

HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Monday, 23 May 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held at
HYBRID – VIRTUAL AND COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, 2ND FLOOR, WEST on
Monday, 23 May 2022 at 5.30 pm

Present

Members:

William Upton QC (Deputy Chairman)
Ray Booth (Barnet Mencap)
Nick Bradfield (Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
John Etheridge (South End Green Association)
Colin Gregory (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association)
Michael Hammerson Highgate Society)
Dr Gaye Henson (Marylebone Birdwatching Society)
Simon Hunt (Open Spaces Society)
Helen Payne (Friends of Kenwood)
Susan Rose (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Steve Ripley (Ramblers' Association)
Richard Sumray (London Council for Recreation and Sport)
Simon Taylor (Hampstead Rugby Club)
Jeff Waage (Heath & Hampstead Society)
David Walton (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath)
John Weston (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Simon Williams (Vale of Health Society)

Officers:

Ben Dunleavy	- Town Clerk's Department
Edwin James Birch	- City Surveyor's Department
Stefania Horne	- Natural Environment Division
Declan Gallagher	- Natural Environment Division
Richard Gentry	- Natural Environment Division
Jonathan Meares	- Natural Environment Division
Katherine Radusin	- Natural Environment Division

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Matthew Frith (London Wildlife Trust) and Merlin Fox (Heath Hands). Karin Oleinkova was in attendance for Heath Hands.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were none.

3. MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the previous meeting of the Consultative Committee, held on 24 January 2022.

A Member (Friends of Kenwood) suggested that the final sentence in item 12 be corrected to read 'should *not* be sited on the Heath'.

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 24 January 2022 be agreed as a correct record, as corrected.

MATTERS ARISING:

A Member (London Council for Sport and Recreation) suggested that the style of minutes should reflect that Members were giving views rather than asking questions. They also requested that the name of the body the Members were representing be included in the minutes, as had been the previous practice.

A Member (Hampstead Rugby Club) raised concerns about the format of the Wellbeing Forum. They felt that the change from the Sports Forum to the Wellbeing Forum could lose the voice of the Clubs . The Chair suggested that the Committee continue to monitor the Forum's performance.

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

Members noted the draft minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee meetings held on 9 February and 4 May 2022.

MATTERS ARISING:

A Member (London Council for Sport and Recreation) expressed their concern that the current timetable to the developments being carried out on the Parliament Hill Athletics Track would risk the loss of the entire 2024 athletics season. They asked if the timetable if the project team could consider moving the timetable forward by a couple of months to allow more flexibility and reduce the risk. They also suggested that it would be helpful if future works after the project could be included in the cyclical maintenance programme, or have a reserve fund developed, rather than having it return as a major project each time. Officers replied that preventative maintenance through cyclical works are preferred from reactive maintenance, but there is a limited budget for assets and infrastructure and a priority system is in place. The Assistant Director said that the upcoming investment in the athletics track would hopefully allow for better resilience in the future. The Gateway 2 Report was going to the Operational Property and Projects Sub Committee for approval on Monday 30 May. This was the final step in drawing down the funds for the project. Once this approved, officers would consult with the City Surveyor's Department on procuring the design team and reviewing the programme. A Member (Representative of Clubs using facilities on the Heath) said that the Representatives were a distance away from understanding the procurement timetable and programme of works, and that once out to tender contractors might come back with their own preferences. They agreed that it was vital to

avoid losing the athletics season and that once there was greater clarity on the project, they would welcome further discussions on how to minimise disruption.

5. **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Environment, providing the Assistant Director's Update.

Night of 10,000 PBs

A Member (London Council for Sport and Recreation) said that the Heath should be considering how to build on this event, particularly with the forthcoming resurfacing of the Parliament Hill Athletics Track. They suggested that further events should look into the possibility of sponsorship.

Constabulary

A review of the constabulary was carried out to respond to the changes brought by the pandemic with the aim of having a more effective and responsive service that is guided by data. A Member ((London Council for Sport and Recreation) commented that it was important to make sure that there was a Constabulary presence by the Model Boating Pond over the summer, as this was a popular spot for unauthorised swimming and barbecues.

