

HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Monday, 18 May 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held at
Virtual Public Meeting. The meeting can be viewed at:
<https://youtu.be/nzHB7NiKvRM> on Monday, 18 May 2020 at 5.30 pm

Present

Members:

Karina Dostalova (Chairman)
Anne Fairweather (Deputy Chair)
Nick Bradfield (Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Cindy Galvin (Heath Hands)
Colin Gregory (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)
Dr Gaye Henson (Marylebone Birdwatching Society)
Helen Payne (Friends of Kenwood)
Thomas Radice (Heath and Hampstead Society)
Susan Rose (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Ellin Stein (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Neighbourhood Association Committee)
Richard Sumray (London Council for Recreation and Sport)
David Walton (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath)
Simon Williams (Vale of Health Society)

Officers:

Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Declan Gallagher	- Operational Services Manager
Richard Gentry	- Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Jonathan Meares	- Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager
Paul Maskell	- Leisure and Events Manager
Kate Radusin	- PA to Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Yvette Hughes	- Business Manager, Open Spaces Department
Sanjay Odedra	- Head of Media, Town Clerk's Department
Leanne Murphy	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Simon Taylor, Harunur Rashid, Sharleen McGee, John Etheridge, Mathew Frith, Ray Booth, Steve Ripley and John Weston.

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

There were none.

3. MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2020 were approved as a correct record subject to the addition of a Member missing from the apologies.

Matters Arising

With regards to the minutes of the last Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee (HHHWQPC) meeting which were circulated to Members, a Member (Heath and Hampstead Society) voiced disappointment that the recommendation of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee (HHCC) for Option 2 in the Swimming Review proposals was not taken forward by Members of the HHHWQPC who ultimately approved Option 3. The Member felt that HHHWQPC was duty bound to follow HHCC views. The Chairman advised that the HHHWQPC always considered all views expressed by the HHCC with great importance but that the City Solicitor confirmed that HHHWQPC was not duty bound to follow their advice. The HHHWQPC remains the decision-making Committee and did not take the decision lightly taking into account all views expressed by HHCC Members, the Swimming Associations and the written views received from the general public throughout the significant consultation taken.

A Member (Friends of Kenwood) shared her disappointment that the HHHWQPC did not listen to the HHCC's recommendation concerning Option 2 and noted that this also happened in the use of animals in the circus decision.

A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) stated that whilst he did not agree with the decision, HHHWQPC was the decision-maker and the decision was legitimate. The Member felt clarity should be given to the role of Consultative Committee. The Chairman confirmed she was happy that the decision was valid following detailed analysis of all views. Officers agreed to provide Members with clarity on the overall decision-making process of all Committees.

4. **COVID-19 UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Superintendent relating to issues and matters concerning the Covid-19 pandemic. The following comments were made:

- The Superintendent noted that following the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday 10 May 2020, there were a number of updates to make to the information pack. The safety, health and wellbeing of Staff and the public was of significant importance. It was acknowledged how important the Heath remained to the physical and mental health of those who use it.
- Two car parks have been opened (Jack Straw and Lido) and negotiations were ongoing to open the East Heath Car park, which is currently being utilised for NHS parking.
- With regards to staff, the emergency roster continues to be reviewed to protect staff.
- The Team are in the process of rolling out changes including new signage and where people are permitted to cycle. The new style dog

bins are also being introduced. Messaging advising the public to take waste home has received a good response and will continue.

- Members were advised that the Cafés have opened offering a takeaway service only which had received a mixed response. Officers continue to liaise with tenants and how the City Corporation can support them.
- The Constabulary have continued to engage with people not adhering to social distancing regulations. An ongoing matter has been dealing with use of the Heath as a public sex environment and the Constabulary continue to work with the MET, LGBT+ stakeholders and the local community to address this.
- High winds on 10 May 2020 caused a number of trees to be lost, including a copper beech at the Vale of Health. The trees/ branches have been made safe and will remain where they have naturally fallen.
- Contractors have today begun their second OPM spray of trees. Contractors will resume works to the public toilets and repairs to the paths and fences on 25 May 2020.
- With regards to events, an application has been received from the Affordable Art Fair (AAF) around moving the planned five-day event from May to 18-22 November 2020. The Leisure and Events Manager remains in talks with the organisers of the Night of 10k PB event which has been postponed to 5 June 2021.
- The Chairman thanked Officers for their hard work managing the extra unprecedented workload due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- A Member (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee) was concerned that people following the advice to take waste home were abandoning their rubbish (including dog waste and used nappies) on the route home which was particularly affecting residents living on the Heath fringe and surrounding lanes. The Member felt that there needed to be liaison with Camden Council to address this health issue. The Superintendent confirmed Officers were working with the London Boroughs of Camden and Barnet to deal with littering hot spots. It was noted that there would also be liaison with local businesses selling takeaways concerning their packaging.
- In response to a comment regarding ice cream venders, the Superintendent confirmed that unlicensed traders were being reported to the relevant Local Authority.
- A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) was concerned that path edges were being eroded by increased footfall and visitors walking on the path edges to socially distance from each other. This issue was compounded by the dry weather. The Superintendent advised

