

HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 10 July 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 Wednesday, 10 July 2024 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

William Upton KC (Chairman)
John Beyer
Deputy Timothy Butcher
John Foley
Michael Hudson
Pauline Lobo
Deputy Charles Edward Lord
Councillor Arjun Mittra
Eamonn Mullally

In Attendance:

Alderman Gregory Jones (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Marcus Boyland

Officers:

Clem Harcourt	- Chamberlain's Department
Niranjan Shanmuganathan	- Chamberlain's Department
Sunil Singh	- City Surveyor's Department
Sadaf Anwar	- Comptroller & City Solicitor's
Anna Cowperthwaite	- Comptroller & City Solicitor's
Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
William LoSasso	- Environment Department
Jonathan Meares	- Environment Department
Callum Southern	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Alison Gowman, Caroline Haines and Wendy Mead MBE.

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

No declarations of interests were received.

3. MINUTES

3.1 **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 21 May 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

3.2 **Draft Minutes of Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee**

Members noted the draft minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 10 June 2024.

3.3 **Draft Highgate Wood Consultative Group Minutes**

Members noted the draft minutes of the Queen's Park Consultative Group held on 10 June 2024.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

4.1 **Committee Appointment from the London Borough of Barnet**

Members noted and welcomed the re-appointment of Councillor Arjun Mittra to the Committee by the London Borough of Barnet and Councillor Marcus Boyland to the Committee by the London Borough of Camden.

4.2 **Appointment of Sub Committees, Consultative Committees and Groups and Representatives on Other Bodies**

The Committee considered the appointment of Sub Committees, Consultative Committees and Groups and Representatives on other Bodies following the report at the previous meeting of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

RESOLVED – That Members:

- Appointed Pauline Lobo to serve on the Highgate Wood Consultative Committee.
- Appointed Councillor Marcus Boyland to serve alongside the Chairman on the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.

5. ***ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT - HAMPSTEAD HEATH**

The Committee received a report of the Natural Environment Director concerning an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since the last meeting of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee on 21 May 2024.

During the discussion, the following points arose:

- a) There was a drafting error on the cover of the report; it should read 'Hampstead Heath' but read 'Highgate Wood & Queen's Park' instead.

- b) Officers gave an update on the two cricket nets on the Heath Extension. They were both in need of repair, and there was funding immediately available to repair one and bring it back into use. The proposal to move the nets more to the side of the Heath, which had been previously approved, had not been pursued further. Informal consultation had occurred with local users who supported this change of approach. The Committee agreed these proposed actions.
- c) Concerns were expressed about the risk of stray cricket balls to walkers and dogs passing nearby, that had been part of the earlier considerations to move the nets. Officers advised they had sought assurances regarding Heath and Safety.
- d) It was questioned when the Ponds Access Project would be concluded. Officers indicated they had received an update from Surveyors. There was a sliding gate to be replaced, but the project would be completed following the installation.
- e) Officers reported that there were six options in the Surveyor's consultant's report to restore the Pergola, with the cost ranging from £1.8 to £4.2 million and a recommendation from Surveyors was forthcoming. The Chairman emphasised that advice was also needed on the legal considerations, given its listed status.
- f) Officers from the City Surveyor's Department explained that a structural monitoring review was due to take place at the end of the month which would inform whether the Pergola would be safe until at least the end of August or if further holding repairs would be required.
- g) It was considered whether a bid for Heritage Lottery Funding or fundraising could be done to contribute to repairs of the Pergola.
- h) Following questions from the Committee, Officers confirmed that current activities related to the Pergola were funded through the Cyclical Works Programme.
- i) The Committee requested a separate agenda item on repairing the Pergola at the next meeting, and that it should be investigated whether it would qualify for CIL funding from the local authority.
- j) It was considered by the Committee whether it would be safer to close the Pergola completely. It was noted that Officers from North London Open Spaces (NLOS) and City Surveyor's were working closely together to ensure the Pergola is only kept open if they were certain that it was safe for the public.
- k) Officers reported that there was a risk of the Pergola being added to the List of Heritage Assets at Risk and advice was needed from Historic England once options going forward for repairs were clear.

