustee is satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustee is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustee is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable the Trustee to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The Trustee is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustee is aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware; and
- the Trustee has taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Financial statements are published on the Trustee's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements, which may vary from legislation in other jurisdictions. The maintenance and integrity of the Trustee's website is the responsibility of the Trustee. The Trustee's responsibility also extends to the ongoing integrity of the financial statements contained therein.

Adopted and signed for on behalf of the Trustee.



Henry Nicholas Almroth Colthurst, Deputy
Chairman of Finance Committee of
The City of London Corporation
Guildhall, London

Randall Keith Anderson, Deputy
Deputy Chairman of Finance
Committee of The City of London
Corporation, Guildhall, London

Guildhall, London

29 January 2025

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEE OF HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK KILBURN

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Charity's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustee with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Trustee are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent

otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustee's report; or
- sufficient and proper accounting records have not been kept by the Charity; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustee

As explained more fully in the Trustee's responsibilities statement set out on page 15 and 16, the Trustee are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustee are responsible for assessing the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustee either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011, and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the Charity operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 together with the Charities SORP (FRS102) 2019. We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the Charity's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charity for fraud. The laws and regulations we considered in this context for the UK operations were General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption legislation, Health and safety legislation, and Employment legislation.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the Trustee and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

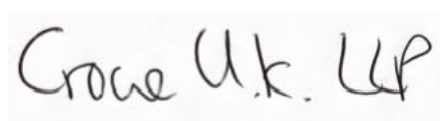
We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing of recognition of income, and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management, internal audit, legal counsel and the Audit & Risk Committee about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission, and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk

of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustee, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustee those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustee as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Crowe U.K. LLP". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Crowe U.K. LLP

Statutory Auditor

55 Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7JW

31.01.2025

Crowe U.K. LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023/24 Total Funds £	2022/23 Total Funds £
Income from:					
Voluntary activities	2	4,148	72,597	76,745	1,155
Charitable activities	3	231,151	-	231,151	225,471
Grant from City of London Corporation	4	1,533,369	-	1,533,369	1,254,787
Investments	5	5,630	-	5,630	6,707
Total income		1,774,298	72,597	1,846,895	1,488,120
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities:					
Maintenance and preservation of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn	6	1,744,186	27,597	1,771,783	1,503,483
Total expenditure		1,744,186	27,597	1,771,783	1,503,483
Net (loss) / gain on investments	11	16,649	-	16,649	(3,914)
Net (expenditure)/income and net movement in funds		46,761	45,000	91,761	(19,277)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	15	289,641	14,754	304,395	323,672
Total funds carried forward	15	336,402	59,754	396,156	304,395

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.

There were no other recognised gains and losses other than those shown above.

The notes on pages 23 to 34 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Fixed assets:			
Tangible assets	10	209,526	120,059
Investments	11	186,231	169,582
Total fixed assets		395,757	289,641
Current assets			
Debtors	12	109,129	38,177
Cash at bank and in hand		7,714	136,824
Total current assets		116,843	175,001
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	(116,444)	(160,247)
Net current assets/(liabilities)		399	14,754
Total assets less current liabilities		396,156	304,395
Total net assets		396,156	304,395
The funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds	15	-	14,754
Unrestricted income funds	15	396,156	289,641
Total funds		396,156	304,395

The notes on pages 23 to 34 form part of these financial statements

Approved and signed on behalf of the Trustee.

Caroline Al-Beyerty

Chamberlain of London

29 January 2025

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material in relation to the financial statements of the charity.

(a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS102, have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for fixed asset investments which are held at fair value and in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (FRS 102) (second edition effective 1 January 2019) and the Charities Act 2011.

(b) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the Trustee considers that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The charity's governing documents place an obligation on the City of London Corporation to preserve the open spaces for the benefit of the public. Funding is provided from the City of London Corporation's City's Estate. On an annual basis, a medium-term financial forecast is prepared for City's Estate, covering the next 5 years from the period covered by these financial statements. The latest forecast anticipates that adequate funds will be available in the 12 months from the date of these financial statements being signed to enable the charity to continue to fulfil its obligations.

