

HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Monday, 19 April 2021

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held
on Monday, 19 April 2021 at 5.30 pm

Present

Members:

Anne Fairweather (Chair)
Karina Dostalova (Deputy Chairman)
Ray Booth (Barnet Mencap)
Nick Bradfield (Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
John Etheridge (South End Green Association)
Mathew Frith (London Wildlife Trust)
Cindy Galvin (Heath Hands)
Colin Gregory (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)
Dr Gaye Henson (Marylebone Birdwatching Society)
Simon Hunt (Open Spaces Society)
Helen Payne (Friends of Kenwood)
Thomas Radice (Heath and Hampstead Society)
Susan Rose (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Steve Ripley (Ramblers' Association)
Ellin Stein (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Neighbourhood Association Committee)
Richard Sumray (London Council for Recreation and Sport)
John Weston (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Simon Williams (Vale of Health Society)

Officers:

Colin BATTERY	-	Director of Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	-	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Katherine Radusin	-	PA to Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Richard Gentry	-	Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Jonathan Meares	-	Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager
Declan Gallagher	-	Operational Services Manager, Hampstead Heath
Paul Maskell	-	Leisure and Events Manager, Hampstead Heath
Philip Saunders	-	Remembrancer's Department
Leanne Murphy	-	Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Simon Taylor and David Walton.

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 and non-public summary of the meeting held on 25 January 2021 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

In response to a request from a Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) for an update regarding the gas works starting in March, the Superintendent confirmed the contractor carrying out the engineering works for British Gas had changed and Officers awaited an approach from the new contractor regarding start dates.

With regards to a query (Highgate Society) concerning the inspector decision on phone mast, the Town Clerk agreed to recirculate the Spaniards Road Monopole appeal decision.

4. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The draft public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 24 February 2021 were received.

5. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH SPORTS ADVISORY FORUM MINUTES**

The public minutes of the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum held on 15 March 2021 were received.

6. **HEATH HANDS UPDATE**

Members were advised that Heath Hands had restarted volunteering sessions on the Heath, including wildlife monitoring. It was noted that volunteers were eager to be back at the Heath.

Highlights included a new Heath Hands website with fundraising opportunities and the introduction of a new trainee programme. Upcoming focuses included works around Savernake Road bridge area and the 150th anniversary, where Heath Hands are planning a Community fun day for 27 June.

The Chair thanked Heath Hands volunteers for all of their great work.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Members considered an update report of the Superintendent regarding Hampstead Heath and the following comments were made:

Coronavirus response

- The Superintendent was delighted at the Heath Team's efforts to reopen on 29 March, which went smoothly despite coinciding with warmer weather. Large groups have been gathering on the Heath, and Staff have been managing Anti-Social Behaviour and significant littering issues which has been challenging. Volunteers have been a huge support in dealing with littering.

- A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) saw litter to be the primary concern as they moved into summer which was a national problem across all Open Spaces. It was noted the City Corporation was engaging with the Keep Britain Tidy campaign, but the Member queried if there was Government scope to emphasise a wider remit to the public of the benefits of taking litter home.

Constabulary

- The Constabulary continue to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour issues, large gatherings and littering and have developed stronger links with the Metropolitan Police and colleagues in the Camden Community Team to manage this. It was noted that Primrose Hill was closing earlier on Fridays and Saturday evenings due to Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Progress is being made regarding the introduction of Fixed Penalty Notices.
- An update on body worn video cameras will come to the next meeting following the introduction of this enforcement measure.
- A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) voiced the need for Officers to use deterrents to make people aware that the Constabulary will clamp down on Anti-Social Behaviour and has powers to do so. Members were advised that Officers would use the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme following an initial warning.

