

Committee(s)	Dated:
Queen's Park Consultative Group	31 October 2018
Subject: Superintendent's Update – Queen's Park	Public
Report of: Bob Warnock, Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Discussion
Report author: Richard Gentry, Open Spaces Department	

Summary

This report provides an update on the management of the Park and operational activities of the Queen's Park Team since April 2018.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Members provide their views on the removal of a metal railing fence which surrounds an oak tree, as set out in paragraph 15.
- Members provide feedback on the proposed events for 2019, as set out in paragraph 30.
- Members views and feedback are sought in relation to the approval thresholds outlined in table 1 of the draft Policy, Appendix 2.
- That the view and comments of the Queen's Park Consultative Group be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at their meeting on 28 November 2018.

Main Report

Operational Management

1. Having experience one of the hottest summers on record staff in the Park have continued to provide a range of services to visitors, including the facilitation of events and sporting activities and maintaining the Park and it's features to a high standard.
2. Queen's Park has been successful in 2018, receiving Green Flag and Green Heritage Awards for 2018/19 and achieved a gold standard at the recent London in Bloom Awards. These achievements recognise the quality of Queen's Park and are a testament to the exceptional work of staff, volunteers and the support from the local community.

Projects and Programmes

3. The Park Manager is working with a consultant, The Park Agency, to develop further, the Queen's Park Woodland Walk Management Plan. This piece of

work will expand on the earlier draft which was presented to the group at the last meeting April 2018. A further draft document will be presented for consideration in April 2019.

4. The Park Manager is scoping out a proposal for a review of the Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan 2014 - 2023. This plan was approved by this Group in June 2014 and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee in September 2014. The Conservation Management Plan five year review is due to be undertaken in 2019. The review will ensure the Plan remains current and relevant.
5. Separate reports covering the Public Toilets and Sandpit have been prepared for Members consideration.
6. Tennis Courts 1- 6 have been resurfaced. These works have been funded through the City Surveyor's Department, Cyclical Works Programme. The courts will be painted and relined in the spring of 2019.
7. The Park Manager will seek funding during the next round of applications from the Wembley National Stadium Trust, to fund the procurement of a tennis practice wall which could be installed by the tennis courts. Anticipated cost is between £1,500 - £2,000.
8. The Cyclical Works Programme has recently funded the repair of a section of broken fence on the Pitch and Putt course.
9. The Park Manager will provide an update on the redevelopment of the Children's Farm on the walk and at the meeting.
10. The Park Manager has been approached by a small group from the local community who have proposed the first floor office space in the Park be utilised as a community space. The City Surveyor's Dept. are considering how underused space could be used to greater benefit. The Park Manager has consulted with the Surveyor on the process and is in discussion with the City of London Procurement Team to seek expressions of interest as part of a tender process for the use of this space. The Park Manager will provide further information on this proposal at the meeting.

Sustainability

11. The Divisional Waste and Recycling Review is now well under way. Several options are being investigated to improve the current service, both in terms of sustainability and cost effectiveness. For the Financial Year 2018/19 Qtr. 1 – to Qtr. 2 the Park has incurred costs for the collection of waste, including dog waste, recycling and skip hire costs. These costs equate to £8,345.00.
12. In partnership with the London Borough of Brent and their contractor, Veolia, the Park will offer the opportunity for the recycling of Christmas trees. A small area will be fenced off at the top of the Park, giving access for drop off and the collection of trees. In excess of 1,000 trees we received for recycling last year.

Ecology and Environment

13. Due to previous incidences of vandalism to the annual Christmas tree and the installed lights, this year lights will be installed on one of the London Plane trees

in front of the café. This will provide several benefits; the lights will be available for use throughout the year, e.g. if the Park held an evening event after dusk, in addition, there will be a saving on the cost of purchasing the tree. The new arrangements will also free up staff time, as there will not be the requirement for staff to install the tree or lights.

14. Tree works have been carried out over the summer months, these have included; the removal of a horse chestnut in the playground due to stability and suspected subsidence damage to the toilets, tree inspection of the perimeter trees, clear up of a fallen red oak on main field, the removal of Norway maple associated with the farm redevelopment, the removal of four Oak Processionary Moth nests from three oak trees, the lifting of limbs across paths for Queen's Park Day and the Tennis Court contractors and the removal of large *massaria* branch above zip line in playground (6 other *massaria* branch removals various dates). They have scheduled works which will include the removal of a dead horse chestnut on the west side of the main field and ongoing tree inspection of inner Park trees. Site visits are carried out by the Tree Team, establishing any necessary works and monitoring for pest and diseases.
15. The Park Manager seeks the views on this group regarding the removal of the metal railing which currently surrounds the old Oak tree adjacent to Kingswood Avenue. It is recommended that this railing be removed and a low level post and rope barrier be installed with updated interpretation relating to the tree (option B).
Options:
 - A. Retain the metal fence, renew interpretation (recommended/ not recommended)
 - B. Remove the fence, replace with post and low rope and renew interpretation (recommended/ not recommended)
 - C. Remove fence (recommended/ not recommended)