In making this assessment, the Trustee has considered the financial position, including future income levels, planned expenditure and the liquidity of the charity over the next 12-month period. This assessment helps to provide assurances that the charity can continue to keep operating over the next 12-month period. For this reason, the Trustee continues to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of the financial statements.

(c) Key management judgements and assumptions

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenditure. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the result of which form the basis of decisions about carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in any future periods affected. Management do not consider there to be any material revisions requiring disclosure.

In preparing the financial statements, management has made the following key judgements: useful economic life of fixed assets.

(d) Statement of Cash Flows

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 (paragraph 1.12b) from the requirement to produce a statement of cash flows on the grounds that it is a qualifying entity.

A Statement of Cash Flows is included within the City's Estate Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024 which is publicly available at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk.

(e) Income

All income is included in the Statements of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income; it is more likely than not that economic benefit associated with the transaction will come to the charity and the amount can be quantified with reasonable certainty. Income consists of donations, charges for use of facilities, grants (including government grants), investment income, interest, sales and rental income.

The City of London Corporation's City's Estate meets the deficit on running expenses of the charity and also provides funding for certain capital works. This income is considered due each year end once the deficit on running expenses and capital works funding has been confirmed, and is recognised in the SOFA at this point.

(f) Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under the principal categories of 'expenditure on raising funds' and 'expenditure on charitable activities'. Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Governance costs include the costs of governance arrangements which relate to the general running of the charity as opposed to the direct management of functions inherent in the activities undertaken. These include the costs associated with constitutional and statutory requirements such as the cost of Trustee meetings.

Support costs (including governance costs) include activities undertaken by the City Corporation on behalf of the charity, such as human resources, digital services, legal support, accounting services, committee administration, public relations and premises costs. These costs are recharged and the basis of the cost allocation is set out in note 7.

The Trustee, the City Corporation, accounts centrally for all payroll related deductions. As a result, the charity accounts for all such sums due as having been paid.

(g) Pension costs

Staff are employed by the City of London Corporation and are eligible to contribute to the City of London Local Government Pension Fund, which is a funded defined benefit

scheme. The estimated net deficit on the Fund is the responsibility of the City of London Corporation as a whole, as one employer, rather than the specific responsibility of any of its three main funds (City Fund, City's Estate and Bridge House Estates) or the trusts it supports.

The Fund's estimated net liability has been determined by independent actuaries in accordance with FRS102 as £49.9m as at 31 March 2024 (£142.6m as at 31 March 2023). Since any net deficit is apportioned between the financial statements of the City of London's three main funds, the charity's Trustee does not anticipate that any of the liability will fall on the charity. The charity is unable to identify its share of the pension scheme assets and liabilities and therefore the Pension Fund is accounted for as a defined contribution scheme in these financial statements.

Barnett Waddingham, an independent actuary, carried out the latest triennial actuarial assessment of the scheme as at 31 March 2022, using the projected unit method. The 31 March 2022 valuation was carried out in 2022/23 and has set the contribution rates for the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2026 at 21%. Contribution rates adopted for the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 had been set at 21%.

(h) Taxation

The charity meets the definition of a charitable trust for UK income tax purposes, as set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010. Accordingly, the charity is exempt from UK taxation in respect of income or capital gains under part 10 of the Income Tax Act 2007 or section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

(i) Fixed Assets

Heritage Land and Associated Buildings

Highgate Wood and Queen's Park comprises 315 hectares (780 acres) of land, together with associated buildings, located in the North London boroughs of Haringey and Brent respectively. The object of the charity is the preservation in perpetuity of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. Highgate Wood and Queen's Park are considered to be inalienable (i.e. may not be disposed of without specific statutory powers).

Land and the original associated buildings are considered to be heritage assets. In respect of the original land and buildings, cost or valuation amounts are not included in these financial statements as reliable cost information is not available and a significant cost would be involved in the reconstruction of past accounting records, or in the valuation, which would be onerous compared to the benefit to the users of these accounts.

Additions to the original land and capital expenditure on buildings and other assets would be included as fixed assets at historic cost, less provision for depreciation and any impairment, where this cost can be reliably measured.

