



Heath Hands Update – September 2020

Volunteer programmes began a phased reintroduction across the site from mid-June. Over 1,300 hours contributed by volunteers across some 120 sessions, largely focused on garden maintenance, litter picking and habitat conservation activities. An average of ten sessions per week, which is approximately 60% of pre-lockdown levels.

Volunteers assisting the teams regularly again at:

- The Hill Garden
- Golders Hill Park
- English Heritage Kenwood Estate
- Highgate Wood
- Education and community gardens e.g. Secret Garden and Old Orchard and Whitestone Pond Garden
- Limited number of conservation sessions undertaking task from Annual Work Programme on main body of the Heath e.g. invasive species control, scrub management
- Keats House garden and assisting with reopening of House to public

Major focus assisting Ranger Teams tackling litter over Summer, with a coalition of local groups including Parkrun, Camden Greenpeace, GetaGrip and Park the Plastic assisting Heath Hands volunteers. Over 40 organised events, and small-scale sessions continuing to be organised each week. Many hundreds from local community helping tackle litter problems voluntarily.

Youth volunteer programmes restarted in mid-September with increased sessions after school and on weekends to help young people get involved in beneficial projects.

Wildlife monitoring has continued over summer with restricted projects on reptiles and dragonflies and hedgehog conservation. Wildlife Interpretation and some other volunteer roles remain suspended due to health and safety restrictions.

Heath Hands Community Heath programmes for local groups and community organisations slowly restarting as restrictions have eased, and benefits of outdoor events. Activities organised with North London Cares, the Camden Society, the Winch amongst others.

Funding from Camden Giving, is supporting efforts to improve accessibility to our green spaces and our work to provide opportunities for those of all abilities and backgrounds.

Heath Hands programme of walks and talks including activities to improve mental health and wellbeing restarting formally in October. This is part-funded by a grant from the Postcode Local Trust.

Volunteer capacity remains severely restricted, and there are few opportunities for recruitment of new volunteers, despite overwhelming interest from local community. The active volunteer group has fallen to below 140 people.

Staff monitoring official guidelines, with the health and welfare of staff and volunteers the priority.

29th September 2020