

Committee	Dated:
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee	11 March 2020
Subject: Superintendent's Update	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Decision
Report author: Bob Warnock	

Summary

This report provides an update to Members of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee on management and operational activities across the Heath since January 2020.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Members provide feedback on the Annual Work Programme 2020-21 (Appendix 1).
- Members approve the recommendation for further consultation to be undertaken in relation to the development and introduction of a code of conduct for dog walkers and a licensing scheme for commercial dog walkers, as set out in paragraphs 25-26.
- Members note the Heath Café tendering timeline as outlined in paragraph 30 and give feedback on the proposal to issue ten-year leases as set out in paragraph 31.
- Members to provide feedback on the Keep Britain Tidy report appended to the report (Appendix 3).

Main Report

Management Framework

1. The report format has been updated to align with the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018 - 2028 Outcomes.
2. The Annual Work Programme 2020-21 has been prepared (Appendix 1). Members feedback is welcomed.
3. The Divisional Plan 2020-23 has been prepared in draft form. Pending further information on the Fundamental Review, and the outcome of the Swimming Review, Officers will prepare a final draft for Members to consider at their next meeting.

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

Cross Country Ground Restoration

4. Following the Cross Country on 25 January 2020, the attached map (Appendix 2) has been prepared to outline the ground restoration works that will be undertaken.
5. Heath Conservation Rangers will sow 3,000m² of wildflower seed along the route of the course in suitable areas. Two seed mixes will be used, a perennial meadow mixture and an annual Cornfield mixture which will provide initial cover and act as a nursery crop for developing perennial wildflowers. Staff will sow the seeds in the spring. The poaching in certain locations creates good conditions for seed sowing which require open conditions to germinate in. Sowing is only proposed in areas where both the ground conditions and the habitat are suitable. For example, sowing will not occur where there is heavy waterlogging, areas that are regularly mown or locations where the sowing would be incongruous.
6. Areas which have been heavily poached will be chain harrowed once conditions allow (May-June). A chain harrow levels out uneven ground but requires dry ground for the operation of the machinery.
7. Whilst the cross-country race does often cause heavy poaching across sections of the route, this does not cause any lasting ecological damage and can provide ecological benefits.
8. The extent of the poaching does vary year on year. However due to a combination of active repair works and natural regrowth, the route of the course is usually fully recovered by mid-summer of the same year.
9. After the event and for many weeks after the route of the course is lined with gulls and other native birds feeding off the newly exposed invertebrates. This larger scale feeding does not normally occur.
10. The route of the cross-country course does not go across any sensitive grassland areas and indeed the early parts of it go across short regularly cut grassland with lower ecological value. The disturbance of the grass allows us to sow wildflower seeds which require open sites to seed into.
11. The erosion caused by the cross country is usually temporary in nature. The Heath is criss-crossed with many miles of desire lines that cause permanent erosion throughout the Heath. Repairs of these areas are very difficult and always temporary due to the continued use of such routes. Whilst the Cross-Country does indeed cause a temporary impact, many more miles of erosion and compaction are caused by 'general' Heath use, for which we have very little control over unlike the Cross Country.

City Surveyors Cyclical Work Programme

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

East Heath Car Park (A DP5)

13. The Superintendent will provide and update at the meeting.

Planning

14. The Superintendent will provide an update on the following planning applications:

- 55 Fitzroy Park 2018/3672/P
- The Water House, Millfield Lane. 2017/3692/P

Trees

15. As a result of recent storms, a number of root and limb failures occurred across the Heath.

Ciara (9 February)

- 11 tree failures & 4 branch failures

Dennis (16 February)

- 3 tree failures & 3 branch failures

Safety works

16. The Team have undertaken the following safety works during January and February.

- Medium sized Elm – Vale approach; removed due to moving root plate.
- Medium sized Lime – Vale Forest School area; reduced due to basal decay, retained as standing habitat tree.
- Large leaning Robinia - Vale approach; removed due to moving root plate overhanging Vale Lodge.

Veteran Tree works

17. The following veteran tree works have been undertaken during January and February.

- Veteran Oaks – South Meadow; Halo pruning around veteran oaks.
- Hollow beech – Vale; 3rd phased crown reduction to stabilise veteran tree.

Fishing – Hampstead and Highgate Angling Society (HAHAS) proposal.

18. The Superintendent has received a proposal from the HAHAS to introduce float fishing to the North Bank of the Highgate Men's Pond. These proposals were discussed with the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee at their October walk.

19. Officers are developing a Ponds and Wetlands Plan and the Superintendent proposes to consider the request in line with this Plan. A report will be prepared for the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee to consider at their next Meeting.

