

## **Appendix 1 – (Draft) Annual Report for Queen’s Park Charity 2021/22**

### **Origins and Objectives Of the Charity 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) site 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 Opens 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. The Queen’s Park Consultative Group (QPCG), which comprises Members from local groups (including the Queen’s Park Residents Association and Kensal Rise Residents’ Association), local Ward Councillors and a school’s liaison contact.

The purpose of the QPCG 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 know 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 are developed within the framework of the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan 2018-23, the Open Spaces Business Plan 2021-22 and the Queen’s Park Divisional Plan 2021-24.

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 Keats House 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.

The Corporate Plan outcomes we have a direct impact on are:

**Outcome 2** - People enjoy good health and wellbeing

**Outcome 3** - People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential

**Outcome 5** - Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible

**Outcome 10** - We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration

**Outcome 11** - We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.

**Outcome 12** - Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained.

The contribution which Queen's Park makes towards supporting the aims and objectives of these is detailed below.

## Achievements and Performance

Achievement to date (Update April – August 2021) against the key priorities for 2021/22:

- COVID – 19 Impact Recovery Programme

Throughout the Pandemic Queen's Park has remained open and accessible to the general public, enabling visitors to enjoy the park and its facilities.

Various stages of lockdown have necessitated some of the facilities to be closed to public access, e.g. tennis courts, pitch and putt course, paddling pool and indoor seating at the Queen's Park Café.

With the lifting of restrictions under the UK Government COVID – 19 Response – Spring 2021, the Park and its facilities, including the café are open for visitors.

The Paddling Pool was opened on 28 August 2021 and will remain open during September/October whilst weather conditions permits and user demand exists. Opening of this facility was impacted by repairs and maintenance works, linked to the ageing equipment.

- Refurbishment of the Queen's Park Children's Sandpit and improve provision of equipment in the Children's Play Area.

A Capital Funding Bid for the redevelopment of the Children's Sandpit / Playground has been submitted. Officers await the outcome of the bid submission.

The Playground and Sandpit receive an estimated 200,000 visits per annum, based upon previously collected data. It is a well-used and much loved play area with ageing equipment which is beginning to fail.

An approach will be made to the London Borough of Brent to consider the opportunity of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to support the delivery of this project.

The City Corporation have set up a donations page, which can be found at this link ([Donate to Queen's Park - City of London](#)).

Officers will continue to consider other funding opportunities to support the delivery of the project.

- Consult on, finalise and implement the Queen's Park Woodland Walk Management Plan.

Following increased usage during 2020-21 and the issue of ground compaction and erosion, the Woodland Walk has been closed to members of the public since March 2021 to enable recovery of the soil structure.

During the Autumn of 2021, staff will carry out works to break up the soil. These works will support the ecological recovery of the ground.

A range of options to aid recovery of the woodland walk have been considered and discussed with the local community. These include the erection of stock fencing and dead hedging to reduce the continued use of undesirable lines through the walk which have contributed to the compaction of the soil.

Members of the local community have varied views on this area and how it should be used by visitors to the Park.

The walk has recently been opened for access by Junior ParkRun, enabling their run of two loops of the Park, covering 2km to take place on a Sunday morning between 9am and 10am.

Suggestions from members of the local community include the installation of a board walk, running adjacent to the Woodland Walk along the fence line shared with the Pitch and Putt Course.

Consideration needs to be given to the long term aspirations of the Woodland Walk and its benefits as an area for fauna and flora with restrictive public access.

A final draft of the Woodland Walk Management Plan will be presented to Members for feedback at the next meeting in May 2022.

- Deliver the tender for the Queen's Park Café.

The tender for the Queen's Park Café has been delayed for 1 year due to the on-going impacts of Covid-19 and Officer workload. It is anticipated that a new longer term lease will be issued in January 2023.

The café continues to provide a social venue for park users to meet with family and friends where they can enjoy food and refreshments in a park environment.

The current tenant has adapted their business over the last 18 months, acknowledging the change in behaviours of Park visitors and responding to the restrictions that have been in place due to the pandemic.

