

HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Monday, 6 September 2021

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held
on Monday, 6 September 2021 at 5.30 pm

Present

Members:

Anne Fairweather (Chair)
Nick Bradfield (Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
John Etheridge (South End Green Association)
Colin Gregory (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)
Dr Gaye Henson (Marylebone Birdwatching Society)
Helen Payne (Friends of Kenwood)
Thomas Radice (Heath and Hampstead Society)
Steve Ripley (Ramblers' Association)
Ellin Stein (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Neighbourhood Association Committee)
Richard Sumray (London Council for Recreation and Sport)
Simon Taylor (Hampstead Rugby Club)
John Weston (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Simon Williams (Vale of Health Society)

In attendance:

Merlin Fox (representing Heath Hands)

Officers:

Juliemma McLoughlin	- Executive Director of Environment
Colin BATTERY	- Director of Open Spaces
Richard Gentry	- Acting Superintendent, Hampstead Heath
Declan Gallagher	- Operational Service Manager, Hampstead Heath
Yvette Hughes	- Business Manager, Hampstead Heath
Paul Maskell	- Leisure and Events Manager, Hampstead Heath
Jonathan Meares	- Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager
Katherine Radusin	- PA to Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Leanne Murphy	- Committee and Member Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Susan Rose, Mathew Frith and Ray Booth.

The Chair advised Members that this would be Thomas Radice's last meeting as representative of the Heath and Hampstead Society and thanked him for his hard work during many years of service on this Committee. These thanks were echoed by Members.

2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The public minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2021 were approved as a correct record subject to amendments concerning the draft Terms of Reference for the Hampstead Heath Sports and Wellbeing Forum and reference to Kenwood's Forest School "Into the Woods".

Matters arising

- On behalf of Friends of Kenwood, a Member formally thanked the City Corporation for relocating the biodiversity interpretation board.
- With regards to plans for the 150th anniversary celebrations, Officers confirmed plans were being discussed for an evening event of readings from local writers and a venue was being sourced.

4. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD & QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The draft public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 26 May 2021 were received.

5. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH SPORTS & WELLBEING FORUM ACTION POINTS**

The draft action points of the Hampstead Heath Sports & Wellbeing Forum held on 5 July 2021 were received.

Some Members of the Committee sitting on the newly formed Sports and Wellbeing Forum voiced concern around the number of Members on the Forum. Members were advised that the effectiveness of the new Forum would be reviewed next year after more meetings. It was also noted that the numbers were smaller on the Forum than this Committee and Officers were only present to report.

6. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Members considered an update report of the Superintendent regarding Hampstead Heath and the following comments were made:

Drone guidance

- A Member (Heath & Hampstead Society) did not feel that the draft Drone Guidance was strong enough in its position regarding drones as it only encouraged against the use of drones on Hampstead Heath which was not a legally enforceable presumption. Officers confirmed that changes in the Air Navigation Order 2016 (ANO) made things more complex and legal advice was being sought to clarify the guidance. Officers would introduce an application process for pilots to fly drones on the Heath; although not mandatory, it would enable Officers to identify if the Drone falls within the permissions of the ANO 2016.

- A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) recommended differentiating between policy and guidance and queried if the Heath could have separate guidance from national guidance due to its byelaws. Officers confirmed they would be undertaking a review of the relevant byelaws for Hampstead Heath and would use Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) against those repeatedly breaking laws.

