

Committee	Dated:
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee	13 November 2019
Subject: Superintendent's Update	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Decision
Report author: Bob Warnock – Open Spaces Department	

Summary

This report provides an update to Members of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee on management and operational activities since September 2019.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Members agree the proposed next steps in relation to the Golders Hill Park Accessible Car Park as detailed in para 20.
- Members provide feedback and views in relation to the outcomes of the recent dog walking consultation exercise (appendix 3).
- Members agree the proposals in relation to Forest Schools as set out in paras 27-28.

Main Report

Management Framework

1. This report aligns with the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018 - 2028 Outcomes.

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

Awards

2. Golders Hill Park and the Hill Garden and Pergola have received Gold Awards for London in Bloom. The garden at Keats House which is managed by the staff from Golders Hill Park in partnership with Heath Hands was awarded Silver Gilt.

City Surveyors Cyclical Work Programme

3. The Superintendent will provide an update on current projects within the City Surveyors Cyclical Work Programme.

Capital Project Funding Bids

4. Following the introduction of the new Corporate Annual Capital bidding process, the Director of Open Spaces will be submitting capital project bids for the resurfacing of East Heath Car Park and the Parliament Hill Athletics Track. Capital Project Briefs are being prepared by the Superintendent in consultation with colleagues in the City Surveyors Department.

Planning

5. The Superintendent will provide an update on the following planning applications:
 - North Fairground Site 2017/4346/P
 - South Fairground Site
 - 55 Fitzroy Park 2018/3672/P
 - The Water House, Millfield Lane. 2017/3692/P
 - Jack Straws Castle – Change of use application

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) Management

6. The Heath Tree Team identified a total of 957 nests in 368 oak trees across Hampstead Heath. Contractors removed 428 nests from 87 trees in high target areas, at a cost of £14,300.
7. In addition, the Tree Team removed 23 nests from 16 high risk trees using an industrial vacuum.
8. A successful OPM inspection pilot has been completed by volunteers from Heath Hands. This involved training and equipping four volunteers who inspected the oak trees on the Heath Extension. This will be rolled out again next year. Parasitism and predation on the OPM nests has been recorded this year.

Tree Works undertaken

9. There was one incident of summer limb drop on veteran oak on the Heath Extension. Other works have included:
 - Veteran tree works across the Heath Extension, The Vale and South Meadow.
 - Dead willow felled on East Heath Road.
 - Large Massaria limb removals from plane trees at South End Green and Gospel Oak.
 - Dead tree removal at Keats House.
 - Reduction of leaning horse chestnut at Golders Hill Park Swan pond.
 - Lifting perimeter ash trees on the Heath Extension.

Tree Inspection

10. Inspections have been completed in the following areas:
 - Spaniards Road
 - East Heath Road
 - South End Green
 - West Heath Road
 - Hampstead Way/Wildwood Road
 - West Heath Avenue
 - Dams

- Swimming Ponds
- Golders Hill Park

Humanitarian Aid Workers Memorial proposal – Kenwood Estate

11. Following the Chairman writing to English Heritage to convey the views of Members, English Heritage have replied to confirm that the proposed location for the Memorial would no longer be pursued. Another location within the grounds of the Kenwood Estate may still be considered, however.

Hampstead Heath wildlife camera survey

12. A report from the 2018 Hampstead Heath wildlife camera trap survey has recently been produced by the Institute of Zoology. This indicates that the Heath is an important location for hedgehogs in London. Fox, rabbit, muntjac deer and even a badger were also recorded. A copy of the report can be sent to Members on request.

B: Improved quality of life for visitors.

Swimming

13. The Superintendent has commenced a review of the summer 2019 swimming season which is attached at appendix 1. The issues have been discussed with the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum, the Hampstead Heath Swim Forum and the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.

Playgrounds

14. The Superintendent will provide an update on the Adventure Playground, Preachers Hill Playground and the Vale of Health Playground.

Heath Extension Meeting Room

15. Following Members agreement, the meeting room has been prepared for hire and proposed hire charges have been included as part of the Fees & Charges report, which forms part of the meeting agenda pack.
16. An engagement and consultation exercise commenced on 23 October and will run until 20 November 2019. Following the completion of the consultation, a report setting out draft proposals, timelines and next steps will be prepared for discussion with the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee. A final report will then be prepared for Members of this Committee to consider.

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

Golders Hill Park Accessible Car Park

17. For safety reasons, the accessible car park is currently only available to visitors on weekdays. A survey has been undertaken to collate feedback from users about their current experiences using the facility and to seek their views on extending the opening arrangements to include weekends and bank holidays.
18. The report outlining the results of the survey is attached as appendix 2.

19. In line with the report recommendations, it is proposed that a specialist consultant is appointed to develop options to facilitate weekend access in consultation with users. A report setting out options will be prepared for discussion with the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee. Following this, a further report will then be prepared for Members of this Committee to consider.
20. The Superintendent will increase the staff patrols of the accessible car park to ensure compliance with the existing Blue Badge parking scheme.

