

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	Dated: 10 June 2024
Subject: Assistant Director Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	-Diverse engaged communities -Leading sustainable environment -Vibrant thriving destination -Providing excellent services -Flourishing public spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£0
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Bob Roberts Executive Director, Environment Department	For Information
Report author: Bill LoSasso Superintendent North London Open Spaces	

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since the last Hampstead Heath Consultative Meeting on 22 April 2024.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Parliament Hill / Leisure

1. The 'Night of the 10K PBs' was held on Saturday 18 May 2024, which was a qualifying event for athletes ahead of the Paris Olympics this summer. It was a wonderful evening that was supported by representatives from the management and consultative committees, local councillors and the Mayor of

Camden, and the Town Clerk. There were thousands of spectators, athletes from over 40 countries represented, over 50% of athletes running their own personal best, and a spot at the Paris Olympics secured by Megan Keith. William Upton KC CC supported the event in a television interview, and over 100,000 people watched the event on the European Athletics YouTube feed.

2. Meetings and arrangements are underway for 'Give it a Go' 2024, which will be taking place on 14 July. It is a collaborative event with partners from Camden Council and local sports clubs and leisure centres. It's an event to promote health and wellbeing and a chance to try out new sports from tennis to fencing and bowling to boxing.
3. The cricket square has been prepared and the cricket season was due to start on 23 April. It has unfortunately been delayed at Parliament Hill Fields due to poor weather and ground conditions. The cricket season is underway at Heath Extension, however, with regular maintenance being carried out on the squares. Weekly games are being booked in for the coming months. Meetings are being held with City Surveyors regarding the cricket nets on Heath Extension and to discuss the use of their existing limited budget. The next meeting is on 22 May. The local team are also discussing funding opportunities with local cricket teams.
4. Football and rugby season is now completed at Heath Extension. Bookings are also increasing for the football pitches, rounders and grids at Parliament Hill Fields, with schools and the general public. Summer sports grids have been marked out and are now being used by Camden School Sports Association (CSSA), local schools, and groups for football training and general fitness. Work is underway to mark out rounders pitches for local schools.
5. Hampstead Heath Extension changing rooms have been closed due to traces of Legionella in a recent routine water quality test. The changing rooms were closed immediately after the issue was identified, our risk guidance for Legionella has been followed, and we are working closely with the City Surveyor's Department and specialist external contractors to address the situation and ensure continued public safety. Despite the closure of the changing rooms, there will not be any impact on our sports clubs' ability to use sports pitches while work is carried out to resolve this problem. It is hoped that the changing rooms will be reopened by the start of the rugby season in September this year.
6. The Lido and Ponds are getting much busier with the warmer weather, and with more awareness and publicity being generated about the health benefits of year-round swimming, showing a year-on-year rise. As an example, the weekend of 11-12 May was very busy with over 3,000 visitors to the Lido and

in excess of 10,000 visitors to the three bathing ponds. Wi-Fi connection has now been installed at the Mixed Pond and new cables were installed at the Men's Pond in April to strengthen the Wi-Fi connection, which will help with payment made by credit cards.

7. The Lido started its summer opening hours on 4 May and the Mixed Pond opened to the public on this date. Repairs and maintenance of the Lido and Parliament Hill paddling pools began on 16 May. The works include new filter media and dosing units for both paddling pools and a new pump for the Lido paddling pool. The aim is to open both pools by half-term starting on Saturday 25 May.
8. The Ponds Access Project is now coming to a close. All the works at the Ladies, Mixed and Men's Ponds has progressed well and is now complete. The hoists are installed, the grating has been added and the sliding doors at the Men's Pond were installed the week commencing 13 May. The extra grating to fill the void in the Men's Pond has now been instructed and will be carried out in mid-June. The handover is scheduled for 20 May when all works associated with the Ponds Access Project will be signed off and completed. Training was provided to the Lifeguards at the end of March on how to use the new hoists. Heath Hands helped with some planting at the Mixed Pond to replace vegetation removed during the Ponds Access Project. They also installed new fencing to help with control of the new accessible platform.

Golders Hill Park

9. The main task currently is cutting the grass, but areas of long grass are being left where possible to create more wildlife friendly areas within Golders Hill Park. The sandpit area is still closed due to refurbishment works taking place. Progress has been made with the local team, but it has been decided to appoint external contractors to complete the work, due to the machinery and technical expertise required to meet play safety standards. Quotes are being gained from contractors to install the remaining plastic sleepers. The sandpit remains closed, but we are working hard to ensure it can be opened in a timely manner. The other half of the sandpit area where the sunshade is located will be opened by Saturday 18 May.
10. Structural repair work has taken place on the Pergola and five of the worst columns were pinned at the base with two 450mm steel pins. Temporary structural repair work has been carried out and the eastern section of the colonnade was reopened on 15 May 2024. It is now safe for the public to access temporarily until August 2024. Future steps are now being evaluated. Senior Building Surveyors are still working with specialist contractors on the

next phase of works, as parts of the pergola may need to be removed to ensure continued public safety if a longer-term, more comprehensive solution is not implemented. A feasibility report has been commissioned by the City Surveyor's Department to identify options, and the cost for a full restoration is currently estimated to be more than £2 million. Heath Hands volunteer sessions are continuing in both the Park and Hill Garden, with three sessions a week being hosted by the Gardening team.

