

HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 21 May 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 21 May 2024 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

William Upton KC (Chair)
John Beyer
Councillor Marcus Boyland
Deputy Timothy Butcher
John Foley
Jason Groves
Michael Hudson
Pauline Lobo
Andrew McMurtrie (Ex-Officio Member)
Councillor Arjun Mittra

In Attendance:

Alderman Gregory Jones KC
Mathew Frith

Officers:

Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Clem Harcourt	- Chamberlain's Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
Simon Owen	- Chamberlain's Department
Bob Roberts	- Environment Department
Niranjan Shanmuganathan	- Chamberlain's Department
Sunil Singh	- City Surveyor's Department
Callum Southern	- Town Clerk's Department
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller & City Solicitor's
William LoSasso	- Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by Deputy Charles Edward Lord and Caroline Haines.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. *ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL

The Committee received the order of the Court of Common Council held at the Guildhall of the City of London on Thursday 25th April 2024, which appointed the Committee and approved its Terms of Reference.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee considered to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No.29.

The Committee received an Expression of Interest from William Upton KC to be elected as uncontested Chair of the committee.

RESOLVED – That William Upton KC be declared as Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee considered to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No.30.

The Committee received an Expression of Interest from Alderman Gregory Jones to be elected as uncontested Deputy Chair of the committee.

RESOLVED – That Alderman Gregory Jones be declared as Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

6. **MINUTES**

6.1 **Draft minutes of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee**

RESOLVED – That, the public and non-public summary of the meeting held on 12 February 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

6.2 **Draft minutes of Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee**

Members noted the draft minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 22 April 2024.

6.3 **Draft Queen's Park Consultative Group Minutes**

Members noted the draft minutes of the Queen's Park Consultative Group held on 8 May 2024.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF SUB COMMITTEES, CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES AND GROUPS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk concerning the terms of reference and composition of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee's consultative committees and groups, and the appointments it was invited to make to other bodies.

RESOLVED – That Members:

- Noted the terms of reference and composition of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.
- Appointed John Foley to serve on the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee subject to his agreement outside the meeting, alongside the Chairman.

- Agreed the terms of reference and composition of the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Consultative Groups.
- Appointed Jason Groves to serve on the Highgate Wood Consultative Group and act as Chair. Agreed that two other Members of this Committee may be appointed to serve on the Highgate Wood Consultative Group at the next Committee meeting.
- Appointed Alethea Silk subject to her agreement outside the meeting to serve on the Queen's Park Consultative Group. Agreed that two other Members of this Committee could be appointed at the next Committee meeting.
- Agreed that the action to appoint a local representative from this Committee to observe meetings of the Natural Environment Board be moved to the next Committee meeting.
- Appointed John Foley to serve on the Keats House Consultative Committee subject to his agreement outside the meeting.

8. ***ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

8.1 **Hampstead Heath**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since the last Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting on 12 February 2024

The following points were noted:

- The opening of the Parliament Hill athletics track on April 17th was discussed and was well received locally.
- The night of the 10,000-meter personal bests on Saturday was also discussed, with the biggest crowd ever for the event.
- The Bowling Green and croquet lawn were mentioned for making it into Parks for London's Green Space Quality Manual.
- The popularity of the swimming facilities on the heath was discussed, with 3000 swimmers at the Lido alone and 10,000 swimmers at all three ponds over the weekend of May 11th and 12th.
- The Ponds access project was expected to conclude in June.
- The committee congratulated the staff and volunteers for their excellent work on the events.
- A suggestion was made to do a big social media campaign around the launch of the access project.
- The committee discussed the recruitment at Golders Hill Park and the appointment of a new head zookeeper.
- A ceremony for Declan Gallagher at Golders Hill Park was mentioned, with a memorial bench placed at the top of the lawn near the car park.
- The committee discussed the issue of sexual activity and drug paraphernalia being found on West Heath and suggested a deeper dive into the issue at the next meeting.
- The committee discussed the possibility of reviving the liaison with a local group to help with the issue on West Heath.

- A suggestion was made to do a committee walk around West Heath to see the problem on the ground.
- The committee discussed the Heath Hands agreement and the finalisation of the document.
- The committee discussed the Hampstead Heath management strategy review and the possibility of having an away day in October to facilitate the review.
- A suggestion was made to have the away day at Hampstead Heath or one of the other council spaces.

8.2 **Highgate Wood and Queen's Park**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning update on matters relating to Highgate Wood and Queen's Park since the last Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting on 12 February 2024.

The following points were noted:

- The Committee received an update on the Roman kiln project in Highgate Wood, the sandpit project in Queen's Park and its progress, the paddling pool in Queen's Park and its status and the cafe tendering process and the use of consultants..
- Members noted the sandpit project in Queen's Park has taken longer than expected, but is nearing completion and is expected to open in June.
- The committee were informed that the paddling pool in Queen's Park requires investment and would not open this year.
- Members noted that the Woodland Walk proposal in Queen's Park would be considered as part of the updated 10-year management strategy for Queen's Park.
- In regard to the cafe tendering process Members were informed that this would be discussed in more detail at the next committee meeting, including the use of consultants and the potential for investment in the buildings.

9. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee with assurance that risk management procedures in place within the Environment Department and its Natural Environment Division are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.