Licencing (A DP 6)

21. An engagement and consultation exercise in relation to the dog walkers code of conduct has been carried out with two pop-up events taking place, one at Parliament Hill Fields and the other at East Heath, facilitated by an external consultant.
22. The online survey generated 1,300 hits with 958 completed surveys.
23. The data will be used by the Superintendent to support the development of a Code of Conduct, and a Licensing Scheme for commercial dog walking across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park. The proposals will be discussed with the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, Highgate Wood Consultative Group and the Queen's Park Consultative Group before being presented to this Committee for approval.
24. A report setting out the findings of the consultation exercise has been prepared as appendix 3.

Forest Schools

25. The Superintendent has started to engage with the existing Forest Schools that operate on the Heath. In addition, the Officer Events Group have started to receive applications for new Forest Schools.
26. Whilst, initially it was proposed to manage these activities through the Events Policy, taking account of the learning from Highgate Wood and the number and scale of applications received, it is proposed that a specific licencing scheme is developed for Forest School activities. This will involve determining the carrying capacity of the Heath and establishing zones where Forest School activities may be undertaken. This is necessary to address issues such as impact on flora, fauna, compaction, erosion and other Heath users.
27. It is proposed that Forest School activities already operating on the Heath should be put on a short-term licensing agreement while the licencing scheme is developed and consulted upon.

D: Greater number and diversity of people taking care of the Heath.

Hampstead Heath Constabulary

28. The Hampstead Heath Constabulary are in the final stages of producing protocols and policies for the deployment of Body Worn Video Cameras (BWV). The Constables will be using BWV overtly within the next few weeks. The use of

BWV equipment has been evidenced to improve safety, reduce crime and anti-social behaviour as well as improving the delivery of services through improved efficiency, and better management of complaints and investigations. Internal Information Technology (IT) issues have delayed the deployment of this equipment.

29. The newly acquired Constabulary Electric Hybrid vehicle is now being used for patrols and has been well received by Heath visitors.
30. The Constabulary are once again focusing evening patrols across the Parliament Hill area due to a small increase in the number of reported robberies. Officers continue to support the efforts of the Metropolitan Police Service and have been involved in the arrest of suspects.
31. A male was recently convicted at court for offences of illegal driving on the Heath and abusive aggressive behaviour towards a Heath Ranger. The matter had been contested however, a guilty verdict was recorded together with a fine and costs totalling £480.
32. A female was recently convicted at court for a cycling offence, failing to stop for a Constable and abusive behaviour. The matter was dealt with in her absence and she was found guilty. The Bench imposed a fine and costs totalling of £795.

Waste & Recycling

33. The Superintendent will provide an update at the meeting.

30th Anniversary

34. The City of London Corporation wishes to thank the Heath & Hampstead Society for hosting an event to mark 30 years of the City Corporation's custodianship of the Heath. The party on the 11 September 2019 at the Parliament Hill cricket ground proved a wonderful celebration of the Heath, an opportunity to thank staff, acknowledge the partnership work between the City Corporation and the Society and reflect on the successes achieved over the last 30 years.

Highgate Wood

Roman Kiln Project update

35. The Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln (FOHRK) are now focusing on submitting a capital grant application to City Bridge Trust to cover the costs of the extension of the information building, the restoration and installation of the kiln and the interpretation material. FOHRK have delayed the application to NHLF in order to await confirmation from City Bridge Trust, and plan to submit their application in May 2020.
36. The Highgate Wood Manager is currently obtaining final costings for the extension and conversion of the information building, planning application requirements and the role of City Surveyors Department.

Conservation

37. Bird and bat numbers were mixed this summer with the Sparrowhawks breeding successfully again this year and increased numbers of blue tit, great tit and

nuthatch during the bird nesting season, but bat numbers are down in the most recent September survey which is disappointing.

Queen's Park

Capital Project Funding Bid

38. Following the introduction of the new Corporate Annual Capital bidding process, a capital project bid for the replacement of the Queen's Park public toilets is being prepared by the Superintendent in consultation with colleagues in the City Surveyors Department.

Staffing

39. Following a successful recruitment campaign, a Grounds Maintenance & Projects Team Leader and an Animal Keeper & Engagement Assistant have joined the Team. Both members of staff bring with them a wealth of experience and knowledge from their previous roles.
40. The current full-time establishment at Queen's Park remains eight staff, and Staff at the Park continue to be supported by colleagues from across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Keats House.

Paddling Pool

41. The Paddling Pool has suffered a leak over the summer months, which was discovered after the pool was commissioned and reopened in May 2019. Further works will be required to repair the leak ahead of the 2020 season.

Weddings & Civil Ceremonies

42. Two wedding ceremonies were held on the bandstand over the summer. Further promotion of the venue will take place through a publication which is produced by the London Borough of Brent. These events support the Park with income generation assisting with the ongoing maintenance of the green space.

Awards

43. We are delighted to report that Queen's Park has retained their London in Bloom Gold Award.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – 2019 Swimming Season review
- Appendix 2 – Golders Hill Park Accessible Car Park Survey Report
- Appendix 3 – Dog Walking consultation and engagement exercise findings

Bob Warnock

Superintendent of Hampstead Heath

T: 020 7332 3322

E: bob.warnock@cityoflondon.gov.uk