

Annual Impact Report 2018-2019

Introduction

In 2018 the 10-year Management Strategy for Hampstead Heath (2018-2028) was introduced, building on the foundation of the Hampstead Heath Management Plan Part 1 - Towards a plan for the Heath 2007-2017.

The Strategy seeks to balance the often-conflicting demands of protecting and conserving the Heath while at the same time enhancing the enjoyment of each year's 9.3 million visitors and recreational users.

This Annual Impact Report details the progress we have made during the first year's implementation of the Strategy. It will summarise our achievements and will set out the priorities for 2019, the 30th anniversary of the City of London Corporation becoming the custodian of Hampstead Heath.

Summary of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018 - 2028

The Strategy confirms our commitment to realising the aspirations of the Heath Vision, which identifies a range of Priorities and the four strategic Outcomes necessary to achieve them:

- A. The Heath is maintained as a flourishing green space and historic landscape.
- B. Improved quality of life for Heath visitors.
- C. The Heath is inclusive and welcoming to a diverse range of visitors.
- D. Greater number and diversity of people taking care of the Heath.

These are also linked to the City of London's Corporate Plan 2018- 2023, which focuses on ways to:

- Contribute to a flourishing society
- Support a thriving economy
- Shape outstanding environments and support a thriving economy

The 'golden thread' running through the documents directly links the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy and the Heath Vision to the Corporate Plan, Open Spaces Business Plan, the Divisional Plan and Annual Work Programmes.

Working towards the Outcomes

A - The Heath is maintained as a flourishing green space and historic landscape

The ecological improvements resulting from the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project continue to be monitored, while additional desilting work at the Mixed Pond has further improved water quality and the swimming experience. The aquatic planting and wild-flower meadows are thriving and providing excellent habitat for wildlife and insects.

The Heath's Tree Team has been tackling Oak Processionary Moth on the Heath since 2015. With support from the Forestry Commission, staff have worked alongside specialist contractors to identify where the insect is present, spraying trees and then removing nests. Using their specialist skills, the Tree Team has proactively monitored this invasive species, mitigating its impact and communicating the health risks to visitors.

Ecological monitoring is continuing to increase with support from partners: The London Natural History Society, The Zoological Society for London (ZSL) and Heath Hands. An extensive hedgehog monitoring programme was carried out with ZSL and volunteers, involving 150 wildlife camera positions. As well as showing that Hampstead Heath is one of the best places in London for hedgehogs, a variety of other wildlife was recorded include muntjac deer and badger.

B - Improved quality of life for Heath visitors

Give it A Go is an annual festival that focuses on health and well-being and also encourages visitors to try out new activities. Run in partnership with the London Borough of Camden and the sports clubs based on the Heath. This event encourages an increased participation in outdoor recreational activities, encouraging new visitors to familiarise themselves with the Heath and have the confidence to return.

Night of the 10,000m Personal Bests is a running event held at the Parliament Hill Athletics Track, which is organised by the Highgate Harriers Athletics and Cross Country Running Club. It is managed almost exclusively by volunteers and the event attracts a large audience to the Heath, keen to watch world-class athletes compete.

The Conker Championship is a community event that attracts families from across London to join in with this fun competition. This event celebrates the heritage of the Heath and forges an enhanced connection with Nature and the seasons.

C - The Heath is inclusive and welcoming to a diverse range of visitors

In 2019 the Heath's original two mobility scooters have been replaced and joined by a third new one, with all three now available to hire for free. The mobility scooters can be booked by phone in advance and collected from the Parliament Hill Fields Lido, which is ideally located for accessibility, being adjacent to a car park with blue badge parking spaces and a nearby Overground Station with step-free access.

#ThisGirlCan is a series of organised activities that encourage women and girls to try out a new sport or activity for free, in partnership with the many sports clubs who use the Heath. In its inaugural year of 2018, the activities on offer included gardening, fencing, tennis, bowls, croquet, athletics, rugby and military fitness, with the list sure to grow.

