

QUEEN'S PARK CONSULATIVE GROUP

Wednesday, 25 May 2022, 12.15pm.
Queen's Park Meeting Room / Ms Teams

Members:

William Upton QC	- Chair, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee
Virginia Brand	- Ark Franklin Primary School
John Blandy	- Queen's Park Area Residents Association
Cllr Neil Nerva	- London Borough of Brent
Cllr Stephen Crabb	- London Borough of Brent
Cllr Eleanor Southwood	- London Borough of Brent
Robin Sharp	- Queen's Park Area Residents Association
Vicky Zentner	- Kensal Rise Residents Association

Officers:

Stefania Horne	- Assistant Director, Natural Environment (Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Queen's Park, Keats House & West Ham Park)
Richard Gentry	- Queen's Park, West Ham Park & Constabulary Manager
Kate Radusin	- PA to the Assistant Director

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Brindley

2. Governance Review

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and provided an update in relation to the City of London's recent Governance Review, and changes to clerking arrangements for Consultative Groups. Minutes of the meeting will be recorded by Officers working within the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Keats House and Queen's Park Team.

The Target Operating Model (TOM) is on-going and a number of job title changes have arisen. The Superintendent will be known as the Assistant Director moving forward.

Following a discussion, the Chair proposed to continue to hold meetings in a hybrid format. This was supported by Members. A Member (London Borough Brent) noted their support for hybrid meetings, as it allowed a greater flexibility of attendance.

A Member (Ark Franklin Primary School) queried if the removal of formal processes for Consultative Groups and Committees was across the City of London's open spaces, and noted that holding meetings on site provided an opportunity for feedback to be recorded formally. The Chair confirmed the changes applied to all Consultative Groups and Committees across the open spaces, except for the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, which will continue to be clerked by the Town Clerks Department, due to statutory obligation.

Following a question from a Member (London Borough of Brent), the Chair confirmed that the minutes of the QPCG would continue to be received by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee.

A Member (London Borough of Brent) suggested that future meeting times may be adjusted to 12-2pm or 1-3pm to assist local Councillors in attending.

The Queen's Park Manager confirmed alternative meetings room provision could be made for future meeting if a large space was required.

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

The Chair noted Anne Fairweather and Karina Dostalova have stood down as Members, and recorded thanks for their service on the QPCG.

A Member (Queen's Park Area Residents Association) noted no public minutes from the HHHWQPC have been received as part of the meeting papers.

An Officer confirmed that a copy of public minutes for the HHHWQPC would be emailed to Members of the QPCG.

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

4. Annual Report & General Update

The Queen's Park Manager provided an update:

Budget

End of year budget achieved for 2021/22. There are number of vacancies within the Park Team which resulted in an underspend.

Café tendering

A review of current lease arrangement with a number of cafés across the sub-division is due. Condition surveys needs to be arranged for each café within the sub-division, in conjunction with City Surveyors, to inform re-tendering. The Park Café is currently managed by Hoxton Beach, also operate the Parliament Hill Lido and Highgate Wood Cafés. Feedback from park users has been positive around the current offer.

Following a questions from a Member (London Borough of Brent), it was confirmed that the cafés would be tendered individually, however the same operator may bid for more than one café.

A Member (London Borough of Brent) suggested that Officers could work with the Councils small business unit to promote local businesses as part of the tendering process.

The Assistant Director stated that another options was to conduct a , soft market testing exercise and negotiate with existing providers rather than direct tendering. Members understood that a number of options were available.

There was a discussion around staffing, and the current difficulties of staffing for the service industry as a whole.

The Queen's Park Manager set out the timeline for tendering, which would hopefully be by the end of the financial year.

Green Flag

The Park has achieved a green flag every year since the scheme launched. A 25 year plaque has been awarded to the Park. Mystery judging for this years Green Flag will take place tomorrow.

Children's sandpit

£13k has been raised via donations towards the costs of the project (£100k). Capital Funding of £50k is being sought, and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) finding opportunities will be investigated.

Woodland management plan

Work is being progressed and is led by the Woodland Walk Working Group (WWWG). There followed a discussion around the contributions of the WWWG in progressing plans. The Chair hoped that further publicising this work would lead to further donations and public awareness. A Member (Queen's Park Area Residents Association) offered to provide a document for circulate to the QPCG setting out further information on the plan.

A Member (London Brough of Brent) suggested there a number of funding pools may be available which could support the sandpit project.