Hampstead Heath as case study for MSc at the Bartlett, University College London

20. On the 28 January 2020 we hosted a University College London (UCL) workshop for MSc Sustainable Heritage students who are looking at Priority 2 from the

Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018 -2028 and focusing on three of the Commitments on page 17 of the Strategy, for a series of group exercises.

21. The three chosen themes are management of views, protection of heritage features and planning and development challenges on the Heath's boundaries. The students are working in groups and will produce assignments on the three themes and there is a further opportunity to further develop the themes into dissertation topics. This is a joint collaboration between UCL, The Heath & Hampstead Society and the City of London Corporation.

B: Improved quality of life for visitors.

Playgrounds

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

Weddings and Civil Ceremonies

23. There are currently 11 confirmed bookings for 2020 ceremonies.

Commercial Dog Walking Licence Scheme

24. A period of engagement and consultation has taken place with users of our open spaces, seeking their views on the introduction of a code of conduct for dog walkers and a licence for commercial dog walkers. In addition to this engagement, benchmarking has been carried out, consulting with Local Authorities pan London. The data received will enable us to benchmark fees and charges for commercial dog walker licences; in addition, the question has been asked of other London Boroughs regarding the maximum numbers of dogs that can be walked in their open spaces. A key issue for members of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee was the number of dogs that could be walked by one person at one time.
25. The Superintendent would like to carry out further consultation and proposes that a small working party look in detail at the draft code of conduct and the licensing scheme arrangements whilst Officers consider their use of current legislation in managing dog walking within our open spaces.
26. It is recommended that Members agree to further consultation, in relation to the development and introduction of a code of conduct for dog walkers and a licensing scheme for commercial dog walkers.

Fitness Training

27. Engagement and consultation has begun regarding the introduction of a licensing scheme and code of conduct for fitness instructors who use the open space for their commercial activity. Feedback from a small working group has been positive with the group recognising the need for open spaces to be zoned for fitness activities. There was also the suggestion of creating a licensed operators forum that could help enhance the quality of services being offered within our open spaces.

28. Officers will continue with the engagement and consultation process, seeking views of open space users and liaising with colleagues from other London Boroughs as a code of conduct and licensing scheme is developed further.

Heath Cafés

29. The leases for the Parliament Hill, the Golders Hill Park and Parliament Hill Fields Lido Cafés will expire on 12 January 2021.
30. The City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 was passed in March 2018. The introduction of this Act gives the City of London Corporation the opportunity to consider longer leases for the café premises Hampstead Heath.
- 27 January 2020, Present to Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee proposed timeline for delivery of the Hampstead Heath café tenders.
 - March 2020, Appoint a Consultant to carry out user engagement.
 - April – May 2020, User engagement takes place.
 - April – May 2020, Develop specification and Invitation to Tender Documents.
 - 20 April 2020, Verbal update to Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee on findings from the consultation to date and set out draft tender methodology.
 - 3 June 2020, Report to Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee and set out tender methodology.
 - June – July 2020, Café tender process.
 - August 2020, Evaluation of compliant bids.
 - August 2020, Update the Café Working Group.
 - 9 September 2020, Report tender outcome to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee.
 - September – October 2020, Lease agreement and legal sign off.
 - January 2021, Commence new lease arrangements.
31. It is proposed that any future lease arrangements be for a period of at least ten years, with suitable break clauses, subject to satisfactory performance and service delivery.
32. When developing the tender documents, Officers will consider the following key deliverables, which have been discussed with the Café Working Group:
- Strong links with the local community
 - Passionate about making the café an integral part of the community
 - Environmentally aware
 - Offer quality food at affordable prices
 - Be innovative and creative
 - Cater for a diverse community
 - A diversity of seasonal activities
 - Provide a family friendly offer
 - Offer a range of payment options

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

Golders Hill Park Accessible Car Park

33. The Superintendent is in the process of commissioning a specialist consultant, to prepare and design options for further consideration.