Tangible fixed assets

Assets that are capable of being used for more than one year and have a cost greater than £50,000 are capitalised. Such assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Depreciation is charged on a straight-line basis, in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life as follows:

	Years
Operational buildings	30 to 50
Improvements and refurbishments to buildings	up to 30
Infrastructure	up to 20

(j) Investments

Investments are made in the City of London Charities Pool (charity number: 1021138) which is an investment mechanism operating in a similar way to a unit trust. This enables the City of London Corporation to “pool” small charitable investments together and consequently obtain better returns than would be the case if investments were made individually.

Investments are valued at bid price. Gains and losses for the year on investments held as fixed assets are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

(k) Cash

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, overdrafts (if any) and short term deposits and other instruments held as part of the Corporation's treasury management activities with original maturities of three months or less.

(l) Funds structure

Income, expenditure and gains/losses are allocated to particular funds according to their purpose:

Restricted Funds – These include income that is subject to specific restrictions imposed by donors, with related expenditure deducted when incurred.

Unrestricted income funds – these funds can be used in accordance with the charitable object at the discretion of the Trustee and include both income generated by assets held representing unrestricted funds. Specifically, this represents any surplus of income over expenditure for the charity which is carried forward to meet the requirements of future years, known as free reserves.

Designated funds – these are funds set aside by the Trustee out of unrestricted funds for a specific purpose.

(m) Insurance

The charity, elected Members and staff supporting the charity's administration are covered by the City Corporation's insurance liability policies, and otherwise under the

indemnity the City Corporation provides to Members and staff, funded from City's Estate.

2. INCOME FROM VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total 2023/24	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total 2022/23
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Donations and legacies	4,148	-	4,148	30	1,125	1,155
Contributions	-	72,597	72,597	-	-	-
Total	4,148	72,597	76,745	30	1,125	1,155

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds 2023/24	Unrestricted funds 2022/23
	£	£
Charges for use of facilities	169,990	169,642
Rental income	61,161	55,829
Total	231,151	225,471

4. INCOME FROM THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

	Unrestricted funds 2023/24	Unrestricted funds 2022/23
	£	£
Revenue and capital grant from City of London Corporation	1,533,369	1,254,787

5. INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS

	Unrestricted funds 2023/24	Unrestricted funds 2022/23
	£	£
Investment income	5,630	6,707

Income for the year included:

Voluntary activities – relating to income received for the Roman Kiln Project, from Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions from London Borough of Brent towards the Queen's Park Sandpit project. Also, donations received from the public.

Grants from the City of London Corporation – being the amount received from the City of London Corporation's City's Estate to meet the deficit on running expenses of the charity, alongside funding for capital purchases.

Charitable activities – being amounts generated from charges made for the use of facilities, such as for filming and sports bookings and from the rental of catering facilities and wayleave licenses.

6. EXPENDITURE

	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2023/24 £	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2022/23 £
Maintenance and preservation of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn	<u>1,446,622</u>	<u>325,161</u>	<u>1,771,783</u>	<u>1,208,947</u>	<u>294,536</u>	<u>1,503,483</u>

Charitable activity

Expenditure on the charitable activities includes labour, premises costs, equipment, materials and other supplies and services incurred in the running of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn.

Auditor's remuneration and fees for other services

Crowe U.K. LLP are the auditors of the City of London's City's Estate Fund and provide assurance services to all of the different charities of which it is Trustee. In 2023/24 an audit fee of £6,930 was recharged (2022/23: £5,500). No other services were provided to the charity by its auditors during the year (2022/23: £nil).

7. SUPPORT COSTS

Support costs include activities undertaken by the City of London Corporation on behalf of the Charity, such as human resources, digital services, legal support, accounting services, committee administration and premises costs. Such costs are determined on a departmental basis, and are allocated on a cost recovery basis to the charity based on time spent, with associated office accommodation charged proportionately to the space occupied by the respective activities, with the split of costs as follows:

	Charitable activities £	Governance £	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Department:				
Chamberlain	27,411	-	27,411	40,633
Comptroller & City Solicitor	-	-	-	7,238
Town Clerk	-	41,254	41,254	35,698
City Surveyor	37,553	-	37,553	25,420
Natural Environment directorate	117,424	-	117,424	129,549
Other governance & support costs	12,287	6,930	19,217	19,232
Digital Services	82,302	-	82,302	36,766
Sub-total	276,977	48,184	325,161	294,536
Reallocation of governance costs	48,184	(48,184)	-	-
Total	325,161	-	325,161	294,536

All support costs are undertaken from unrestricted funds. Governance costs are allocated based on a proportion of officer time spent on the administration of Trustee and Committee related meetings.