- Consult on the Cyclical Works Programme for the Queen's Park Toilets, CWP Project Queens Park - Toilet Block – Refurbishment.

As part of the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) The City Surveyors will complete, internal and external redecoration and the replacement of white goods during autumn/winter 2021. A site meeting with an appointed contractor will be taking place in October 2021 enabling the Surveyor and staff on site to agree a programme of works.

A landscape architect has been appointed to provide a concept design for the exterior of the Play Area and the immediate environs.

The objective of improvements to the exterior of the building will be to:

- Change the exterior image of an unattractive building
- Create an exterior which is in keeping with the natural environment
- An exterior which is resilient to its location, e.g. withstand the environment of a Children's Play Area
- The exterior of the Public Toilets should not disfigure, disturb and deter, but on the contrary, through interesting look, they may even become a talking point within the local community.

Key Recommendations of the concept design (DRAFT)

- Treat the building as a whole to avoid existing unsightly and disjointed look
- Explore shades of paint colour to complement the natural environment and best adapt to one overall concept
- Connect spaces visually through planting - create a new meadow in adjacent Triangle Green Area to enhance the feeling of arrival
- Explore idea of a green roof to complement and extend the concept of meadow
- Explore the idea of rain garden and bioretention area in flood prone areas of Children's Play Area
- Explore the concept of flexible planting and seating areas to visually and physically enhance access, circulation and feeling of the spaces surrounding the toilet block area
- Explore the idea of direct access to toilet block from within the Young Children's Playground,

The recommendations within the concept design would be funded either through the CWP, e.g. replace rendering and repaint exterior walls or from the Park's Local Risk Budget for improvements, e.g. planting.

- Review of the Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan.

The review of the Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan has been delayed due to the on-going impacts of Covid-19 and impacts on Officer workload. The review of the 2014-24 Conservation Management Plan will be presented to Members in May 2022.

The review will focus on an update of the Conservation Management Plan and consider the progress made with the recommended aims and objectives for the future management of the Park.

- Develop a Park Activity Plan to gain understanding of who currently visits the Park.

The development of the Activity Plan forms part of the 2014-24 Conservation Management Plan review, which has been delayed. Therefore the draft Park Activity Plan will be presented to Members in May 2022.

The Activity Plan will:

- Assess where we are now
- Make strategic decision about engaging with people
- Action planning.

The Activity Plan will provide a solid 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. (Queen's Park CMP 2014 -24)

#### Other achievements during 2021/22:

- Pests and Diseases continue to be managed in the Park through planned inspections by the Arboricultural Team.
- The Pandemic placed restrictions on gatherings of groups during the initial COVID- 19 restrictions that were in place, this included Weddings and Civil Ceremonies. The Park was able to facilitate two weddings on the Bandstand in 2021.
- On 12 September 2021, Queen's Park Area Residents' Association (QPARA) organised for a Fairground Organ to play in the Park from 10am – 4pm. As Queen's Park Day was not able to proceed due to the pandemic, this was appreciated by Park visitors, on what would usually be the business day of the year.
- A successful Book Festival, organised by NW6 Arts took place on the weekend of the 18 - 19 September 2021. With in excess of 80 authors, 3 event locations including a free community stage, the event was well attended.

#### **Performance Measures for 2021-22**

- To support the Open Spaces Department, by maintaining tennis participation.

The Park's tennis courts remain a popular with Park users. During the period April 2021 – August 2021 8,178 games of tennis have been played on the courts.

- Achieve budgeted income and expenditure targets for the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn Charity.

Following the easing of national Covid-19 restrictions, a small number of events, including Weddings have been held in the Park during 2021. The Café remains occupied on a tenancy-at-will. The Park is currently on track to achieve its budgeted income and expenditure targets for 2021-22.

- To maintain Green Flag Award, Green Heritage Accreditation and London in Bloom awards during 2021.

Green Flag and Green Heritage judging has taken place. Green Flag results for 2021 will be released on 14 October 2021.

London in Bloom award results will be announced on 6 October 2021.