- l) Learned from Officers that the recruitment attempt for a Head of Development and Partnerships had been unsuccessful.
- m) Two quotes, with a third expected, for repairing the sandpit at Golders Hill Park had been received and Officers indicated local authority partners would be approached to explore options for a CIL application.
- n) The Committee thanked the Park Rangers, the Park Constabulary and all the staff who manage Hampstead Heath, specifically West Heath, for their work in maintaining the park.
- o) The Committee drew attention to working parties that had previously been involved with tackling issues on West Heath that drew together wide range of partner organisations and indicated that kind of partnership needed to be re-established. Officers expressed agreement with the Committee that tackling anti-social behaviour on West Heath was a multi-party endeavour and confirmed they were considering a partnership-based approach.
- p) Officers reported that a specialist contractor had been brought in to do a deep clean of West Heath and remove clinical, hazardous and sexual activity waste, and indicated they would provide an update report to the Committee.
- q) The Committee noted that the 10,000m Personal Bests event on the Parliament Hill Athletics track was getting ever more popular and asked officers to consider whether a management plan may be required next time.
- r) The Committee noted it was good for the City to be able to invite guests. Members asked for proper catering provision for the VIP area, which was shared with the main sponsor. Unlike previous years, there was no food this year and our guests had had to leave the inner track area in order to get any. It should also be explored whether extra revenue could be raised from the next 10,000m PBs event.
- s) The Committee considered whether satisfaction surveys could be carried out at the next 10,000m personal best event. Officers indicated an exit survey could be considered next year.

RECEIVED.

6. ***ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT - HIGHGATE WOOD & QUEEN'S PARK**

The Committee received a report of the Natural Environment Director concerning an 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 21 May 2024.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) Officers informed Members that most of the event work for next year would be small scale local events, but the big focus for the year would be the Roman kiln project.
- b) Officers reported there had been some closures of Highgate Wood since the new threshold of 37mph was set.
- c) Members questioned whether the sandpit at Queen's Park had been opened. Officers reported that it was now in use again, and a formal re-opening to thank those who had been involved in the project would occur on 15 September on Queen's Park Day with key local stakeholders in attendance.
- d) The Chairman suggested Members reach out to the recently-elected Members of Parliament to discuss matters involving Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park.
- e) Officers noted that the Queen's Park Book Festival would be on the 31 August and 1 September.
- f) It was reported to the Committee by Officers that Green Flag judging had been held at all the North London Open Spaces and were awaiting the announcement of the winners on 16 July.
- g) The Chairman reported that the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee annual dinner would be on 3 December at Inner Temple.

RECEIVED.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Natural Environment Director 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 were satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) Officers indicated that City Surveyors were developing plans for tackling the backlog and would be in a better position to report in the Autumn. The Committee requested that a member of City Surveyors should attend each meeting.

- b) Officers reported that the Environment Department were asking City Surveyors to delegate some of their budget for smaller day-to-day maintenance works.

RESOLVED – That Members confirmed, 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.

8. *REVENUE OUTTURN - 2023/24

The Committee received a report comparing the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee in 2023/24 with the final budget for the year.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) It was highlighted that the outturn was dramatically different from the original forecast and the Committee considered whether it was covered by deficit funding. Officers confirmed the total net expenditure for the year was covered by deficit funding.
- b) Officers confirmed that the drivers of the variance were the reduced contributions from the Hampstead Heath Trust Fund and additional expenditure from the cyclical works programme.
- c) The Committee queried regarding the Charities Review and the move away from deficit funding. Officers responded that nothing had been determined yet and Committees would be fully involved in any change to their funding model.
- d) It was considered by the Committee, given the drop in income from the Trust Fund, what the forecast for next year would be. Officers indicated they could provide future income projections.
- e) Members discussed whether the reduction in the grant from the Hampstead Heath Trust Fund had been considered for the 2024/25 budget. Officers explained it was dependent on the stock market and variations would occur from one year to the next.
- f) The Committee considered whether the outcomes of the investment fund needed to be reported at Committee as Trustees once a year. Members requested a response on Trustees responsibilities in relation to income from investment funds, as well as a report comparing income performance against the 2024/25 budget.

RECEIVED.

9. *HEATH HANDS 2024-25 YEARLY REPORT

The Committee received a report from Heath Hands, and noted the important contribution the work of their volunteers made to the Heath.

RECEIVED.

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

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk concerning decisions taken under Delegated Authority powers since its last meeting.

Members noted the report.

RECEIVED.

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

A Member of the Committee advised a more rigorous application of flagging items to be received without discussion.

Officers informed that the four management plans for the four North London Open Spaces were under review and would engage with the Committee and the Consultative Committee to inform the review.

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

There was no urgent business.

13. **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.

14. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

14.1 **Draft Non-Public Minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee**

RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

14.2 Draft Non-Public Minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee

Members noted the draft non-public minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 10 June 2024.

14.3 Draft Informal Minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee

Members noted the draft informal minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 10 June 2024.

15. LAND AVAILABLE FOR ACQUISITION AT HAMPSTEAD HEATH

The Committee received a report of the Natural Environment Director.

16. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITIES - INCOME ANALYSIS AND PRIORITIES

The Committee received a report of the Natural Environment Director.

17. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

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

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 6:07pm.

Chairman

**Contact Officer: Callum Southern
Callum.Southern@cityoflondon.gov.uk**