Divisional Plan

150th Anniversary of the Hampstead Heath Act

- Members voiced appreciation in relation to the biodiversity boards; however, a Member (Friends of Kenwood) was voice concerns around the location of the Kenwood biodiversity signboard, which was sited at a key viewpoint, and hoped its position would be reconsidered by English Heritage.
- In response to suggestions from a Member (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Neighbourhood Association Committee) relating to a possible performance event and an evening of readings from local writers, Members were encouraged to contact the Leisure and Events Manager with all ideas.
- A Member (Highgate Society) recalled the H&HS centenary 4-page newspaper spread on the history of the society and suggested something similar for the history of the Heath and its management.

East Heath Car Park

- Members were informed that works had commenced on 6 April 2021, and that works should be completed ahead of the Whitsun Bank Holiday.

Playgrounds

- Members were informed that plans for the Adventure Playground, Vale and Preachers were going well with local children and key Stakeholders involved in plans.
- The Superintendent drew Member's attention to the design brief for the Heath Extension Playground (appendix 2). The design brief had been shared with local Stakeholders and had received positive feedback. It was noted that Officers were planning to form a Working Group for this project to discuss the design well as fundraising opportunities.
- A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) was happy to join the Working Group and felt the draft brief reflected the criteria and natural design requests.

Savernake Bridge

- Officers agreed to follow up with Camden regarding a previous Member request for Camden to incorporate a finger point sign. A Member (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) also suggested asking Camden to consider swapping the cycle channels, move up (right) and down (left) around.
- The Chair gave thanks to the Sir Hubert Von Herkomer Arts Foundation who worked with 90 children to produce artwork for the Bridge over the Easter Holidays, and to Camden for funding the artwork. The project has received a positive response from the public.

Cycling

- The Superintendent advised that cycle parking was being progressed around the periphery of the Heath. A helpful meeting had taken place with Camden regarding the introduction of highway dockless bikes and cycle stands on the roads adjacent to the Heath.
- Members were advised that Camden had submitted a proposal for school children to use two paths during the morning and afternoon to allow them to travel across the Heath to School.
- A Member (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) strongly objected, highlighting the already increased number of people using Heath, and was concerned that the routes and bursts of people would increase the problems already being experienced. The Member felt that the visibility of more bikes would lead to people to assume that it was ok

to cycle at the Heath. There was also a concern that this pilot could ultimately lead to bad publicity for the City Corporation should a scheme not be continued after the pilot period.

- A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) disagreed feeling the pilot would be positive as it would be good for children's health and could possibly reduce traffic in the area as Hampstead had the highest concentration of schools in Europe.
- It was noted that the H&HS considered a similar concept in great detail years ago and concluded there should be no further extension of cycling on Heath.
- Members agreed the 'Cycle Burst' scheme was a nice idea but were not convinced it would work in practice as it would encourage/be taken advantage of by other cycle commuters. It was endorsed that Camden needed to provide safe cycle routes around the Heath.
- Other Members echoed similar views concerning the dangers of school children travelling downhill with increased people and bikes/scooters would be too much traffic on the Heath.
- The Chair highlighted that this was only limited to two paths and was not a free for all on cycling.
- Members felt that evidence and more information regarding the estimates of numbers/usage would be needed. A Member (Highgate Society) also suggested a survey of pedestrians that use the paths at the relevant times to provide feedback.
- It was noted that there could be extra costs involved for City Corporation in terms of policing and monitoring the scheme and Members agreed that a contribution should be requested from Camden.
- The Superintendent agreed to share all feedback with Camden and would come back with a further information at the next meeting.

Draft Terms of Reference for the Hampstead Heath Sports and Wellbeing Forum

- The Chair advised the new Sports and Wellbeing Forum would enable a strategic overview to be taken and would provide opportunities for more groups to be involved and to contribute. This would continue to be reviewed but it was hoped the suggested proposals would benefit the Forum.

