

HIGHGATE WOOD CONSULATIVE GROUP

Tuesday, 24 May 2022, 4pm.
Heathfield House Meeting Room / Ms Teams

Members:

William Upton QC	- Chair, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee
Peter Corley	- Tree Trust for Haringey
Lucy Roots	- Friends of Queen's Wood
Therese Gray	- Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee
Michael Hammerson	- Highgate Society
Cllr Nick da Costa	- London Borough of Haringey

Officers:

Stefania Horne	- Assistant Director, Natural Environment (Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Queen's Park, Keats House & West Ham Park)
Jonathan Meares	- Highgate Wood, Conservation, Trees & Sustainability Manager
Kate Radusin	- PA to the Assistant Director

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Alison Watson and Councillor Emery.

2. Governance Review

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.

The Assistant Director set provided an update in relation to the City of London's recent Governance Review, and changes to clerking arrangements for Consultative Groups. Moving forward, minutes of the meeting will be recorded by Officers working within the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Keats House and Queen's Park Team. Meetings will continue to be held in hybrid format and pre-meeting walks will be retained.

The Chair confirmed they supported hybrid meetings, to give flexibility for attendance. No changes are proposed to the frequency or location of meetings.

In addition to the recent local elections, there have been changes to the Highgate Ward boundary.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (6 October 2021) & Matters Arising

A Member (Highgate Society) noted a correction to the minutes of the last meeting, in relation to the Lanchester Road (not Gardens) planning application.

The Highgate Wood Manager noted that works were progressing on site, and that representations had been made in relation to the root protection zones of two oak trees located on the property.

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 6 October 2021 were agreed, following one amendment.

4. Sub-Divisional Plan 2022/25

The Assistant Director introduced the Sub-Divisional Plan, which sets out a number of High level outcomes, which also encompass Highgate Wood, such as the Heritage Conservation Plan. Charity Specific projects are also set out.

A Member (Highgate Society) noted that a heritage audit was needed (in relation to Develop Heritage Outcomes, project 8).

The Chair noted that a Professional Dog Walking Licence scheme had been discussed on the walk, and that an increase in dog walking activity had been seen in the Wood. The centre field has signs of wear and tear associated with dogs. A Member (Haringey) is also a Trustee for Alexandra Palace. A Licencing scheme has been introduced at Alexandra Palace and provides an income to cover the cost of dog waste bins.

The Chair noted that dog walking activity would be monitored, and further discussions held if Members believe it is becoming an issue within the Wood.

The Assistant Director confirmed that currently the licencing scheme is being introduced at Hampstead Heath as a pilot and once the scheme has been evaluated, consideration of the scheme being rolled out at Highgate woods will be considered. .

A Member (Friends of Queen's Wood) requested an update in relation to Forest School Licencing, noting that Haringey have granted permission for groups to use Queen's Wood.

The Highgate Wood Manager confirmed that two groups are currently licenced to use Highgate Wood, to regulate the activity and impact on the site. These are commercial/fee charging schools. Local State Primary Schools still make regular use of the Wood.

5. General Update

The Highgate Wood Manager sets out the progress made towards the priorities for 2021/22, and the priorities for the coming year. Good progress has been made in relation to green recovery, but there is still a lot to do. The creation of the new Conservation Area, in conjunction with Heath Hands, will support this work. Operational efficiencies are on-going, with the retendering of the Café to commence this year and extend into 2023. In relation to Ecological Monitoring, the Heath Ecologist will assist HW Staff. Data from a Soil Survey will feed into this work, which will also support monitoring of the impacts of Forest School activity. Income from the café and events has grown, with licenced events, especially Saturday morning football training, proving very popular.

A Member (Highgate Society) enquired as to the Staffing required to create the new Conservation Area. The Highgate Wood Manager confirm that fencing installation had commenced, with the Heath's Tree Team supporting this work. The same fencing technique has been used on the Heath, and has been well received. In house Staff skills are being utilised to deliver the project.

A Member (Highgate Society) suggested that the appearance of the fencing could be softened with vegetation in future. The Highgate wood manager stated that where possible dead hedges are used as part of the fencing.

The Chair noted an up to date map, including information on the Conservation Areas would be helpful.

The Highgate Wood Manager confirmed that a new map would be produced, in addition to the installation of new notice boards, which will be installed on site ahead of the Conservation Area being fully enclosed.

A Member (Highgate Society) noted the importance of providing public information, to ensure that visitors understand why things are being done, and the complexities around the management of the site. Education walks for the wider public would be very valuable if there is the Staff capacity to deliver.

The Highgate Wood Manager confirmed that Highgate Wood received a 25 year Green Flag plaque from Keep Britain Tidy, as one of only a handful of sites to retain a Green Flag every year since the scheme launched. The Roman Kiln project is progressing well, and a Heritage Lottery Fund application is being considered for 2023.

Drainage works are being undertaken on the field, with the aim of improve the cricket field condition.

6,554 children attended licenced activities (forest schools & football coaching) within the wood during 2021/22.

The replacement of four noticeboards will be undertaken in house.

A further update in relation to Storm Eunice will be sent to Members in due course.

The Community Heritage Day will return to the Wood on 4 September 2022. Events will be paired down compared to previous years, however a variety of arts and craft stalls and community group stalls will feature at the event.

A Member (Highgate Society) enquired as to event sponsorship from local businesses.

The Highgate Wood Manager noted that the dog show would be sponsored by a local Vets practice.

6. AOB

It was noted that moving forward, Lucy Roots would replace Alison Watson as the representative from Friends of Queen's Wood. This would free up space for another representative from the Muswell Hill Friends of the Earth.

A Member (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee) suggested Transition Highgate as an organisation which may be approached.

The Chair asked members of the HWCG to suggest any other groups or organisations which should be invited to attend HWCG meetings going forward.