So that people feel safe here, the Hampstead Heath Constabulary continues to patrol the Heath, reassuring our visitors through their presence and providing a response to infringements of Byelaws and Regulations. The Constables work closely with

Stakeholders such as the Metropolitan Police Service and the other Emergency Services to tackle challenging issues on the Heath. Constables focus their patrols on the issues which matter most to our users, including anti-social behaviour, dog control and cycling on pedestrian-only routes.

In partnership with Heath Hands, Community Heath was established. They held their first festival in summer 2018, offering free activities and encouraging people to socialise with their neighbours. The aim was to promote physical and mental health and well-being, as well as offering opportunities to become involved in sport, recreation and volunteering on the Heath. In 2018, over 1,200 people were involved in Community Heath activities. A total of 90 events were held which encouraged participation in recreation and volunteering opportunities.

D - Greater number and diversity of people taking care of the Heath

To develop recommendations for the future management of waste and recycling, Heath staff have been working with Keep Britain Tidy to encourage visitors to bring less waste onto the Heath and to take their rubbish away with them when they leave. We are also working to promote recycling on site for those unable to take their rubbish away with them. A new waste disposal contract has recently been signed and new recycling bins are soon to be placed on the Heath. A clear communication campaign will reinforce these developments to build awareness and improve visitor understanding of why we are doing this and how they can help us conserve the Heath.

Over the past year, Heath Hands reported an increase of around 10% in volunteering activity, contributing to more than 13,000 hours of voluntary conservation and maintenance work on the Heath. There was particularly noticeable increase in volunteering activity relating to wildlife monitoring, supporting the Heath's Ecologist.

The Heath's team of Rangers has developed a partnership with the charity Phoenix Futures, which supports people who are recovering from addictions while getting back into work. Several projects were identified where volunteers from Phoenix Futures could work alongside our staff to help conserve the Heath. This provides the volunteers with a lasting connection with the Heath, even though some of them may never have visited it before. As a result of this partnership, one of the volunteers from Phoenix Futures has gone on to find employment as a gardener.

Priorities for 2019/20

In 2019/20 we will continue to build on the impacts detailed in this report. Fundamental to achieving this will be the development of a Management Strategy Measurement Framework. This will inform management decisions and activity planning, allowing us to assess progress towards achieving the Outcomes and delivering our Priorities.

Outcome A

- Commence a moth survey to identify the number and distribution of moth species present on the Heath. Moths are an important indicator of a healthy ecosystem.

- Manage Oak Processionary Moth using a risk-based approach.
- Develop conservation objectives for the Heath's historic features.

Outcome B

- Actively contribute to the development of the City of London Sports and Physical Activity Strategy.
- Develop a programme of events and activities to mark the 150th Anniversary of Hampstead Heath Act 1871, the foundation legislation that brought the Heath into public ownership.
- Focus our Events on participation and continue to promote events like Give it a Go and #ThisGirlCan, both of which are run in conjunction with the London Borough of Camden's initiative, We Can Move.

Outcome C

- Continue to support the Community Heath project that forms links with different local organisations, helping to encourage an even more diverse audience to visit the Heath and participate in recreation or volunteering opportunities.
- Develop a capital project to improve accessibility at the swimming facilities.
- Develop proposals in response to the findings from the Golders Hill Park Accessible Car Park survey.
- Develop digital communications so people know more about the Heath, what's on offer and how to take part.

Outcome D

- Identify additional volunteering opportunities for wildlife and interpretation projects, in conjunction with Heath Hands.
- Continue to work with Stakeholders to produce a code of conduct for dog walkers and fitness instructors to inform a licencing scheme.
- Implement and promote our new waste and recycling strategy across the wider Heath.
- Continue to implement changes to fleet, plant and equipment to ensure compliance with the ULEZ and promote a greener Heath.
- Commence the feasibility study for the Parliament Hill Fields area of the Heath, to support visitor engagement and participation.