

## **Appendix 1 – Draft Annual Report for Queen’s Park Charity 2020/21 [April – September 2020 update]**

### **1. Objectives and Activities**

The City of London protects and manages, by charitable trust, almost 11,000 acres of open spaces within and around the capital for the benefit of local communities and visitors.

Queen’s Park is a 30-acre (12ha) Park which opened in 1887. Situated in northwest London between Kensal Green, Brondesbury Park and Kilburn, it is bounded by Harvist Road to the south, Chevening Road to the north, Milman Road to the west and Kingwood Avenue to the east. The Park forms the focus of a neighbourhood which developed from around 1895 consisting of late Victorian and Edwardian houses. The Park lies within the London Borough of Brent and the surrounding streets are in a Conservation Area. The Park was initially called Kilburn Recreation Ground and has been known as Queen’s Park since the naming of the Park by Royal Command in the Jubilee year of 1887, in honour of Queen Victoria.

**Acquisition:** Queen’s Park comprising 30 acres of the site of the Royal Agricultural Show held in Kilburn in 1879 together with Highgate Wood was acquired in 1886 by the City of London Corporation from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners under the provisions of the Highgate and Open Spaces Act 1886.

**Administration:** Formerly administered by the Corporation’s Coal and Corn and Finance Committee 1886 -1966, Queen’s Park is now managed by the City of London Corporation through the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee. There is also the Queen’s Park Consultative Group, which comprises Members from local groups including the Queen’s Park Residents Association, local Ward Councillors and a schools liaison contact.

The purpose of the Queen’s Park Consultative Group is devising and implementing the City Corporation’s policies and programmes of work in relation to Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park in accordance with the provisions of the Highgate Wood and Kilburn Open Spaces Act 1886.

#### **The purpose of the Charity is:**

‘the preservation in perpetuity by the City of London Corporation of the open spaces known as Highgate Wood, Highgate and Queen’s Park Kilburn for the use by the public for exercise and recreation.’

#### **Explanation of Aims and objectives for the year including the changes or differences it seeks to make through its activities**

The activities of the Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Kilburn charity are guided by its Charitable Objective as stated above and developed within the framework of the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan and the Open Spaces Department’s Business Plan.

#### The City of London Corporation’s Corporate Plan 2018 – 23 states that:

Our vision

The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London with a globally successful UK.

We aim to...

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

The Open Spaces Department's overarching vision is that:

'We enrich people's lives by providing access to ecologically diverse green spaces and outstanding heritage assets'.

The provision of a wide range of services at Queen's Park helps the Department achieve its three strategic objectives:

- A. Open Spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible
- B. Spaces enrich people's lives
- C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

and nine of the twelve outcomes, in particular:

- Our open spaces, heritage and cultural assets are protected, conserved and enhanced
- Our spaces are accessible, inclusive and safe
- People enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Nature, heritage and place are valued and understood
- People feel welcome and included
- People discover, learn and develop
- Our staff and volunteers are motivated, empowered, engaged and supported

The contribution which Queen's Park makes towards these is detailed below.

## **2. Achievements and Performance**

**Achievement to date against the key priorities for 2019/20 were:**

1. Further work in order to deliver improvements to the sandpit and adjacent toilet block at Queen's Park.

At the Projects Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee meeting, 20 February, 2019 Members considered a Gateway 2 Project Proposal (Regular) report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding Queen's Park Sandpit Refurbishment and Public Toilet Rebuild and the following points were made.

At the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee 13 March 2019 Members considered and approved a Gateway 2 report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath concerning the Queen's Park Sandpit Refurbishment and Public Toilet Rebuild.

- The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath confirmed that all options would remain under consideration if the report was approved that day.

- Whilst, it was important to proceed with an option that guaranteed value for money, Members were mindful of the benefit that an appropriate option could provide the local community in terms of health and wellbeing.
- Safeguarding was a key element of the project design going forward.

For context, Members were advised that due to the significant capital expense from a number of key large projects currently coming through the City Corporation, all projects that were not yet at Gateway 5 would be reviewed under new criteria as part of a fundamental review of revenue and projects.

On 9 October 2019, the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath reported to the Queen's Park Consultative Group that the project for the redevelopment of the Playground Toilet and Sandpit was on hold. New central funding arrangements would be introduced in the autumn allowing Officers to bid for funding for the projects that are on hold, as well as new Projects.

The redevelopment of the sandpit was removed from the project, to be managed as a project in its own right.

In March 2020, in principle it was agreed that a budget of £380K would be available for the redevelopment of the Queen's Park Public Toilets.

At a Resource Allocation Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee (RASC) in September 2020 the Sub-Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain following a review of the reprioritisation of approved capital bids previously agreed by RASC in January 2020, to assess the impacts of COVID-19 against the original Business Case put forward and whether the schemes were still relevant in their current format and met the essential criteria.