Following a discussion around Gift Aid, it was suggested that there may be opportunities for shared learning in relation to gift aid with Brent. Members (Ark Franklin Primary School & Queen's Park Area Residents Association) offered their support in relation to seeking CIL funding, noting the time commitment need for applications.

A Member (London Brough of Brent) asked if more could be done to support a safe walking route to Tiverton Playing Field from Queen's Park. If Tiverton was more dog friendly, more people may use the area to exercise their dogs. The Assistant Director welcomed the opportunity to meet with representatives of Tiverton Park. A Member (London Brough of Brent) suggested a meeting take place with Officers, the local Brent Parks Team and a Cabinet Member and offered to facilitate the meeting.

Following a question from a Member (London Brough of Brent), the Queen's Park Manager confirmed that the Hampstead Heath Tree Team proactively undertake tree inspections and works on site when needed to support the Park. This included monitoring and managing Oak Processionary Moth (OPM).

A Member (Queen's Park Area Residents Association) requested a copy of the 2021/22 Charity Annual Report. The Queen's Park Manager confirmed a copy of the report would be circulated once it had been published.

5. Sub-Divisional Plan 2022/25

The Assistant Director introduced the sub-Divisional plan, which is a three year rolling document. The plan sets out projects which cover a number of sites, as well as site specific projects. At Queen's Park the Woodland Walk and Sandpit are priorities in the plan. The Professional Dog Walking Licence scheme being launched on the Heath will inform a Queen's Park Scheme in the future.

In relation to volunteering opportunities, a Member (London Brough of Brent) noted there may be opportunities to tie in with local scout groups.

The Assistant Director confirmed that a consultant had been commissioned to provide a Climate Action Plan. A copy of the plan would be shared with the QPCG once ready.

A Member (Ark Franklin Primary School) took the opportunity to say how wonderfully the park has been run, and passed on a thanks to all of the Staff on behalf of QPARA. There are currently less Staff working at the Park and less bylaw enforcement is taking place. Delivering efficiencies does concern Members. The Park is the centre of the Community, local volunteers do a lot to support the Park, and value the Park.

The Manager and Staff are known by the community. Staff need to have resources to resolve issues in a different way. Changes may not be for the benefit of the park. An organisation chart setting out the current Staffing arrangements for the Park was requested.

The Assistant Director explained that current staff structures are under review but highlighted that the team is sufficiently resourced. The current Target Operating model review is focused on modernisations such as tennis bookings going online and for the teams to work more effectively. The focus is to work better, rather than doing less and cutting services. The Assistant Director reassured members that the park will continue to be resourced and new structures will be made available when ready.

A Member (Ark Franklin Primary School) noted that the Park Manager was now also responsible for West Ham Park, and that the two Team Leader positions were vacant.

The Assistant Director confirmed that these arrangements were temporary, and that permanent solutions were being sought in relation to the Staffing structure.

A Member (London Borough of Brent) enquired as to the timeline for the staff review. .

The Assistant Director set out that arrangements were due to be confirmed by winter 2022. The Park team will be supported by casual Staff this summer and adequate resources will be provided.

The Park Manager noted that a member of the Park Team is currently seconded to Hampstead Heath, and that Heath Staff are providing grass cutting support at the Park to free up the Staff to undertake other duties. The Heath's Tree Team are continuing to support the Park by undertaking tree inspections. Casual Staff are provided from a pool of staff working across Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood.

A Member (Ark Franklin Primary School) felt that Staff resources were needed to enforce bylaws and maintain the Park.

The Park Manager noted that feedback from Park users was that they enjoy seeing the same Staff regularly.

A Member (Ark Franklin Primary School) noted that due to an increase in the local population and lack of additional open spaces more people are using the Park.

6. AOB

A Member (Ark Franklin Primary School) asked if there could be more engagement undertaken in relation to rubbish, to save staff time.

The Park Manager noted that Parks for London are running a 'Clean Parks for London' Campaign. Education around waste and recycling are key elements of the waste divisional plan project. We have also reached out to colleagues within COL to see how we can support in delivering this message.

A Member (London Brough of Brent) noted that this was the first meeting of the QPCG he had attended since 1998, following re-election as a local Councillor. The Park was vital to the local community during lockdown and provides amenity to the wider community. Thank you to the Staff.

The Park Manager confirmed that a family friendly picnic event would be held on Friday 3 June, 2-6pm in celebration of the Platinum Jubilee. The event will include a funfair, and would be an opportunity for members of the local community who may not be joining a street party locally. Posters advertising the vent will be shared with Members of the QPCG.