

HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Monday, 26 September 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held at
HYBRID – VIRTUAL AND COMMITTEE ROOM 4 on Monday, 26 September 2022
at 5.30 pm

Present

Members:

William Upton KC (Chairman)
Ray Booth (Barnet Mencap)
Nick Bradfield (Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
John Etheridge (South End Green Association)
Matthew Frith (London Wildlife Trust)
Merlin Fox (Heath Hands)
Colin Gregory (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)
Dr Gaye Henson (Marylebone Birdwatching Society)
Richard Sumray (London Council for Recreation and Sport)
Jeff Waage (Heath and Hampstead Society)
David Walton (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath)

Officers:

Jonathan Meares	- Natural Environment Division
Declan Gallagher	- Natural Environment Division
Paul Maskell	- Natural Environment Division
Stefania Horne	- Natural Environment Division
Julie Fittock	- City Surveyors
Ben Dunleavy	- Town Clerk's Department
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Helen Payne (Friends of Kenwood) and Susan Rose (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee). Nick Fielding was in attendance for Friends of Kenwood.

Before continuing with the main items of the agenda, the Chairman placed on record the Committee's thanks and congratulations to Richard Gentry who had recently moved to a new role within the Corporation.

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

There were none.

3. MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the previous meeting of the Consultative Committee, held on 23 May 2022.

A Member (Highgate Society) suggested that under item 5 (5.1 Draft Divisional Plan 2022-25) the conversation concerning archaeological interpretations had been raised by them rather than the Member erroneously referred to.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 23 May 2022 be agreed as a correct record, as corrected.

a) **DRAFT MINUTES OF HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE**

Members noted the draft minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 15 June 2022.

Matters Arising

- A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) suggested that any financial papers received by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee should also be received by the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, as appropriate. The Chairman will consider the request and appropriate information will be made available.

4. **SPORTS AND WELLBEING FORUM - DRAFT ACTION POINTS**

The Committee received a report of draft action points of the Hampstead Heath Sports & Wellbeing Forum.

RESOLVED – That Members receive the report and note the contents.

5. **ASSISTANT DIRECTORS UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Environment, providing the Assistant Director's Update.

The Assistant Director reported that corporate projects were progressing well. The Committee heard that a corporate review of all projects within the City of London Corporation was taking place, including the athletic tracks and the ponds projects. It was noted that the pond project was progressing well with procurement and design now finalised. The Committee was advised that good progress had also been made on the pond and wetlands conservation plan and work had also begun on building a brand-new pond. Members noted that the London Cricket Trust had confirmed funding for several improvements to the cricket facilities and the environment department continues to liaise with stakeholders and users to ensure funding continues to progress.

The Assistant Director highlighted to the Committee a correction regarding a project involving the Royal Free Hospital, noting the project was funded not by the Hospital but by the Royal Free Charity.

Queen's Green Canopy

A Member (Marylebone Birdwatching Society) queried whether the trees being proposed for planting on the Tumulus site would be in a line or group. An officer confirmed that the plan was to recreate the field boundary that once existed across the field and the trees would be placed as naturally as possible and

would be positioned in such a way that they would mark the field boundary and will be irregularly spaced. They added that, should Members of the Consultative Committee wish to be involved in the placing of the trees, this would be welcomed.

A Member (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath) said the location for the trees around the Tumulus site looked to be on the route where the large cross-country races followed and asked that this be considered. An officer said the relevant officers would be working on the issue raised and plans would be made to avoid disruption to the cross-country races.

Constabulary Update

The Chairman asked whether the weeklong operation with the Metropolitan Police in partnership with the City of London Corporation and the London Borough of Camden (Community Safety Team) would take place again. The Assistant Director said the operation took place because of the recent issues concerning anti-social behaviour on the Heath; the operation had been successful in providing public reassurance and there was an opportunity to continue to work jointly with other partners to make sure the Heath remained safe.

A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) said there are issues each summer around Parliament Hill, just after exams have taken place for young people and further partnership work with the police would be welcomed and provide safety for young people on the Heath. Regarding boating issues in the pond, the Member asked whether fixed penalty notices could be issued where unsafe actions were occurring and said more notices needed to be placed regarding the use of disposable barbeques in the park. Regarding the pond, the Assistant Director said that large signage was situated to ensure that the public does not access the pond and natural barriers were also being used to maintain health and safety. Concerning the use of barbeques, the Assistant Director said there had been a huge effort from staff to minimise the risk of fires and firebreaks had also been put in place, but the department understood the challenges disposable barbeques posed to the Heath.

A Member (Heath Hands) suggested that signage declaring fixed penalties would have a substantial effect on boating issues in the pond. The Assistant Director agreed to take these suggestions away to colleagues at the constabulary.

A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) asked if the Assistant Director could confirm if serious trends of anti-social behaviour had been observed. The Assistant Director said a dashboard is planned to analyse trends but also to look in further detail as to where problems were arising and in which locations.

A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) expressed their concern that the current timetable for the developments being carried out on the Parliament Hill Athletics Track for 2023/24 including the timing for the changing

of floodlights. The Assistant Director said have already been raised back to appropriate colleagues and will be considered when the project develops.

