

HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 1 December 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 1 December 2021 at 3.00 pm

Present

Members:

Anne Fairweather (Chair)
William Upton QC (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy David Bradshaw
Alderman Prem Goyal
Michael Hudson
Alderman Gregory Jones QC
Wendy Mead
Deputy John Tomlinson
Yianni Andrews
John Beyer
Councillor Marcus Boyland
Richard Cornelius
Emily Hills
Oliver Sells QC (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Beth West	-	Interim Director of Open Spaces
Richard Gentry	-	Acting Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Jonathan Meares	-	Highgate Wood, Conservation & Trees Manager
Declan Gallagher	-	Operational Service Manager
Yvette Hughes	-	Business Manager, Open Spaces Department
Katherine Radusin	-	PA to Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Paul Maskell	-	Leisure and Events Manager
Leanne Murphy	-	Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Caroline Haines, Pam Hampshire and Jason Pritchard.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

4. **OTHER MINUTES**

The following minutes were noted:

4.1 **Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee**

The draft public minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee meeting held on 1 November 2021 were received.

4.2 **Queen's Park Consultative Group**

The draft public minutes of the Queen's Park Consultative Group meeting held on 6 October 2021 were received.

4.3 **Highgate Wood Consultative Group**

The draft public minutes of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group meeting held on 6 October 2021 were received.

5. **FRONT LINE WORK UPDATE**

Members were informed that a member of staff was unable to attend on this occasion and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

6. **DEPARTMENTAL AND SERVICE COMMITTEE BUDGET ESTIMATES 2022/23**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director of Environment concerning Departmental and Service Committee Budget Estimates 2022/23.

Members were very pleased that the bids for the Athletics Track and Queen's Park Sandpit and Toilet Project had been approved by RASC to proceed.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- Review and approve the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee's proposed revenue budget for 2022/23 for submission to Finance Committee;
- Review and approve the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee's capital and supplementary revenue projects budgets for 2022/23 for submission to Finance Committee;
- Authorise the Chamberlain in consultation with the Executive Director Environment to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, the Target Operating Model, and changes to the Cyclical Works Programme following the funding decision on bids for works in 2022/23;
- Agree that minor amendments for 2021/22 and 2022/23 from changes to recharges arising during budget setting be delegated to the Chamberlain

7. **REVIEW OF THE 2021 EVENTS PROGRAMME & PROVISIONAL EVENTS PLANNED FOR THE 2022 PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment regarding the Review of the 2021 Events Programme & Provisional Events Planned for the 2022 Programme.

Members were impressed by the events that were able to take place in 2021 and hoped the Affordable Art Fair would be able to come back in 2022.

RESOLVED, that Members approve the Large and Major events proposed as part of the provisional 2022 Events Programme for Hampstead Heath and Queen's Park, as set out at appendix 1.

8. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Members considered a report of the Executive Director of Environment and received a verbal update from the Acting Superintendent concerning matters relating to Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park. The following points were made:

COVID

- Members were advised that Officers continued to monitor and implement Government updates and recommendations, notably concerning the wearing of masks in closed areas and leisure facilities.
- A Member requested an overview of the Covid experience and what progress had been made concerning repairs.
- Officers confirmed that all of the City Corporation's Open Spaces saw a huge increase in the number of visitors last year, but usage had gone down since other leisure venues have been able to open. The open spaces were now experiencing compaction and erosion requiring works over a number of years. Covid recovery works were ongoing including recovery repairs on damaged grassland exasperated by wet weather. Some veteran trees had also been fenced off to aid recovery.
- In terms of climate change, compaction remained a major concern and soil and grass recovery was needed to assist the carbon removal project to reduce existing carbon drawdowns across Open Spaces and for carbon storage. It was confirmed that consultants had been appointed to direct a five-year plan.
- A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund was being considered to support regeneration at Queen's Park and Officers were looking at costs.

Drone guidance

- Members were advised that Officers were finalising the updated guidance and a request form in relation to drones use on the Heath. In parallel with the guidance, a Byelaw Working Group had been set up

and was reviewing the byelaws which were outdated. It was hoped the byelaws would strengthen the Corporation's position in the future.

- Some Members voiced complete opposition against the use of drones at the Heath by individuals or for commercial use. Officers confirmed there was no desire to encourage drone use outside of health and safety need and commercial filming with permission.

Professional Dog Walking Licence Scheme

- Members voiced disappointment that the panel consisting of a committee of three magistrates to review revoked or rejected applications had not been set up. The Committee were advised that the panel would be used for all Open Spaces licensable activities which required more work than originally anticipated and a professional pool of magistrates.
- A Member enquired if the established appeals process used by the Licensing Committee could be used. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Licensing Committee acted in accordance with the Corporation's statutory function of Licensing Authority which did not include this scheme. The Comptroller was providing advice on what was required in the new committee as per the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018.
- The Chair highlighted the need to move forward with the licensing scheme and requested an update on progress from Officers to the Committee within a week.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

9. REDEVELOPMENT OF HAMPSTEAD HEATH ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND - GATEWAY 6: OUTCOME REPORT

The Committee considered a Gateway 6 outcome report of the Executive Director of Environment concerning the Redevelopment of Hampstead Heath Adventure Playground.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- Note the report;
- Note the lessons learnt;
- Authorise the closure of the project

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

There were no questions.

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

The Chair noted the following business:

- Members were advised that Karina Dostalova had stepped down from the City Corporation due to a conflict with her new job. A Vote of Thanks would be given in her honour at the Committee Dinner.
- The Chair welcomed Councillor Marcus Boyland, the new representative of London Borough of Camden, and Beth West, Interim Director of Open Spaces.
- The Chair gave extensive thanks to Yvette Hughes who would be leaving the City Corporation in January 2022 after over 20 years working at Hampstead Heath. These thanks were echoed by Members and Officers.
- Thanks was given to Richard Gentry in his last meeting as Interim Superintendent of Hampstead Heath. These thanks were also echoed by the Committee.

The meeting ended at 3.55 pm

Chair

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