8. DETAILS OF STAFF COSTS

All staff that work on behalf of the charity are employed by the City Corporation. The average number of people directly undertaking activities on behalf of the charity during the year was 15 (2022/23: 14).

Amounts paid in respect of employees directly undertaking activities on behalf of the charity were as follows:

	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Salaries and wages	620,795	547,765
National Insurance costs	55,186	55,019
Employer's pension contributions	97,977	99,926
Total emoluments of employees	773,958	702,710

The number of directly charged employees whose emoluments (excluding employer's pension contribution and national insurance contribution) for the year were over £60,000 was nil (2022/23: nil):

Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise the Members of the City of London Corporation, acting collectively for the City Corporation in its capacity as the Trustee, and the Director of Natural Environment who manages the seven open spaces funded by the City of London Corporation. A proportion of the Directors' employment benefits are allocated to this charity.

Support is also provided by other chief officers and their departments from across the City of London Corporation, including the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, Chamberlain, Comptroller and City Solicitor and City Surveyor.

The amount of employee benefits received by key management personnel totalled £8,124 (2022/23: £21,079). No members received any remuneration, with directly incurred expenses reimbursed, if claimed. Expenses totalling £nil were claimed in 2023/24 (2022/23: £nil).

9. HERITAGE ASSETS

Since 1886 the primary purpose of the charity has been the preservation of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn for the recreation and enjoyment of the public. As set out in Note 1(i), the original heritage land and buildings are not recognised in the Financial Statements. Policies for the preservation and management of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn are contained in the Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan 2013-2023 and Queen's Park Kilburn Conservation Management Plan 2014-2024. Records of heritage assets owned and maintained by Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn can be obtained from the Executive Director of Environment at the principal address as stated on page 35.

10. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Land and Buildings	Infrastructure	Furniture and Equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£
Cost				
At 1 April 2023	166,388	257,130	-	423,518
Additions	-	-	105,955	105,955
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	166,388	257,130	105,955	529,473
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2023	59,475	243,984	-	303,459
Charge for the year	3,342	13,146	-	16,488
At 31 March 2024	62,817	257,130	-	319,947
Net book value				
At 31 March 2024	103,571	-	105,955	209,526
At 31 March 2023	106,913	13,146	-	120,059

11. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

The investments are held in the City of London Corporation Charities Pool, a charity registered in the UK with the Charity Commission (charity number: 1021138). The Charities Pool is a UK registered unit trust.

The value of investments held by the charity are as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Market value 1 April	169,582	173,496
Gain / (loss) for the year	16,649	(3,914)
Market value 31 March	186,231	169,582
Cost 31 March	107,254	107,254
Units held in Charities Pool	18,728	18,728

The geographical spread of listed investments as at 31 March was as follows:

	Held in the UK	Held outside the UK	Total at 31 March 2024	Held in the UK	Held outside the UK	Total at 31 March 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Equities	156,695	20,392	177,087	137,606	23,069	160,675
Pooled Units	6,946	-	6,946	5,557	-	5,557
Cash held by Fund Manager	2,198	-	2,198	3,350	-	3,350
Total	165,839	20,392	186,231	146,513	23,069	169,582

12. DEBTORS – AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Rental debtors	18,106	4,808
Prepayments and accrued income	6,437	6,546
Recoverable VAT	41,886	23,553
Other debtors	42,700	3,270
Total	109,129	38,177

13. CREDITORS – AMOUNTS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	8,770	55,569
Accruals	79,689	60,405
Deferred income	4,502	4,502
Other creditors	23,483	39,771
Total	116,444	160,247

Deferred income relates to rental income received in advance for periods after the year-end.