Good News

A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) queried what more could be done to encourage women's cricket and requested an update on the rollout of dog licensing. The Assistant Director said Women are already a priority group for Camden's Health and Wellbeing agenda. The department was working closely with the London Cricket Trust but also with the English Cricket Board to make sure good work and progress continues with partners. Regarding dog licensing, the Assistant Director said licences are continuing to be sent out, and this was a priority for the department. The Assistant Director also provided an update on the Heath extension playground, which is progressing well, and contractors have been engaged.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

A Member (South End Green Association) asked whether monies being sought for the Model Boating Pond Island would only be raised through donations, enquiries were also made on whether the former role of Constabulary, Queen's Park and West Ham Park Manager would be appointed in the same capacity. The Assistant Director confirmed donations are continuing and will be used as match funding towards funding applications as and when they become available. Regarding the filling of the vacant position, the Assistant Director said the role was currently being undertaken by existing staff as a temporary measure until the Target Operating Model review was complete.

RESOLVED – That Members receive the report and provide feedback.

6. A BLUEPRINT FOR THE PARLIAMENT HILL LIDO

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Environment, providing a concept plan for Parliament Hill Lido. The Assistant Director explained that the proposed concept plan is not the final proposal but initially developed to visually highlight development opportunities and that the final design will need to be developed with users and stakeholders.

A Member (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath) said it was important that the essence of the Lido was not forgotten in the blueprint for Parliament Hill. They also suggested that the customer journey can be improved. The Assistant Director agreed to take these comments back for review.

A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) said it was important to understand what the financial envelope for the changes being proposed might be and asked how the blueprint would be taken forward after being brought to the Consultative Committee. The Assistant Director confirmed that an initial analysis had been conducted on the capacity and penetration rate, it was estimated that with the current population and a basic model and basic improvements, subsidies could be potentially decreased by half but this can

change according to final design and model. For the next steps, the Assistant Director noted that it was important that the vision and capacity of the changing rooms be clarified together with the users to ensure there was a vision that was achievable to funding.

RESOLVED – That Members receive the report and provide feedback.

7. **GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT FOR NATURE RECOVERY**

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Environment, setting out a series of proposals for future grassland management on Hampstead Heath in response to the City of London's 2020 Climate Action Strategy, nature recovery and the biodiversity emergency.

A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) asked in what circumstances would less than annual cutting be considered appropriate and whether grazing was an issue. An officer commented that there was some overlap with some areas concerning grazing and the cutting regime would be dependent on the strength of the grass as some areas were in enriched zones. Members were informed that the annual cutting of grass would also produce a saving on fuel.

A Member (Heath Hands) said the initiative was excellent and in line with the City of London agreeing to reach net zero by 2027, it was suggested that the department may want to consider implementing the 7.2 hectares across the Heath for lowland meadow creation. An officer noted that strategy implementation had already started, and an audit had been completed from scopes one and two which showed emissions were already down from 2020's levels, however, this was still a big challenge.

A Member (London Wildlife Trust) advised that Consultative Committee be mindful concerning fires and that decisions may need to be taken were there to be extended periods of high temperatures. They felt that cuts may need to be taken earlier in advance than may have been preferable. The Member asked what monitoring would take place as referred to in the report. The Assistant Director confirmed monitoring would be done by the City of London's ecologist with methodology yet to be agreed upon surrounding species diversity.

A Member (Highgate Society) suggested that rotational cutting could address the issues raised with fire risk. Concerning diversity, the Member also asked whether the loss of grassland between the south meadow could be addressed. The Assistant Director said there was a constant battle of grass versus woodland, with woodland taking hold despite the departments' attempts to arrest the process.

A Member (South End Green Association) said they welcomed the initiative and noted that it was important to monitor erosion issues

RESOLVED – That Members receive the report and provide feedback.

8. **SWIMMING BOOKING SYSTEMS**

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Environment, setting out proposed changes to the Booking System used at the Bathing Ponds and Lido on Hampstead Heath.

A Member (Friends of Kenwood) suggested that it would be good to create a user account on the system so data did not have to be entered multiple times. This would also help to enable data gathering, which had the Members' full support.

RESOLVED – That Members receive the report and provide feedback.

9. **VISION AND PRIORITIES FOR PARLIAMENT HILL IMPROVEMENTS**

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Environment, providing a vision for improvement to Parliament Hill.

A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) asked to what extent the proposals involved possible changes to the staff yard including Heathfield House and relocation of the education team. The Assistant Director said a formulated strategy for buildings had not yet been done but work was ongoing with surveyors in terms of improvements and maximising opportunities for the staff yard.

A Member (Highgate Society) said focusing on the concept of the visitor hub was a particularly important issue and was glad to see it had been given serious consideration. The Member suggested that a better program of public information about the Heath was needed to enable informative information to give greater feedback. The Assistant Director said the points raised would be picked up by separate projects and initiatives.

RESOLVED – That Members receive the report and provide feedback.

10. **HEATH HANDS SEPTEMBER UPDATE**

Members received a report updating the Consultative Committee of the work of Heath Hands from September 2022.

A Member (Marylebone Birdwatching Society) said they were grateful for the work done by Heath Hands for filling up feeders as well as being impressed with the activities involving school children birdwatching. A question was raised as to why there had been a drop-in volunteer activity for Highgate Wood. The representative from Heath Hands agreed to report back to the Member on the issue.

11. **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted by the Consultative Committee.

The meeting ended at 7.39pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Blair Stringman
Blair.Stringman@cityoflondon.gov.uk