Officers explained that the report included the detailed risk registers and that all risks had been recently reviewed in detail by the assistant director and the management team. The report asked members to confirm whether the registers satisfactorily set out the key risks to the charities and that appropriate systems were in place to identify and mitigate the risks.

RESOLVED – That Members confirm, on behalf of the City Corporation as trustee, that the registers appended to the report satisfactorily set out the key

risks to the charities and that appropriate systems are in place to effectively identify and mitigate risks.

10. ***NATURAL CAPITAL AUDIT**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning a Natural Capital Audit.

The Director of Natural Environment provided an update on the natural capital audit, explaining that the audit articulated the huge value of open spaces for many different ecosystem services, including biodiversity, carbon sequestration, access, recreation, health and well-being, and flood management. The data from the audit was captured on a geographic information system, allowing it to be broken down to the site-specific level or clustered up to a group of sites. The audit covered not only the open spaces within the division, but also City Gardens, school grounds, and the cemetery and crematorium.

Members noted that the next steps for the audit included feeding into the new corporate plan, influencing local planning, working with funding organisations, supporting income generation, establishing a reputation as an international leader in natural capital accounting, establishing a baseline against which progress can be measured, informing governance and priorities, and building effective delivery partnerships.

It was noted that an internal working group meeting was planned for later in the month to prioritise the next steps and determine who would deliver outcomes. Members were informed that the audit was planned to be repeated every two to three years to enable significant progress to be shown and more value to be delivered by the open spaces.

11. **NORTH LONDON OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN**

The Committee considered reports of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, concerning an overview of the planned key management activities and initiatives for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park.

11.1 **Management Priorities for Hampstead Heath for FY'2024-25 (Business Plan)**

RESOLVED – That Members, approve the FY'2024-25 business plan for Hampstead Heath.

11.2 **Management Priorities for Highgate Wood FY'2024-25 (Business Plan)**

RESOLVED – That Members, approve the FY'2024-25 business plan for Highgate Wood.

11.3 **Management Priorities for Queen's Park FY'2024-25 (Business Plan)**

RESOLVED – That Members, approve the FY'2024-25 business plan for Queen's Park.

12. ***ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

The Committee received joint reports of the Chamberlain and Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

12.1 **Hampstead Heath Incorporating Hampstead Heath Trust Fund Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023**

Members noted the report.

12.2 **Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023**

Members noted the report.

13. ***HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK KILBURN CHARITY - REVIEW OF CURRENT DESIGNATED, UNRESTRICTED, AND RESTRICTED INCOME FUNDS HELD AND PROPOSED CHANGES**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning the complete list of the current designated, unrestricted, and restricted income funds held for the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn charity.

The following points were noted:

- There is an unrestricted fund of nearly £170,000, which the committee could designate for certain purposes.
- The committee discussed the potential use of the funds for dangerous trees work.
- A Member suggested considering using the funds for the capital of the paddling pool.
- Officers agreed to work to produce a paper on the costs and the committee's wish to utilise some of the funds.

13.1 ***Hampstead Heath and Hampstead Heath Trust Fund Charities**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning the complete list of the current designated, unrestricted, and restricted income funds held for the Hampstead Heath and Hampstead Heath Trust Fund charities.

Members noted the contents of the report and were informed that an updated paper would be brought to the next meeting.

14. ***HAMPSTEAD HEATH - HILL GARDEN PERGOLA - UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor concerning background information on the Hill Garden Pergola, to provide an update its current condition and comment on next steps.

The following points were noted:

- Officers provided an update on the pergola, stating that short-term repairs had been completed.
- It was noted that repairs were expected to last until August 2024, after which it is recommended that the timbers be removed and replaced in full.
- A feasibility study is being conducted to provide options and refine costs for the repairs, which are estimated to be between two to four million pounds.
- The committee discussed potential funding strategies, including applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund and dividing the project into stages.
- It was agreed that the matter needed to be escalated and that a report should be provided at the next meeting, with the possibility of a verbal update if more time was needed.
- Officer agreed to consider putting the matter on the risk register.

15. ***DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS**

The Committee received reports of the Town Clerk concerning decisions taken under urgency powers since its last meeting.

15.1 **Urgency Decision: Hampstead Heath Fees and Charges for Financial Year 2024-2025**

Members noted the report.

15.2 **Urgency Decision: Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Fees and Charges for Financial Year 2024-2025**

Members noted the report.

15.3 **Urgency Decision: Parliament Hill Athletics Track**

Members noted the report.

16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

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

There was no urgent business.

18. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That, the following matters relate to business under the remit of the Court of Common Council acting for the City Corporation as charity Trustee, to which Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 public access to meetings provisions do not apply. The following items contain sensitive information which it is not in the best interests of the charity to consider in a public meeting (engaging similar considerations as under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act) and will be considered in non-public session.

19. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

19.1 **Draft Minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee**

RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

19.2 **Draft Minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee**

Members noted the draft non-public minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 22 April 2024.

20. ***OUTTURN REPORT: AFFORDABLE ART FAIR**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director.

21. ***DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk concerning a decision take under urgency powers.

22. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There was no questions.

23. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was one item of urgent business.

23.1 ***Corporate Charities Review Scoping Exercise to support the Natural Environment Charities Review**

The Committee received a joint report of the Managing Director, City Bridge Foundation and the Interim Executive Director, Environment.

The meeting ended at 6.04 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Blair Stringman
Blair.Stringman@cityoflondon.gov.uk