Placards

A Member (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee) raised the issue of the number of signs on the Heath, and said that it was important that the vision of the Heath as a piece of countryside in London was not abandoned. They gave the example of signage at the Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond. In reply, the Assistant Director said that signage was due to be included in the Swimming Review, and invited the Member to contact her with other examples of signage and issues encountered on the Heath.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee

- Receive the report and note the contents
- Provide feedback on the draft Divisional Plan 2022-25 in appendix 1
- Provide feedback on the draft Swimming Annual Review 2021/22

5.1 **Draft Divisional Plan 2022-25**

A Member (Heath & Hampstead Society) said that they were pleased that archaeological interpretations were going to be included, and suggested that some of the projects can be listed to clarify the outcomes.. They said that there was a need to produce a full survey of known archaeological monuments across the Heath. They would also like to see a commitment to maintaining long-term ecological commitments. In regards to item 10, they hoped that they would be able to work with others on that item. With regards to item 14, they hoped that visitor engagement would be accompanied by a public information and communication programme.

The Assistant Director said the Natural Environment Department was conducting a wide survey and heritage audit at a Divisional level, which would help to develop appropriate plans. With regards to visitor engagement, this

would underpin new ways of working for Natural Environment, which was looking to conduct a more strategic approach.

A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association) asked for an update on fundraising. The Assistant Director replied that fundraising was one of a number of focused workstreams for how the Natural Environment Department could work strategically and joined up.

5.2 HomeRun App data

A Member (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) commented that the data set on journeys round the Heath from schools was taken from private schools rather than general schools local to the Heath. For private schools to expand, they need to have proposals for green ways for pupils to get to school. The Chair asked if any further data was expected. In reply, the Assistant Director said that this was the data that had been provided by the London Borough of Camden and she would feed back to Camden on possible further data from other schools.

A Member (Heath & Hampstead Society) expressed their view that the data was inadequate and was biased towards certain schools and socio-economic classes. They felt it should contain further information on all the schools neighbouring the Heath, and consider all the ways in which students travelled across the Heath.

A Member (London Council for Sports and Recreation) said that the scheme was a valid way to contribute towards the reduction of rush hour traffic.

5.3 Project on a Page (Swimming Capital Project)

The Assistant Director reported in the progress of the ponds improvement programme. The engagement with users and stakeholders was completed and there has been an overwhelming support for the proposed improvements. The next stage will be to submit a planning application and, pending approval, works are due to start in the autumn.

5.4 Draft Swimming Annual Review 2021/22

A Member (Hampstead Rugby Club) commented that they were pleased to see from the paper that the team had been reaching out to groups who might not normally use the facilities, and praised the staff for the job they were doing.

A Member (London Council for Sport and Recreation) asked if the income from 2021/22 covered the costs, when compared to the budget, and commented that swimming would always require a subsidy. In reply, an Officer said that the subsidy had decreased by 6% from the previous year, and that this exceeded the expectations in the budget.

A Member (Hampstead Garden Suburb Resident's Association) asked if the aim of ensuring that all customers pay for swimming had been successful. An

Officer replied that they had introduced methods and systems that will allow to monitor payments.

5.5 Murphy's Yard Representation letter (February 2022)

The Chair commented that, although the developer's had withdrawn the application, it seemed that development on the site was still likely, and said that it was important for the Committee to continue to monitor the impact potential development could have. A Member (Heath & Hampstead Society) said that the development was one of the largest proposed adjacent to the Heath for some time, and provided a chance to enhance the impact of the Heath's biodiversity on the local community.

5.6 Biodiversity Interpretation Boards

A Member (Friends of Kenwood) expressed their hope that the wording for the Summer Biodiversity Interpretation Board had been agreed. Officers confirmed that the summer boards will be ready to be installed shortly. They also asked for further clarification on the information on grazing livestock, as she was not aware of any plans to introduce grazing at Kenwood. A Member (Heath & Hampstead Society) replied to say that they were responsible for the statements, along with English Heritage. With regards to grazing, trialling had been carried out on Hampstead Heath using sheep, and there were plans to repeat this. Longhorn cattle were not being used, but were included on the Board to highlight historic methods.

6. PROPOSED SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE GOLDER'S HILL PARK ZOO

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Environment relative to the proposed sustainable management at Golder's Hill Park Zoo.