Professional dog walking scheme

- Officers have liaised with the Professional Dog Walking Association and initially received 50 responses to an expression of interest. Criticism was received from the lack of understanding of where professional dog walkers walked their dogs. An exercise has been carried out to develop a heat map of the different areas used across the Heath by professional dog walkers. Members were informed that the Heath would be zoned into 6 segments and a limited number of licenses would be issued for each zone. There would no longer be morning or afternoon slots and there would be a limit of four dogs per professional dog walker.
- The Chair noted that a number of representations had been received from small business/individuals and there was a need to balance the maintenance of the environment with business reliance needs.
- A Member (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) enquired if East Heath was a single zone as this appeared to be the most popular area. Officers confirmed East Heath up to the Upper Fairground site would form one zone.
- Members were advised that there would be approximately 10 - 15 licences for each zone.
- Members voiced concern this would allow for constant swaps of dog walking by one professional within their zone. Officers clarified a licence would be issued to an individual dog walker who could operate within a designated zone. However, companies would have to licence each individual dog walker.
- The Chair queried when the scheme would come into effect and Officers advised that 21 days' notice must be given. It was hoped this would follow the upcoming HHMC meeting (pending approval) and come into effect in October/November 2021.
- A Member (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) questioned how Licenced Professional Dog Walkers could be identified. Officers confirmed either a pass, lanyard or armband would be issued to licensed dog walkers.

Playgrounds

- Members were advised that Officers were working with the local community to develop the Concept Design for the Heath Extension Playground. Public engagement was ongoing with a deadline for feedback until 26 September 2021.
- Members were supportive of the Concept Design.

Planning

- **Jack Straws Castle (2020/1828/P).** Officers await details regarding the alterations and planning permissions as this site borders Heath lands.
- **Murphy's Yard.** Members were advised there were major issues, particularly concerning the height of the proposal. It was suggested that local user groups comment on the current proposed redevelopment of the area.
- **55 Fitzroy Park (2018/3672/P).** This application remained undetermined. The drainage issues remain unresolved and no further update to the application has been made since April 2021.
- **Branch Hill Pond.** Officers are working with a consultant to submit a planning application for a small pond.

Tree planting on Parliament Hill Broad Walk

- A Member (Hampstead Rugby Club) voiced concern regarding the planting of new trees as there were lots of users of the slope and there was potential for saplings damage.
- Members were informed that 3 groups of new trees would be planted on the eastern corner of the athletics track down to Hive and they would be planted approximately 10-15m apart. The trees were not saplings and would be protected.

Capital Works

- Members were advised that the Parliament Hill Athletics Track surface would require a full reconstruction in order to attain TrackMark certification. A Capital Bid had been submitted for funding consideration. It was noted that external organisations had suspended their grant funding, and this was impacting on Officers ability to secure external funding towards the project. Officers would continue to work with neighbouring Local Authorities to identify possible S106 or CIL funding to strengthen the bid.

- The Chair explained the annual Capital Funding process and highlighted the need to submit a bid for this cycle with a strong case. External funding and support would help.
- A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) requested a strong HHCC response as if the works to the track did not go ahead it could affect the Heath's ability to host big sports events. It was agreed there was a need to get Member support for this project and prioritise the track's importance. Bidding again for Capital Funding in a year was not regarded as a realistic option.
- A Member (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath) noted their experience in managing and refurbishing tracks and offered assistance with this project.

Events

- Concerning the proposal to hold a Christmas fayre event at East Heath, a Member (Friends of Kenwood) noted Christmas trees were already sold by Pines and Needles in Kenwood. It was hoped both sites could work together when planning Christmas events.
- The Highgate Harriers Night of 10,000m Personal Bests event has been rescheduled to 14 May 2022.
- With regards to weddings, 15 had taken place this year with a further 7 planned, and 15 booked for 2022. It was noted that Government had introduced a trial, allowing non-covered spaces to host ceremonies. This would allow two additional locations within the Hill Garden and Pergola to facilitate ceremonies.

Swimming

- Officers confirmed the Lido and Bathing Ponds would revert to winter season opening hours from 20 September. Discussion with the Winter Swimming Club had also taken place in relation to the Mixed Pond extended opening during September/October 2021 (noting that the pond would usually be closed during the winter season).

Cafés

- The tender process for the Golders Hill Park Café will be undertaken during autumn/winter 2021.