Visitors and Community

16. The Park remains a busy destination with an estimated 850,000 visitor numbers between 1 April 2018 - 19 September 2018. The playground received 140,000 visits during this period. Data is collated from pedestrian counters.
17. Local schools continue to use the Park for a variety of reasons, including visits to the farm and school sports days. The Park is in the process of organising bulb planting with local schools for October /November. In excess of 4,000 bulbs will be planted which makes a spectacular display in the spring.
18. Junior Parkrun continues to be popular and successful, with positive comments from families attending with their children on a Sunday morning. This event does not involve any staff resource.
19. A number of schools continue to hold their sports day events in the Park at the end of the summer term. In 2019, a formal booking process will be introduced, enabling the staff to have a better understanding of the Parks use for these types of events engage and to with the schools.

20. A wedding ceremony was held on the Bandstand in April 2018. A confirmed booking is in place for June 2019. Working with the Division's Communications Officer, the Park Manager will consider how the venue can be best promoted. There is also an opportunity to work in partnership with Urban Leisure Group to promote the venue. The fees and charges for Weddings and Civil Ceremonies are available in the Fees and Charges report.
21. Urban Leisure Group have settled well in to the café. Feedback has been positive and the café has been very busy over the summer. The café has recently gone cashless, to reduce the requirement of staff to make cash drops, improve safety and reduce the risk of theft. The café are growing their own produce in planters outside the café, these were previously located outside the paddling pool.

Learning and Schools

22. Our Learning Projects Officer has been proactive over the summer months. At the Open Gardens event they engaged with 86 people. For the weekly summer holiday sessions, we had nine adults and 15 children, unfortunately bad weather meant that three sessions had to be cancelled. On Queen's Park Day they engaged with 69 adults and 83 children.
23. Two students with special educational needs will carry out work experience in the farm and garden. Starting after half-term at the end of October, the students will carry out two hours each per week over a six week period. At the end of each six week period two new students will be introduced to the Park for work experience opportunities.

Volunteering

24. The Division is considering how best to engage with volunteer groups and develop opportunities, including the corporate volunteering offer.

Events

25. The Park Manager made a successful variation to the Park's Premises Licence, to enable outdoor film screenings to take place on a Friday and a Saturday evening.
26. There were a number of successful events in the Park in 2018, these include a Shakespearian play, presented by Shakespeare in the Square, Open Gardens and Open Studios, A Book Festival and Queen's Park Day.
27. The Park is working in partnership with the tenant at the café to present a Christmas Fayre on 8 -9 December 2018, 11am – 5pm on the café forecourt.
28. Members will recall that a request was previously received from a commercial operator to sell Christmas trees in Queen's Park in December. Having discussed this proposal with the Comptroller & City Solicitor and other officers it is not considered to be compatible with the statutory provisions that regulate the use of the Park.

29. To guide future events at Queen's Park, a Part 2, Site Specific Events Policy has been prepared, see appendix 2. Members views and feedback are sought in relation to the approval thresholds outlined in table 1 of the draft Policy.
30. It is proposed that this Policy will inform the future usage of the site and will apply to events taking place after 1 April 2019. The Park Manager has already been approached in relation to the below proposed events in 2019:
 - Shakespeare in the Squares – 22 June 2019
 - Queen's Park Book Festival – 29 and 30 June 2019
 - Queen's Park Day – 15 September 2019
31. The views of Members are sought regarding these proposed events, which have all previously been successfully held in the Park.

Income and Expenditure

32. The Superintendent will provide a verbal update of income and expenditure at the meeting.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

33. Queen's Park delivers the aims and objectives of the City of London Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023, it contributes to the outcomes under the aims of the organisation to provide a flourishing society (1-4), supports a thriving economy (5 & 8) and shapes outstanding environments (9-12).

Conclusion

34. The City of London continues to deliver a much loved green space in the heart of a multi-cultural urban environment. Delivering a range of accessible facilities at little or no cost to its visitors. With the success of the Green Flag, Green Heritage and London in Bloom awards the Park, its staff, volunteers and the local community are recognised for their contributions. Clearer guidance and management will be provided with the development of the Woodland Walk Management Plan, the introduction of the Site-Specific Events Policy and the review of the Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan 2014 – 2023 in 2019.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Open Spaces Departmental Events Policy, Part 1
- Appendix 2 – Queen's Park – Site Specific Events Policy, Part 2
- Appendix 3 – Queen's Park Events Application Form

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