

QUEEN'S PARK CONSULTATIVE GROUP
Wednesday, 21 April 2021

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Queen's Park Consultative Group held on
Wednesday, 21 April 2021 at 11.15 am

Present

Members:

Anne Fairweather (Chair)
Karina Dostalova (Deputy Chairman)
John Blandy
Virginia Bonham Carter
Helen Durnford
Councillor Neil Nerva
Vicky Zentner

Officers:

Bob Warnock - Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Richard Gentry - Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Leanne Murphy - Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor James Denselow and Councillor Eleanor Southwood.

The Chair gave thanks to Ruby Sayed who recently stepped down from the Committee due to the time commitment of becoming Chair of CCS.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were none.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, the public minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 October 2020.

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

4.1 25 November 2020

The public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 25 November 2020 were received.

4.2 7 January 2021

The public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 7 January 2021 were received.

4.3 **24 February 2021**

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

5. **DRAFT END OF YEAR ANNUAL REPORT - QUEEN'S PARK CHARITY (NO. 232986)**

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces presenting the draft End of Year Annual Report for the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn Charity (No. 232986).

During 2020/21 activities, events and income generation at Queen's Park have been impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Park has remained open and has provided invaluable access to open space for the local community during the three National Lockdowns.

The achievement of the 2020/21 Key Priorities has been impacted by the ongoing pandemic and were set out along with proposed draft priorities for inclusion in the 'Plans for Future Periods 2021/22' for Members feedback, with a focus on ground restoration works and the Sandpit Project. The draft Annual Work Programme Projects 2021/22 and draft Queen's Park Divisional Plan 2021/24 were also presented for Members feedback.

The Queen's Park Manager provided Members with a full update on Queen's Park matters since the last meeting. It was noted that there was notable ground compaction and erosion impacting the Park, and staff were carrying out restoration work to allow areas to regenerate as part of the COVID-19 Recovery Programme, which would be the primary focus of work over the next 1-2 years.

Recovery works included recovery of the Woodland Walk, creating compartments using fencing and introducing hedging to allow for regeneration, and the Tree Team carrying out work to thin out the canopy. There was also a desire to introduce volunteers through the Friends of Queen's Park Group.

A donation page has been added to the City of London website to seek funding for the Children's Sandpit improvement project. £2,830 in donations have been received to date. The Queen's Park Manager gave thanks to Cllr. Nerva for promoting potential funding through London Borough of Brent for this project.

A Member voiced concern that the Sandpit project had been ongoing for five years without progression and queried if the edging of the lining could be worked on using the small pot of money already budgeted whilst Officers worked on obtaining the full funds for the project. This was supported by other Members who agreed this would make a huge difference. Officers confirmed the fundraising target was £100k, with an aim to deliver the master plan consulted and agreed on. Improvement works would begin as early as possible once funds were secured. This project was currently going through the City Corporation's Gateway process and would hopefully move to the next gateway soon.

The Deputy Chairman highlighted that this project was raised as a huge concern by HHHWQPC Members and expressed disappointment that the funds were not approved by the Resource Allocations Sub Committee. It was acknowledged that the current financial climate meant there could be no guarantees and all projects must go through Gateway process. The Chair and Deputy Chairman agreed to do all they could to support the project through this process.

Officers clarified that the original plan was to redevelop of toilet block and sandpit together, but that subsequently the project had been split into two projects. The toilet block project is currently on hold, due to reprioritisation of project funding, whilst the sandpit project is progressing via the Gateway process. The Deputy Chairman felt the toilet block should be a priority due to safeguarding and requested a project plan with timelines and milestones for both projects.

The Superintendent confirmed the next step for the sandpit project was to the next gateway process and bring a report to the May HHHWQPCC meeting setting out the programme and timelines for phased repair. It was agreed that whilst the edging and lining were the priority, this was the core cost of the project.

In response to a request for the estimate costs for replacing the liner and edging to assist and application to the Harvey's Trust, it was confirmed there was a set figure of £100k.

A Member recommended having a discussion in May regarding funding options and opportunities. It was noted that the London Borough of Brent has two funding stages ending May and in the autumn. However, it was felt that some funders had issues seeing Queen's Park as a standalone charity separate from the City Corporation. The Member recognised the significant public use of the Park during the pandemic, and the potential of a successful bid in terms of its role for the local community. Local councils did, however, take issue fundraising for the City Corporation with match funding seen to be a huge benefit. There were also potential learning opportunities from the City Corporation concerning individual donations with no tax.

With regards to bids to London Borough of Brent, Officers were informed this was on basis of need and evidence would be required to prove people attending the Park did not have access to a garden. Obtaining relevant data for the locality of the Park was considered very helpful for a bid to the second round of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding.

A Member cautioned that CIL bids were done by area and it was noted that Queen's Park Area Residents Association (QPARA) were submitting a tree bid for the autumn round. It was agreed there should be local coordination regarding bids at a meeting.

RESOLVED – That Members:-

- Provide feedback on the draft Annual Trustees Report for 2020/21 (appendix 1);
- Provide feedback on the draft Annual Work Programme Projects for 2021/22 (appendix 2);
- Provide feedback on the draft Queen's Park Divisional Plan 2021/24 (appendix 3).

6. 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 identifies seven major workstreams for the whole Department together with the actions within various Corporate strategies that the Department is helping to deliver, sets out the current Departmental risks, provides financial information and identifies our performance measures. This report also identifies next year's key areas of work for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park.

RECEIVED.

7. CYCLICAL WORKS PROGRAMME (CWP) 2021/22 UPDATED BID REPORT

Members received a report of the City Surveyor setting out the details of projects which will now be undertaken in 2021/22 and details of the projects that will be delivered within that year which form part of the previous year's programmes.

The Chair confirmed this work was part of a wider overview of the City's Open Spaces and was being shared to draw out relevant Queen's Park bids as part of the ongoing CWP review of wear and tear. Officers confirmed the focus was on maintenance of paving and footpaths showing wear and tear as these were a safety risk, plus the ongoing general maintenance of buildings.

With regards to the Park's toilet block, a Member advised they had been liaising with QPARA who had a local ex architect who could assist with the desire for a doorway going into the sandpit area. Officers confirmed that the CWP only deals with the maintenance of buildings, and in this case the replacement of white goods, redecoration, flooring and tiling might be necessary. The CWP did not allow for significant building changes so this would have to go through the project process to identify funds as there were no local funds for building changes.

In response to a query concerning individual costings, Officers confirmed they had met with the City Surveyor who was costing each element of the project and were awaiting the breakdown. The Superintendent cautioned Members stating that the range of project options must be taken through the proper processes after the new comprehensive steer. Officers were working to establish how the £35k was being allocated to see what was left on how to visually improve the building to make it look less industrial.

Officers confirmed they were liaising with local groups and Members were supportive as the toilet block building stood out unattractively compared to the rest of the Park.

RECEIVED.

8. **QUESTIONS**

There were none.

9. **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 Members.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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

The meeting ended at 12.09 pm

Chairman

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