Fundraising

- A Member (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) stated that Heath's donation page was very different to other donations pages which normally included a totaliser, options to leave message, retweet to friends, etc.

- The Chair agreed more work was needed and Officers were keen to make the site comparable with others.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- Provide feedback in relation to the proposals to manage drone usage via a drone use request form, as set out in paragraph 6;
- Provide feedback in relation to the proposal to continue the biodiversity interpretation boards for the further year, as set out in paragraphs 9-11;
- Provide feedback in relation to the Heath Extension Concept Design (appendix 3) as set out in paragraphs 12-14.

7. HEATH HANDS UPDATE

Members received a volunteering update from Heath Hands.

Members were advised that volunteering activity was almost back to normal, and Heath Hands had contributed over 4,000 volunteering hours at the Heath. Other highlights included five paid work experience placements, a large number of youth groups and activities in September and October and a successful funding bid from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

8. QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chair asked Members for their views, regarding meeting arrangements moving forward. The options for consideration were:

- 1) to continue to meet online with meetings being recorded;
- 2) hybrid meetings held at Guildhall, allowing for meetings to continue to be recorded and allowing Members the option of attending in person or online;
- 3) resume in person meetings at Parliament Hill meeting room, noting meetings would not be recorded.

The Chair noted that meetings relating to the Open Spaces were some of the most watched on the Corporation's YouTube channel. The Chair highlighted the wider opportunities for consultation and transparency of conversations when meetings were recorded.

The Chair confirmed that pre-meeting walks would continue. The Chair also noted the wide membership of the Committee which was not fully representative of the demographic of the area it represented.

RESOLVED - With two hours having elapsed since the start of the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order No. 40 the Committee agreed at this point to extend the meeting by up to thirty minutes.

Members were asked what their preference was for HHCC meetings and how they engaged the groups they represented. The following responses were made:

- **Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee** - in person meetings at Guildhall or Parliament Hill. Represents 10 members with decisions to 30-40 people.
- **South End Green Association** – happy with virtual meetings with a live audience but ok with meeting in person at Guildhall.
- **London Wildlife Trust** - prefer hybrid and report to 10 people plus newsletter to 300 people.
- **Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association** – had difficulties with MS Teams but in principle hybrid meetings best solution when noting the wider audience ability and transparency. Moving forward a Facebook group could be used to share a link to the meeting agenda if appropriate.
- **Highgate Society** – happy with virtual but prefer Zoom. Live meetings easier to have conversations so would go for hybrid. Report to committee of 15 people.
- **Marylebone Birdwatching Society** – hybrid a sensible option with walks assisting conversations. Report to 120 members and update at meetings.
- **Friends of Kenwood** – Hybrid at Parliament Hill preferable but would attend Guildhall. Report back at each meeting 10 main members but 600 members overall, plus lots of social media engagement.
- **Heath and Hampstead Society** – favour face to face meetings. Report back to 12 members plus newsletter to 3,000 people.
- **Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Neighbourhood Association Committee** – dependant on infection rate and vaccine immunity, would be reluctant to meet in Parliament Hill room in person. Report back to committee which are exercised about relevant issues and discuss heavily.
- **London Council for Recreation and Sport** – face to face preferred but would do hybrid if at a different local venue. Engage London-wide disseminating information with Camden on nature, heath and sport.
- **Hampstead Rugby Club** – happy with virtual or hybrid. Report to members and disseminate information to over 600 people.
- **Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath** – hybrid meetings. Do not report to a single committee.
- **Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee** – hybrid meetings best option. Report and disseminate to 10-15 people and run website.
- **Vale of Health Society** – hybrid best but prefer Zoom over MS Teams. Report to 6 active members plus 70 others on individual matters.

With regards to potential larger and local venues, Members were encouraged to provide suggestions to the Town Clerk.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting on 1 November 2021 was noted.

The meeting ended at 7.51 pm

Chairman

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