

HIGHGATE WOOD CONSULATIVE GROUP

Wednesday, 19 April 2023, 1pm.

Heathfield House, 432 Archway Road, N6 4JH / Ms Teams

Members:

William Upton KC	- Chair, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee
Jason Groves	- Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee
Cllr Pippa Connor	- London Borough of Haringey
Lucy Roots	- Friends of Queen's Wood
Stephanie Beer	- Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association
Michael Hammerson	- Highgate Society
Bob Hare	- Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Officers:

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

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Scott Emery, Therese Grey and Laura Dekker.

2. Assistant Directors Update

JM noted that notice board replacements is ongoing. Priority would be given to the entrance boards in greatest need of repair. Works to enclose the new conservation were completed during the autumn and Ecological monitoring would commence this year. Staff have noted increased bird activity, including new species not previously sighted in this area. Staff undertake annual inspection of bat boxes.

A wider discussion around surveying opportunities took place. It was noted that there may be specialisms held by local users of the Wood and Stakeholders which may offer opportunities if funding was available. JM noted the soil survey which was undertaken last year, along with a funded vegetation survey being undertaken at the Heath.

The Roman Kiln project was discussed on the walk. Funding has been secured from the NHLF. Works need to be undertaken to the building along with repairs to the roof. A survey will be undertaken to confirm if the current allocation of funding from the project is sufficient. The Roman Kiln Project Board will continue to progress this matter.

Green Flag judging will take place on site shortly, with results expected during the summer. The Highgate Wood Conservation Management Plan will be renewed for 2023-2033 as a high-level plan, similar to the current Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018-2028. Climate change will be embedded in the new Strategy. Officers will work on a draft plan, which will then come to the HWCG as part of the sign off process.

SH working with colleagues in the Surveyors Department to review the leases for all cafés. A consultant has been appointed to undertake a marketing review of the needs of each café.

SH is it noted that the different sites may have different needs from a café offer and there will need to be balance between commercial return and investment into the café building.

It is likely that the public toilets at HW would not be linked to the new café, due to their location. This would be considered on a case by case basis at each site.

New tree management software (Tree Plotter) has been launched, and will be used for inspections.

The Extreme Weather protocol for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Queen's Park and West Ham Park is being reviewed, considering closing the woods with winds above 35mph. Officers will consider the likely impacts of the revised arrangements and share information with Members.

SH outlined the HW specific projects for 2023-24 which are set out in appendix 1.

Proposed improvements to the cricket square were discussed, following an update on the walk. Funding has been received to install an artificial cricket strip on the western side. Officers are in communication with Haringey Council in relation to the planning process. DOB noted that there are currently 9 strips on the square, and it is proposed to add an addition 10th strip. SH set out that the additional strip would hopefully allow more children to learn and participate in the sport.

The condition of the existing nets, which are muddy, was raised as an issued by Councillor Connor. Dogs and dog mess may also be an issue. Councillor Connor asked for the justifications of the cricket improvements and why Highgate woods was chosen. SH explained that an analysis of provision was carried out and that further information will be circulated. There is a possible conflict with the football provision and a meeting with the Football foundation will be arranged. SH explained to the committee that a wider sport strategy is in preparation for the Natural environment and this will include highgate woods as well as the other open spaces.

Members noted the new wildflower meadow had been created, which would help to off-set any impact.

JM noted the current cap on the number of Forest Schools would be maintained.

3. Questions & AOB

SH updated Members in relation to the commission of visitor data for the Wood (and other open spaces) to provide a better understanding of the usage.

The 2023 Heritage day will be held on Sunday 3rd September 2023. A programme of Staff led walks are available, and ticket can be booked via Eventbrite.

4. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be circulated via email.