A Member (Heath & Hampstead Society) said that the direction being taken by the Zoo was a good one, as was a strong case for a zoo focused on a conservation and education remit rather than putting wild animals in cages. They said that they hoped that the report author could make it clear that, during the transitional period, the Zoo had a duty of care to the exotic animals in its collection. An Officer replied that as part of the Licences Act, the Zoo was required to have an ethics committee. This committee meets twice a year and its members have substantial experience. All decisions on stock management go through the committee.

A Member (Hampstead Rugby Club) asked if there were any plans on concessions for the zoo experiences to engage people who otherwise could not afford them. An Officer replied that there was a volunteering programme open to everyone that will allow participation no matter the backgrounds. .

RESOLVED, that – Members of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee provide feedback on the preferred option and ancillary plans to include the change of use of the Butterfly House and the income generation options.

7. **WEDDINGS AND CIVIL CEREMONIES - ASSISTANT DIRECTORS UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Environment, relative to the Assistant Director's update on the hosting of weddings and civil ceremonies on Hampstead Heath.

A Member (South End Green Association) expressed concern about the number of weddings to be organised, as they did not want to see the pergola frequently closed to accommodate these.. In reply, an Officer said that the main issues would be keeping the capacity and frequency of events in balance.

A Member (Friends of Kenwood) asked for further information on the costs of weddings and the revenue they brought in, and for clarification on the maximum capacity for weddings. An officer confirmed that capacity was capped at 120 guests at the pergola. With regards to the financial elements, the fees and charges is information in the public arena, and ranges depending on the type of wedding. These will be reviewed with the contractor according to market. With regards to revenue, this was commercially sensitive information.

A Member (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) suggested that thought should be put in to creative ways to increase revenue when the contracts were put out for procurement and ideas such as for example sponsorship from the couples could be considered

RESOLVED, that - Members provide feedback in relation to the proposal set out in para 12 of the report.

8. **HEATH HANDS UPDATE**

Members received an update from Heath Hands.

A Member (London Council for Sport and Recreation) congratulated the fficer and said that Heath Hands were doing superb work, in particular on their Health and Wellbeing agenda.

9. **QUESTIONS**

A Member (Highgate Society) referred to the mention in the Assistant Director's update report of the research conducted by the University of Exeter which listed the Heath in the top four most valuable recreation sites in the Country, and said that this should be given further publicity.

In reply to a question from a Member (Hampstead Rugby Club), an Officer said that they were aware of continuing issues with night fishing and they were working with all parties to ensure that the behaviours don't continue.

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

The Assistant Director provided Members with an update on dog licences. Members heard that the scheme introduced in 2020 had set a cap of 70 licences. 89 applications had been received, and there was an issue with a possible appeal on how the cap had been identified. The appeal process is complicated, and the Assistant Director said they would prepare a paper for

review by the Management Committee which will focus more on targeted intervention and an holistic approach rather than focusing just on numbers of commercial dog walking businesses. They said that that the information provided by licences could be used to ensure there was a proactive approach to mitigating the impact of dog walkers on sensitive areas of the Heath.

A Member (Heath & Hampstead Society) asked if all the received applications would now be accepted, as this might make it harder to potentially reduce numbers in future. The also noted that there was anecdotal evidence that dog owners have doubled during the pandemic and that pressures from dog walking have increased on the Heath. The Assistant director noted this and stated that it is even more important to consider an holistic approach focusing on the sensitive areas rather than just numbers. Another Member (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) said that the issue with high numbers of dogs under the control of one walker was the amount of faeces that resulted from their presence on the Heath, as it was difficult for walkers to clear up after too many dogs.

Two Members (representing the London Council for Sport and Recreation and the Hampstead Garden Suburb Resident's Association) felt that it would have been useful to know the criteria for the setting the cap at 70 licences.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair commented that he felt that the hybrid method of holding meetings was valuable, but that he would continue to think on the best manner of holding them.

The Chair announced that it was Simon Taylor's last meeting as a representative of Hampstead Rugby Club, having participated in the Committee for nine years. The Chair and the Committee thanked Simon for his contributions. Simon Taylor thanked fellow Members for all they brought to the Committee.

The meeting ended at 7.22 pm

Chair

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