It was resolved by Members that the project be rescoped, deferred and resubmitted as part of the 2021/22 annual capital bid round.

The City Surveyors Dept has a budget with the Cyclical Works Programme allocated for toilet refurbishments.

The Superintendent and Park Manager will engage with the City Surveyors Department to discuss the refurbishments works that can be funded through the Cyclical Work Programme.

## 2. Review of the Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan.

A landscape history of the Park was prepared by Land Use Consultants in 2011 (LUC, 2011) and a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Park was prepared by Chris Blandford Associates in 2014 (CBA 2014).

In 2019/20 the Park Manager appointed the Parks Agency to prepare a Management Plan for the Woodland Walk, recognising the importance of this area and to provide a vision for the future management of the Woodland Walk, including elements of new design to deliver enhanced amenity and ecological value. These will be delivered through a balance of small projects and alterations to maintenance regimes.

The CMP provides an in-depth understanding of Queen's Park – its historical development, the different types of heritage that can be found there today and their condition, its management and its use by visitors/community groups. This

understanding helps inform the site's statement of significance, which sets out the different values that are relevant to the Park, and where possible, the key features that relate to those values. This statement of significance forms the central core of the CMP.

The Park Manager is liaising with Consultants to carry out a review of the CMP with an aspiration of this project being completed by the end of March 2021 and an outcome of the review being presented to Committees in spring 2021.

### 3. Development of a Park Activity Plan.

The development of an Activity Plan will provide an understanding of who currently visits the Park and who doesn't and why, existing barriers to access and opportunities to overcome these. It will set out aims and objective to encourage existing and new audiences to visit the Park, those heritage, learning and participation activities which can be offered at the site. Build by strengthening links with local group/schools and through more outreach work and by building awareness of the Park and its offer.

The Park Manager will assign this project as objective for the of the Queen's Park Team Leaders, for delivery within the financial year 2020/21, with an outcome report being presented in the spring of 2021.

Pedestrian counters which the Park currently use at entrance and at some of the facilities have failed in some of the posts. Due to mechanical failure and ongoing software issues to download data, an alternative system to collect data will need to be considered, funded through the Local Risk Budget.

The Park continues to use social media to engage with the community, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A focus from an internal resource to use these, and other communication tools in effectively promoting the Park, its activities and facilities will be developed further as part of the Activity Plan.

A Team Leader has been assigned a task to develop a Friends of Group, part of the focus for this group will be fundraising for the development of the Children's Sandpit.

### **The aims for 2019/20 for Highgate Wood and Queen's Park were:**

#### 4. Development of policies and procedures linked to the City of London (Open Spaces) Bill.

The Events Policy for Highgate Wood and Queen's Park have been developed. A range of other policies are in development and will be progressed in the coming year.

Sadly, due to the effect of COVID-19, events in the Park were cancelled after March 2020, with no formal events taking place.

Two weddings were able to proceed late summer 2020 on the Bandstand.

On 13 September 2020, the Park Manager permitted a Fairground Organ to play in the Park from 10am – 4pm. This would have been a feature at the annual Queen's Park Day. This was a token feature for visitors to the Park, on what would have been one of the busiest days this year.

Currently, Officers are working on the implementation of a licencing scheme for professional dog walkers as well as a dog walker code of conduct.

Further work will continue within this project stream, with Officers working with a small working group to develop and implement a licensing scheme for fitness trainers.

A Policy is being developed for the application of Forest Schools that wish to make use of the open spaces.

**Plans for Future Periods The proposed overarching priorities which will guide all of our objectives and activities from April 2021 are:**

- Refurbishment of the Queen's Park Children's Sandpit and improve provision of equipment in the Children's Play Area.
- Consult on, finalise and implement the Queen's Park Woodland Walk Management Plan.
- Consult on the Cyclical Works Programme for the Queen's Park Toilets, CWP Project Queens Park - Toilet Block – Refurbishment.
- Review of the Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan
- Develop a Park Activity Plan
- Deliver the tender for the Queen's Park Café.

**Performance Measures for 2020/21**

1. To support the Open Spaces Department, by increasing tennis participation.
2. Achieve budgeted income and expenditure targets for Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn Charity. Income from events and café rental is reduced this year. The café tenant is in discussion with the City Corporation regarding the current rental arrangement.
3. To maintain Green Flag Award, Green Heritage Accreditation and London in Bloom award.
4. The City of London Corporation is scheduled to adopt a new Climate Action Strategy in October 2020. The Strategy aim is to reach Net 0 by 2040 and there will be a range of measures implemented to achieve this including increasing carbon sequestration and storage across the Open Spaces alongside biodiversity enhancement and resilience measures. Queen's Park will contribute to these measures with continued work to improve and conserve existing woodland and grassland.