	2024 £	2023 £
Deferred income analysis within creditors:		
Balance at 1 April	4,502	4,502
Amounts released to income	(4,502)	(4,502)
Amounts deferred in the year	4,502	4,502
Balance at 31 March	4,502	4,502

14. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BY FUND

At 31 March 2024	Unrestricted income funds		Restricted funds	Total at 31 March 2024	Total at 31 March 2023
	General funds	Designated funds			
	£	£	£	£	£
Tangible assets	-	209,526	-	209,526	120,059
Investments	186,231	-	-	186,231	169,582
Current assets	116,843	-	-	116,843	175,001
Current liabilities	(116,444)	-	-	(116,444)	(160,247)
Total	186,630	209,526	-	396,156	304,395

At 31 March 2023	Unrestricted income funds		Restricted funds	Total at 31 March 2023	Total at 31 March 2022
	General funds	Designated funds			
	£	£	£	£	£
Tangible assets	-	120,059	-	120,059	136,547
Investments	169,582	-	-	169,582	173,496
Current assets	160,247	-	14,754	175,001	46,359
Current liabilities	(160,247)	-	-	(160,247)	(32,730)
Total	169,582	120,059	14,754	304,395	323,672

15. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

At 31 March 2024	Total as at 1 April 2023	Income	Expenditure	Gains & (losses)	Transfers	Total as at 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds:						
CIL Contributions	-	45,000			(45,000)	-
Roman Kiln Project	-	27,597	(27,597)		-	-
Campaign donations	14,754	-	-	-	(14,754)	-
Total Restricted Funds	14,754	72,597	(27,597)	-	(59,754)	-
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	169,582	1,728,097	(1,727,698)	16,649	-	186,630
Designated funds:						
Furniture & Equipment	-	46,201	-	-	59,754	105,955
Land & Buildings	106,913		(3,342)			103,571
Infrastructure	13,146		(13,146)	-	-	-
Total unrestricted funds	289,641	1,774,298	(1,744,186)	16,649	59,754	396,156
Total funds	304,395	1,846,895	(1,771,783)	16,649	-	396,156

At 31 March 2023	Total as at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains & (losses) £	Total as at 31 March 2023 £
Restricted Funds					
Campaign donations	13,629	1,125	-	-	14,754
Total Restricted Funds	13,629	1,125	-	-	14,754
Unrestricted funds:					
General funds	173,496	1,486,995	(1,486,995)	(3,914)	169,582
Designated funds:					
Tangible fixed assets	136,547	-	(16,488)	-	120,059
Total	310,043	1,486,995	(1,503,483)	(3,914)	289,641
Total funds	323,672	1,488,120	(1,503,483)	(3,914)	304,395

Purposes of restricted funds

The restricted fund for 'Campaign Donations' represents funds received from the public through donations. A donations page has been created on the Queen's Park webpage, inviting and enabling the public to make on-line donations to the Queen's Park Sandpit and Playground Improvements project. In total £nil was received during the year (2022/23: £1,125). During the year, a contribution of £45,000 from CIL monies was provided by the London Borough of Brent towards the cost of the sandpit project (2022/23: £nil). This reserve was fully utilised during 2023/24 to part fund the cost of the sandpit project.

Purposes of designated funds

Designated funds have been set aside by the Trustee for the following purposes:

Fixed Assets – these are included at historic cost less accumulated depreciation in accordance with Note 1 (j). At 31 March 2024 the net book value of fixed assets amounted to £209,526 (2022/23: £120,059)

16. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The City Corporation is the sole Trustee of the charity, as described on page 2. The City Corporation provides various services to the charity, the costs of which are recharged to the charity. This includes the provision of banking services, charging all transactions to the charity at cost and crediting or charging interest at a commercial rate. The cost of these services is included within expenditure, as set out in note 7.

The charity is consolidated within the accounts of City's Estate, a fund of the City of London Corporation (the City Corporation, the Corporate Trustee of the charity), by virtue of the deemed control arising from the provision of the shortfall between the charity's income and expenditure by City's Estate, whose place of business is Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ. The principal purpose of City's Estate is to manage its investments in properties, stocks and shares to provide returns which allows the City

Corporation to use the income for the provision of services that are of importance to the City and Greater London as well as nationally and internationally, and to maintain the asset base so that income will be available to fund services for the benefit of future generations. The financial statements of City's Estate can be obtained from the address provided above.

The charity is required to disclose information on related party transactions with bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the charity. Members are required to disclose their interests, and these can be viewed online at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk.

Members and senior staff are requested to disclose all related party transactions, including instances where their close family has made such transactions.

Figures in brackets represent amounts due to or from another entity at the balance sheet date. Other figures represent the value of the transactions during the year.

Related party	Connected party	2023/24 £	2022/23 £	Detail of transaction
City of London Corporation	The City of London Corporation is the Trustee for the charity	1,533,369	1,254,787	The City of London Corporation's City's Estate meets the deficit on running expenses of the charity
		(nil)	(nil)	
		325,161	294,536	Administrative services provided for the charity
		(nil)	(nil)	
		5,630	6,707	Distribution from the Charities Pool
		(nil)	(nil)	

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

CHARITY NAME: Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn

Registered charity number: 232986

PRINCIPAL OFFICE OF THE CHARITY & THE CITY CORPORATION:

Guildhall, London, EC2P 2EJ

TRUSTEE:

The Mayor and Commonalty & Citizens of the City of London

SENIOR MANAGEMENT:

Chief Executive

Ian Thomas CBE – The Town Clerk and Chief Executive of the City of London Corporation

Treasurer

Caroline Al-Beyerty - The Chamberlain and Chief Financial Officer of the City of London Corporation

Solicitor

Michael Cogher - The Comptroller and City Solicitor of the City of London Corporation

Environment Department

Katie Stewart – Executive Director of Environment

Emily Brennan – Director of Natural Environment (appointed 5th June 2023)

AUDITORS:

Crowe U.K. LLP, 55 Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7JW

BANKERS:

Lloyds Bank Plc., P.O. Box 1000, BX1 1LT

INVESTMENT ADVISORS:

Artemis Investment Management Limited, Cassini House, 57 St. James's Street, London, SW1A 1LD

Contact for The Chamberlain & Chief Financial Officer, to request copies of governance documents & of the Annual Report of City's Estate:

CHBOffice-BusinessSupport@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee – For Information Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee – For Information	Dated: 29 th April 2025 20 th May 2025
Subject: Report of Action Taken	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides statutory duties • provides business enabling functions 	
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of:	Ian Thomas CBE, Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Report author:	Callum Southern, Governance Officer

Summary

This report provides details of decisions taken under Delegated Authority procedures under Standing Order 41(b) between Committee meetings.

Recommendation

Members are asked:

- To note the report.

Decisions taken under Delegated Authority under Standing Order 41(b)

Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee Terms of Reference

Background

1. At its meeting on 3rd December 2024, the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee were asked to consider and approve its revised Terms of Reference as part of its annual governance review process.
2. The Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee Delegated Authority to the Town Clerk (in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman) to consider and approve any subsequent changes to Committee Terms of Reference required ahead of the April 2024 Court of Common Council.
3. At the meeting, Chairman suggested the removal of the word 'joint' in 'Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee' and Queen's Park Joint Consultative Committee, as well as a change of 'Committee' to 'Group' in 'Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee'.
4. Therefore, the Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chair, to draft appropriate wording. The Committee Clerk has consulted with Officers in Comptrollers and City Solicitors, as well as the Deputy Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk, and the suggested revision to the Terms of Reference is included in the enclosed papers.

Decision Taken

5. Following consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee, the Town Clerk approved the proposed revision to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee Terms of Reference, for onward approval to the Policy & Resources Committee and, following that, the Court of Common Council.

Budget Estimates 2025/26 – Hampstead Heath Charity

Background

1. The latest 2024/25 budget for Hampstead Heath was a net expenditure of (£4.336m) as at December 2024, a net increase of (£846k) compared to the 2024/25 original budget of (£3.490m) net expenditure. The reasons for the budget increase were:
 - a. (£780k) re-phasing of CWP projects at Hampstead Heath managed by the City Surveyor. Please note that the CWP does not form part of the City Surveyor's local risk budget and is a programme of works over multiple financial years, with variances carried over to future years. The carry-over of unspent balances is reported to Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee;