- The Town Clerk read a statement on behalf of a Member (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath) who was unable to attend the meeting in relation to the proposals for the Hampstead Heath Sports and Wellbeing Forum:
 1. I can understand and accept the broadening of the remit of the forum to include more general wellbeing and to formalise membership. This is in line with the general drift of Government policy and recognises the wider benefits of sport and physical activity. It also aligns with the strategies of the City. My concern is that just about every aspect of Heath business is about improving wellbeing and there is a risk of diluting the focus of the forum. The new extended membership (although welcome) will make meetings lengthy and difficult to manage, let alone give a headache in where to accommodate them.
 2. Added to this, I now understand that the plan is to do away with the swim forum. That is a mistake in my book. There is (and always will be) so much to discuss around swimming that the large number of issues would naturally migrate to being discussed at the sports forum. It will dominate business and marginalise the other attendees. I think there is a permanent role for a swim forum and a temporary role for a track forum (around the management of major projects etc).
 3. Most importantly though I have a strong view that the sports forum should not be chaired by the City. It is after all an advisory forum advising an advisory Consultative Committee. In that sense it is a layer below that of the Consultative Committee and is a means by which sporting issues can be discussed and brought to the Consultative Committee. It is necessary because there is no coherent or formal organisation representing sport on the Heath, such as there is for the respective resident associations and interest groups that also sit on the Consultative Committee. It is almost tantamount to saying the City should chair the meetings of those groups represented on the Consultative Committee. As such I think it is right and proper that one of the sports representatives on the Consultative Committee, chair the sports forum. The City should be present, and it is enormously helpful that it provides administrative support.

- A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) was supportive of the inclusion of wellbeing, but not of the proposed format, as it was considered that more representatives at all meetings would prevent strategic planning. A smaller group of no more than 15 people working on strategic issues to feed into the HHCC was recommended. It was noted that swimming has six representatives and the Member felt it was essential to maintain a separate Swim Forum to discuss their issues.

- Another Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) felt that the proposal in its current format was problematic as everything involving the Heath from a human perspective could be regarded as relating to wellbeing. The Member welcomed the concept to widen the

Forum, its operation and the way it works with the HHCC agreeing it should go further than sports and recreation, therefore not including contact with nature and conservation of the natural environment which needed addressing through the Consultative Committee.

- The Deputy Chairman felt it was important to discuss operational governance and strategic items noting the successful way in which strategic and decision requests were funnelled up through the Sports Forum. The Deputy Chairman ultimately agreed with the position that the myriad of sports and wellbeing should be discussed in one place and supported the proposals.
- In response to a comment from a Member (Heath and Hampstead Society) that a membership of 33+ people was unworkable, the Chair clarified that a membership of 33 people was not the intention and that a more holistic and fair approach to discussions regarding what is available at the Heath was the ultimate desire.
- The Superintendent added that there had been lots of comments received regarding supporting capital investments and work to promote health connections and social subscribing. With broader representation, this would help to create events themes, e.g. women in sport, mental health.
- Members were ultimately supportive, but clarity was required for the role of the HHCC and the numbers involved.

Forest School Licencing

- Officers continue to actively engage and monitor input through short term licenses whilst developing a more holistic scheme for licence Forest School activity, noting the limited carrying capacity of the Heath.
- Members were concerned regarding the impact of Forest Schools and it was noted that the Forest Schools operating within the Kenwood Estate have had a noticeable impact on the area used.
- It was queried how the specified areas selected for Forest Schools were assessed and a Member (Highgate Society) recommended including a condition in licenses that a survey of areas before and after would be undertaken to monitor and limit the impacts of this activity.
- Members were advised that Officers had significant learning from Highgate Wood. The new licence arrangements would aim to prevent impact on specific areas through the monitoring of tree safety and compaction.

- The Heath & Hampstead Society representative offered to support the licensing process.
- Officers confirmed that lots of enquiries from Forest operators had been received. Forest Schools are being advised that further licences are not being issued until 2022 at the earliest.

Planning

- **Jack Straws Castle (2020/1828/P)**. Members were advised that the appeal hearing would commence on 20 April 2021.
Murphy's Yard. Officers attended a recent Development Forum and a further presentation would be arranged for Officers to seek further information on the proposals.
- **55 Fitzroy Park (2018/3672/P)**. The City Corporation recently submitted further comments regarding drainage concerns.