11. In partnership with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and Heath Hands, the NLOS Senior Ecologist led a hedgehog survey workshop in Golders Hill Park. Wildlife cameras were placed throughout the park and will be in situ for approximately 3 weeks from the 1 May 2024. Based on previous surveys, Golders Hill Park remains one of the healthiest hedgehog populations in London.

Golders Hill Park Zoo

12. The Zoo Team hosted a corporate apprentice day on 9 May for apprentices across the City of London Corporation. 28 apprentices attended and worked with the Zoo and Gardening Teams to carry out work and renovate the butterfly garden. The apprentices helped to create a new nature pond in an old unused veg plot, carried out some much-needed weed clearance and painted some planters. The day was a huge success, and it was a great opportunity for apprentices from different departments and teams to come together to showcase the Zoo. The butterfly garden is not open to the public yet, as further works need to be carried out, but we hope to have the area fully renovated and open later this year.

Conservation

13. The Conservation Team was called in by the Swimming Team to carry out some emergency reinstatement to the Mixed Pond access path following the completion of the contractor works to install an upgraded electrical supply. The works were successfully completed last week with the assistance of the lifeguards, and we are now just waiting for the coxwell gravel aggregate to dry out before the surface is rolled to achieve a suitable wearing surface for access to the facility. The team has also been involved in tree damage clearance at various locations following the recent wet and stormy weather, and last week started the weekly butterfly transect surveys. With the recent warmer drier weather tree irrigation operations have recommenced as part of a three-to-five-year establishment programme.

Ecology

14. The Ecologist has now identified potential sites for new leaky dams on the Fleet Stream as part of the Climate Action Strategy objectives to improve resilience and reduce flood risk. These minimal structures using natural materials will be constructed by the Conservation Team over the next twelve to eighteen months. 150 wildlife cameras have been installed around the Heath to start the new hedgehog survey. Heath hands volunteers and the Zoological Society London (ZSL) team were involved in installing the cameras. Ecological monitoring is planned for the butterfly meadow installed in 2023 on the Hampstead Heath Extension, using the Butterfly Conservation App.

Arboriculture

15. The Tree Team has been carrying out scheduled inspections at a number of locations around the Heath and follow up tree works. We had more stormy weather during April, which caused several tree failures which were then worked on and made safe by the Tree Team. They also carried out repairs to the veteran tree enclosure fencing at the Vale of Health and provided professional advice and guidance during a film shoot below Kite Hill.

Events

16. The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain Fairs arrived on 26 March for the traditional Easter holidays, finishing on Sunday 7 April. Due to the problematic weather, numbers were down on last year as several of the days were wash outs and they were therefore unable to open.
17. The Affordable Art Fair arrived on 23 April and the complicated building began. The weather was in our favour and the raising of the giant structure went without incident.
18. The Hampstead Heath and Golders Hill Park music programme begins on Friday 21 June and finishes on Sunday 25 August. We have a varied mix of music genres which caters for our wide and diverse audiences during the event.

Learning Team

19. The Natural Environment Division's Learning Team continues to provide valued programmes and activities on the Heath. In FY'2023-24, 10,706 students took part in facilitated learning sessions designed to boost

connection with nature and enrich classroom learning. 88% participants felt connected or very connected to nature after taking part. The programme reached students in some of London's most deprived boroughs, including Camden, Barnet, Hackney, Islington and Haringey. In addition, 20,345 participants engaged at our play centres. Play is vital for child development and wellbeing, and the play centre are a vital resource for children with limited access to holiday enrichment activities and safe outdoor play areas. 100% of participants felt happy or very happy after taking part. Finally, bespoke sessions were facilitated for 13 – 25-year-olds in need of support with education, employment or mental health. Groups included pupil referral units, young carers and Family Action UK.

Financial implications

20. No implications.

Resource implications

21. No implications.

Legal implications

22. No implications.

Risk implications

23. Risks are monitored and recorded through the various risk registers, including the Division and Departmental Risk Registers.

Equalities implications

24. No implications.

Climate implications

25. Included within the business plan for 2024-25 are a series of projects which contribute towards achieving the City of London's Climate Action Strategy, which was launched in October 2020. A key part of the strategy is conserving and enhancing biodiversity alongside reducing carbon emissions.

Security implications

26. Security implications are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk register

Conclusion

27. This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since the last Hampstead Heath Consultative Meeting on 22 April 2024.

Appendices: None

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