- b. (£64k) increase in local risk funding from central contingency to support energy pressures;
 - c. (£2k) additional recharges following an increase in the cost of the Natural Environment Directorate for 2024/25 which is subsequently recharged to all the various services within the department.
- 2. The proposed 2025/26 budget was net expenditure of (£6.204m), an increase of (£2.714m) compared to the 2024/25 original budget. The 2025/26 budgets included:
 - a. a 2% uplift for inflation as a cash limit to Chief Officers' budgets;
 - b. a clear distinction between local risk, central risk, and recharge budgets; and
 - c. responsibility for budgetary control placed on departmental Chief Officers.
- 3. The Budget Estimates 2025/26 – Hampstead Heath Charity report went to the 4th February 2025 meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee requesting approval for the revenue and capital budgets for the Hampstead Heath charity for 2025/26, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee.
- 4. The Committee voiced concerns with regard to the detail of the Cyclical Works Programme and wished to have the detail provided before the budget was approved. Therefore, the Committee delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to approve the revenue and capital budgets for the Hampstead Heath charity for 2025/26, subject to the provision of the detail behind the figures provided for the Cyclical Works Programme.
- 5. The Cyclical Works Programme budget by project was provided to Members following the meeting on 25 February 2025 as part of consultation process.

Decision Made

- 6. Following consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee, the Town Clerk, as per Delegated Authority powers granted under Standing Order 41(b):
 - a. Reviewed and approved the proposed revenue budget for 2025/26 for Hampstead Heath for submission for approval by the Finance Committee;
 - b. Review and approved Hampstead Heath's capital and supplementary revenue project budgets for 2025/26 for submission for approval by the Finance Committee; and

- c. Agreed that amendments for 2024/25 and 2025/26 budgets arising from changes to recharges & support services or for any further implications arising from corporate contracts, energy price increases, changes to the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) and capital charges during budget setting be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

Budget Estimates 2025/26 – Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Charity

Background

1. The latest 2024/25 budget for Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park was a net expenditure of (£2.215m) as at December 2024, a net increase of (£349k) compared to the 2024/25 original budget of (£1.866m) net expenditure. The reasons for the budget increase were:
 - a. (£282k) re-phasing of CWP projects at Highgate Wood & Queen’s Park managed by the City Surveyor. Please note that the CWP does not form part of the City Surveyor’s local risk budget and is a programme of works over multiple financial years, with variances carried over to future years. The carry-over of unspent balances is reported to Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee;
 - b. (£37k) agreed carry forward from 2023/24 for safety play surface installation at the play area;
 - c. (£5k) increase in local risk funding from central contingency to support energy pressures.
2. The proposed 2025/26 budget was a net expenditure of (£2.093m), an increase of (£227k) compared to the 2024/25 original budget. The 2025/26 budgets included:
 - a. a 2% uplift for inflation as a cash limit to Chief Officers’ budgets;
 - b. a clear distinction between local risk, central risk, and recharge budgets; and
 - c. responsibility for budgetary control placed on departmental Chief Officers.

Committee and Consultation

3. The Budget Estimates 2025/26 – Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Charity report went to the 4th February 2025 meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee requesting approval for the

revenue budgets for the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charity for 2025/26, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee.

4. The Committee voiced concerns with regard to the detail of the Cyclical Works Programme and wished to have the detail provided before the budget was approved. Therefore, the Committee delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to approve the revenue budgets for the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charity for 2025/26, subject to the provision of the detail behind the figures provided for the Cyclical Works Programme.
5. The Cyclical Works Programme budget by project was provided to Members following the meeting on 25 February 2025 as part of consultation process.

Decision Made

6. Following consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, and the Members of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee, the Town Clerk, as per Delegated Authority powers granted under Standing Order 41(b):
 - a. Reviewed and approved the proposed revenue budget for 2025/26 for Highgate Wood and Queen's Park for submission for approval by the Financial Committee; and
 - b. Agreed that amendments for 2024/25 and 2025/26 budgets arising from changes to recharges & support services or for any further implications arising from corporate contracts, energy price increases, changes to the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) and capita charges during budget setting be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

Background Papers

If you require the background papers, please contact the Town Clerk.

Callum Southern

Governance Officer, Town Clerk's Department

E: Callum.Southern@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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