Open Spaces Learning Team

34. The learning team have had a successful three months on Hampstead Heath.
35. The Green Talent programme for at-risk young people has been hosting weekly sessions for an Early Help Intervention Group referred by Harringay Council. The young people have been identified as at risk of poor outcomes. The Green Talent Programme supports the young people in developing personal strengths and skills that help prepare them for adult life, as well as having a positive impact on their confidence and wellbeing. The group have been involved in maintaining one of the teaching gardens, which has enabled them to spend time in nature, learn new skills, and reflect on their skills and aspirations.
36. The schools programme has continued to host school groups to take part in our programme of facilitated learning sessions. Recent visiting schools have included a pupil referral unit for primary school students who have struggled to succeed in mainstream schools. The students enjoyed being out in nature and taking part in activities which provided ownership and challenge, including den building and fire lighting. The team have been planning ahead for a busy summer term, including marketing to local schools with high pupil premium and developing an immersive 'nature day' where students can explore more remote areas of the heath and take part in a range of team building activities within the Old Orchard Garden.
37. The play programme continues to flourish with strong visitor numbers at the One O' Clock Club and a successful Christmas party. The team are preparing for works to the outdoor play area at the Adventure Clubhouse, which have been designed to promote more nature play and connection with the Heath. Our Volunteer and Community Development Officer has worked with the play team to create a new Play Volunteer role; we already have one young volunteer interested - a local person who visited the Clubhouse regularly as a child and feels inspired to contribute.
38. The Team have also delivered safeguarding training sessions for staff in the Hampstead Heath Division who are in regular contact with visitors.

Events

39. A review of the 2019 season has been prepared as part of the agenda pack.

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

Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment - Grant Funding

40. The Open Spaces Department's "Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment" funding theme, managed by the Central Grants Unit awards

grants annually, of between £2k and £15k to community, charity and voluntary groups under 4 sub themes:

- a) Connecting communities with their green spaces
- b) Improving the conservation value of the green spaces
- c) Improving our knowledge of the biodiversity of the green spaces
- d) Improving mental health through the use of green spaces

- 41. Eighteen submissions were received requesting grants totalling £225,000. A budget of up to £132,000 was available to award. Eleven applications across all divisions have been awarded a total of £120k.
- 42. Heath Hands were successful in their grant application and have been awarded funding of £12,500 to extend their outreach programme that targets disadvantaged neighbourhoods surrounding Hampstead Heath and engage them with the green space and provide a range of volunteering opportunities.
- 43. An application from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds for a joint West Ham Park and Queen's Park initiative was unsuccessful.

Hampstead Heath Constabulary

- 44. There have been no recent reports of robberies on the Heath and hi-visibility, reassurance patrols continue, particularly after the hours of darkness.
- 45. The Queen's Park and Constabulary Manager will provide an update on recent prosecutions at the meeting.

Waste & Recycling

- 46. The Superintendent will provide an update on the project at the meeting.
- 47. Keep Britain Tidy have prepared a report, which is attached at appendix 3. The Superintendent seeks Members views on the report findings and next steps, which is to prepare a communications plan.

Highgate Wood

- 48. The Roman Kiln Project is progressing with the current focus on the feasibility of housing the Kiln in the site office. The City Surveyors Department have provided some outline costs for this option, following a site visit in early February. The Highgate Wood Manager and Friends of the Highgate Roman Kiln (FOHRK) are developing this repurposing option as a more affordable alternative to rebuilding the Education Building.
- 49. The Highgate Wood Manager is engaging with the City Surveyors Department to arrange for repairs for the electric security gates at the Onslow Gate entrance. It is hoped the gate will be repaired and operational by the Easter Holidays, following a long period out of service.

50. Highgate Wood was closed during storms Ciara and Dennis, and did sustain some tree damage, which has been made safe. A total of 7 tree failures and 5 branch failures occurred.

Queen's Park

51. The Queen's Park Area Residents' Association have kindly donated £3,000 towards the installation of a toddlers swing in the Children's Sandpit. This will be matched funded from the Queen's Park Local Risk Budget. Quotes have been sought and a supplier considered for the supply and delivery of the swings.
52. A draft Woodland Walk Management Plan will be presented to the Queen's Park Consultative Group at their April meeting. This plan will set out some aspirations for the ongoing management of this significant and valued area of the Park.
53. The Park Manager is in the process of seeking expressions of interest from the local community from those who would want to be actively involved in a Queen's Park, friends of group. This group would support the City Corporation in the preservation, promotion and protection of Queen's Park.
54. The Park Café is currently being run under a tenancy at will by Hoxton Beach. Tender documents, which will include specification information and Invitation to Tender are being prepared in advance of the tender process commencing. Officers have been in consultation with the City Surveyors Dept. and the Comptrollers Dept. to consider how a lease can reflect both the property aspects, as well as performance and service delivery.
55. The Woodland Walk was closed during the recent storms. A tree failure occurred during storm Ciara and a branch failure occurred during storm Dennis.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Annual Work Programme 2020-21.
- Appendix 2 – Cross Country Ground Restoration Map.
- Appendix 3 – Keep Britain Tidy report.

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