Annual Work Programme (AWP)

- The Superintendent advised that the projects had been updated and written feedback from Members was welcomed.
- The Superintendent provided an update on projects progressing through the AWP including signage, further repairs for erosion to the dams and toilet repairs. City Surveyors were thanked for their assistance on the Lido leak works.
- A Member (Friends of Kenwood) queries if further works on the sewerage line from Kenwood House were being undertaken, as there had been some bad smells in the area and hoped there were no issues or blockages. The Superintendent confirmed that further works had been undertaken by Thames Water.

RESOLVED - With two hours having elapsed since the start of the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order No. 40 the Committee agreed at this point to extend the meeting by up to thirty minutes.

Swimming

- Members noted the first swimming annual report and the feedback circulated from the Kenwood Ladies' Pond Association and the Highgate Lifebuoys. The Superintendent noted that 2020/21 has been a challenging year, but that Staff were looking forward to the summer swim season. Further feedback on the annual report was welcomed.
- A Member (London Council for Recreation and Sport) felt it was difficult to assess 2020/21 due to COVID and recommended using 2021/22 to consider the effectiveness of the charges, rather than 2020/21.

- The Chair supported annual reporting on swimming. It was noted that over 3,000 Season Tickets were sold highlighting the popularity of open-water swimming.

Financial Implications

- The Director stated that the Hampstead Heath Charity ended the 2020/21 financial year successfully; there was a gross expenditure of £6m but saw large fluctuations in relation to loss of income plus additional costs re: COVID-19 and litter which had a significant impact. The Director thanked the Heath Team for managing the budget carefully during a challenging year. New initiatives included the online donation pages which had launched via the City of London website. Officers had also secured a change in the corporate regulations to allow donations to be ringfenced and carried forward. It was hoped the 150th anniversary celebrations would encourage more visitors to support the Hampstead Heath Charity through donations and legacies.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- Provide feedback on the Heath Extension Playground Design Brief (appendix 2);
- Provide feedback on the concept of ‘cycle bursts’ utilising specific routes on the Heath to help reduce traffic congestion linked to the local school run, as set out in paras 14-16;
- Provide feedback on the draft Terms of Reference for the Hampstead Heath Sports and Wellbeing Forum (appendix 3);
- Provide feedback on the Annual Work Programme - Projects (appendix 5);
- Provide feedback on the draft Annual Swimming Review 2020/21 (appendix 6) as set out in para 31.

8. OPEN SPACES - UPDATE ON PLANNING RELATED MATTERS

Members considered a report of the Remembrancer providing an update in relation to raising awareness of the importance of open spaces, specifically linked to the Government’s planning proposals, following discussions concerning the Planning White Paper.

Members were advised that the City Corporation had been active evidencing the importance of the Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) designations. A question was raised by the City’s MP and Officers continued working with Officials regarding MOL protection via the White Paper consultation. Further work will

continue with pan London groups on planning on all areas, not just protected areas.

The Chair was pleased the Remembrancer was working on this on these issues which are vital to the open spaces and hoped the Government would take the City Corporation's representations seriously.

RECEIVED.

9. **OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2021-22**

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces presenting the high-level Business Plan for the Open Spaces Department for 2021/22. This plan identified seven major workstreams for the whole Department together with the actions within various Corporate strategies that the Department is helping to deliver. As well as setting out the current Departmental risks, providing financial information and identifying performance measures.

The update also identified next year's key areas of work for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park.

RECEIVED.

10. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

The Chair advised Members that this would be Karina Dostalova's last meeting as Deputy Chairman and gave thanks for her hard work and support during her time as Chairman and Deputy Chairman. These thanks were echoed by the Committee.

12. **MEETING DATES**

The date of the next meeting on 6 September 2021 was noted.

The meeting ended at 7.48 pm

Chairman

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