that compaction and erosion was covered under the AWP and would continue to be addressed.

- Members agreed that more prominent signage was needed concerning cycling at all entrance points. The Superintendent confirmed this would happen and Lifeguards had been redeployed to increase patrols to engage with cyclists.
- A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) was concerned by the large groups visiting the Heath but ignoring social distancing protocol. Members were advised this was the biggest challenge of lockdown and that staff were trying to engage with large groups and had encountered some verbal assault by a small handful of people.
- In response to a query regarding the closure of Kenwood House, a Member (Friends of Kenwood) stated that 86% of all English Heritage staff nationally were currently furloughed and creating a huge resource stretch. There were also issues managing members of the public at the beginning of the lockdown. An update on Kenwood House is due to be issued on its website on Wednesday.
- A Member (Highgate Society) enquired if, like Highgate Wood, the Heath woods was experiencing erosion/compaction from people avoiding main pathways and instead using the wooded areas in an attempt to avoid other people. Officers confirmed this issue was not as prominent at the Heath.

5. **SWIMMING UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Superintendent providing Members with an update on the swimming facilities. The following comments were made:

- The Superintendent advised that an update on the Swimming Review had been prepared as part of the information pack. Following the Government's update on 10 May, a further update and draft Covid-19 recovery proposals for the Swimming Facilities had been prepared and shared with Members. Members views were sought regarding the draft proposals developed to manage the four swimming facilities.
- It was noted that the Mixed Pond would be the most difficult facility to introduce social distancing measures to due to the layout.
- The Chairman noted an email received from the Swimming Association Chairs had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting and reiterated that the City Corporation's priority was its duty of care to Staff and the public.
- A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) highlighted that technology was a major criticism of the Swimming Review and felt that the lockdown had provided more time to invest in the necessary

infrastructure at the swimming facilities. The Member requested a timescale of what changes were coming and when. The Superintendent stated that there were short and long-term plans in development. In the short-term, an existing platform would be used for online booking and payments and in the long-term an app would be introduced which would link integrated wrist bands and lockers. It was noted that it was currently difficult to trial and test the new technology as site meetings with providers were not currently possible, but that progress was being made.

- In response to an observation from a Member (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath) concerning Lifeguards completing an open water qualification, the Superintendent advised that this was required as per the Health and Safety Executive's advice. Face-to-face assessments were not currently possible, but training was still ongoing.
- A Member (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath) questioned why the swimming facilities were being treated differently to each other and felt that there should be equity across all of the facilities, e.g. one-hour swimming sessions. The Superintendent advised that discussions were ongoing with the Swimming Associations and it was clear that there was no one size fits all across the four facilities. A similar framework would be developed but different requirements for each would need to be addressed for each facility.
- With regards queries regarding sunbathing at the Lido, Members were advised that this was fine, but this would make up part of a swimmer's allocated swim ticket slot.
- The Chairman concluded that there was still lots to do, and this would take place in a phased approach.

6. **QUESTIONS**

There were none.

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

The Chairman advised Members that her three-year term had come to an end and this was her last HHCC meeting as Chairman. She explained that due to the current pandemic restrictions, April Court had been unable to go ahead to reconstitute its Committees for the year. As such, there would be no 2020 elections for the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Sub Committees and the current Deputy Chair would become Acting Chair until the elections could take place. The Chairman thanked Members for their support during her tenure which had been a pleasure. Members thanked the Chairman for her great support and leadership over the last three years. The Chairman's dedication and efforts to promote sports across the Open Spaces was noted and appreciated by Members.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting on 6 July 2020 was noted.

The meeting ended at 6.51 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Leanne Murphy
leanne.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk