

QUEEN'S PARK CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Date: 20 November 2024

Time: 12:00 Walk; 13:00 Meeting

Venue: Foord Community Centre, Braeburn House, Winchester Ave, London, NW6
7TR

ATTENDEES

Members:	William Upton KC CC (Chair)	(Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queens Park Committee)
Co-Optees:	Ruby Sayed CC	(City of London Corporation Member) Meeting only, online
	Vicky Zentner	(Kensal Rise Residents Association & QPARA)
	Cllr Steve Crabb	(London Borough of Brent)
	Cllr Lesley Smith	(London Borough of Brent)
	Clare Gillian	(Queen's Park Area Residents Association, QPARA)
	Robin Sharp	(Queen's Park Area Residents Association, QPARA)
Officers:	Bill LoSasso	(Superintendent)
	Charlotte Williams	(Head of Operations and Parks)
	Ciaran O'Keeffe	(Formal Parks Manager)
	Paul Brown	(Queen's Park Senior Ranger)
	Helen Evans	(PA to Superintendent - Minutes)
Enquiries:	Helen Evans	helen.evans2@cityoflondon.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. Apologies

Alethea Silk, Flavia Rittner

2. Introductions

The Chair welcomed the Consultative Group. It was noted that Robin Sharp was attending for Flavia Rittner for this meeting. It was noted that Neil Nerva and Jonathan Meares were not in attendance.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The Consultative Group approved the minutes as a fair record of the meeting on 8 May.

4. Matters arising

- a. The Group sought some clarity on the combined nature of Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charities. It was noted that they are one charity, but operate pursuant to two separate budgets which are reviewed separately. This is a historical artifact and the group was assured there being no co-mingling of budgets; any donations are separated by City of London Corporation's finance department as needed, with each space having their own budget and separate bank accounts.
- b. The Group also sought clarity on the proposed expansion to the Woodland Walk. Officers clarified that it would be reviewed this fiscal year (1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025), not calendar year.

5. Updates

5.1 Management Plan

- a. Officers thanked the Group for feeding into this with valuable input.
- b. This is in near-final form and going to committee in early December.

- c. Authorisation is being sought for the Superintendent and Chair to finalise the plan after committee.
- d. There was a considerable discussion on the Management Plans, with the following points raised:
 - i. It was suggested that five years would be an appropriate time and span of the plan, rather than 10.
 - ii. Some members mentioned that some details seem to have been copied over from the 2014 plan without thorough scrutiny.

ACTION: (CW) to check the data on the Queen's Park Management Plan to ensure correct and relevant, based on up-to-date data rather than historical.

- iii. It was queried whether the City Corporation could consider a new structure to the management committee, with a sub-committee for QP, as some members feel there is a comparative lack of time spent on Queen's Park.
- iv. Biodiversity and climate change is significant, but ensuring the park focus is maintained; a biodiversity action plan was suggested, offering targets for enhancement of biodiversity in open spaces.
- v. BL noted the opportunity to review the Management Plan by Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Management Committee, before final publication.
- vi. There are high-rise developments planned in the local area, which will lead to a future increase in residential population and thereby usage of the park. It was noted there had been a 6% drop in population in the ward since 2021 due to gentrification.
- e. Biodiversity action plan: City Corporation was not consulted on the action plan for Brent, as we are not part of the borough-wide plan. Local Councillors will support with next steps.
- f. Brent officers and City Corporation officers will liaise with relevant borough Action Plans and Strategies referenced in the Management Plan.

ACTION: (SMT) look into relevant action plans and strategies from Brent Council to be incorporated into or referenced within the management plan.

5.2 Cafe remarketing

- a. Officers clarified that the cafe re-marketing will be discussed at the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee on 3

December 2024. This discussion is not to award new cafe operators. Officers confirmed that the Committee is to advise, but that the five cafes at NLOS are planned to be marketed in one effort, but as individual lots, with potentially different successful bidders.

- b. It was noted that some people would like the cafe to stay open later in the summer. Officers are considering operating hours in the remarketing process.
- c. It was noted that ensuring prices are accessible to the whole community is an important consideration.
- d. The community aspects of the cafe will also be considered in the remarketing.
- e. Officers noted that they have direction and feedback from cafe users the previous consultations and no further focus group is planned.
- f. Officers confirmed we will likely instruct an external advisor from the food and beverages industry, and that work will not begin until the new year and final direction is received from the management committee.
- g. One member suggested that we were missing out on opportunities like a pizza truck in the evenings to improve food service was suggested. Some members mentioned they would look into whether they could help initiate arrangements for a food truck to set up on the street.
- h. Some criticisms of the cafe were: it's too expensive for children's food, there are poor reviews of service and food by some, and there is not enough furniture internally or externally. The current tenancy at will of the operator was noted.
- i. RuS raised that this went to HHHWQP some years ago, and queried why this still hadn't gone through. The Chair and Officers noted that the previous remarketing process hadn't been successful.

5.3 Children's entertainment and funfair

- a. Children's entertainment has benefitted from donations in recent years.

ACTION: (Event Manager) Consider request to allocate funding for children's entertainment, and confirm number of funfairs.

5.4 QPCG membership: additional organisations to be invited

- a. Officers noted an intention to invite new representatives to attend the Consultative Group to ensure that they continue to engage with the most representative group of park users as possible.

- b. The Group discussed the incorporation of additional groups into the Consultative Group. Suggestions were: local schools, wider representation, a disability group.
- c. Officers noted that it was an opportunity to obtain views from the wider community, with robust representation of the park users.
- d. QPARA representatives noted they are a large representative group with different committees and groups and that they would like to have more than two representatives present.
- e. RuS: this process is not undermining QPARA's input, but an exercise in ensuring broad representation on the group

ACTION: (Officers) to make progress including more diverse voices of the Park's users into the group, with a focus on accessibility, volunteering and sports.

5.5 Byelaw enforcement

- a. Cllr. Crabb was happy with this being addressed in the report and offered thanks for response on these raised agenda items.

6. Assistant Director's Report

- a. Toilet refurbishment: Officers confirmed that the alarms on the disabled toilets are to be upgraded; currently these are not loud enough.
- b. Contractors driving across the park: this was an issue during the toilet refurbishment which troubled the group, but it has been addressed.
- c. Congratulations were extended to Officers on the awards from Green Flag and London in Bloom.
- d. Signage was requested regarding cessation of dog waste bags offered at the Park.

ACTION (COL): to look into offering signage on the dog poo bins.

- e. There was a discussion around Paddington Cemetery, and their policy for having dogs on leads rather than dogs being banned. Although banning dogs on the site hasn't yet been ruled out, it is unlikely. If banned, there would potentially be additional dogs each day re-directed to Queen's Park.

ACTION (COL): To respond to Paddington Cemetery consultation to reject proposal to ban dogs.

- f. Dogs in the Park since Covid: Officers noted there is a byelaw issue. Byelaws don't prohibit dogs from going into the pitch & putt explicitly, but do prohibit

them to enter the quiet garden and children's area. Users have interpreted this as dogs as allowed off the lead in this space.

- g. Once there is full staff on the Constabulary, education and enforcement will be needed on this so word will get around.

ACTION (COL): Signage on all gates and noticeboards to say dogs are required to be on leads, and enforcement of this.

7. Review of the Queen's Park Paddling Pool

- a. Thanks were offered to CW for her report
- b. Officers noted a need to consider the future of the space, and whether the best use was as a paddling pool or other water play feature.
- c. CW noted that the park team is still under capacity, and the facility will need to be staffed when open, along with managing the park effectively. A potential re-opening of the Paddling Pool will create pressure on the whole team.
- d. The potential ongoing operating costs in addition to the costs to reopen the facility, were discussed.
- e. It was clarified that if a paddling pool is reopened, all staff would need training to provide cover during annual leave, breaks, sickness, and other times that the dedicated staff member was not available.
- f. It was noted that the paddling pool at Parliament Hill does not currently charge for entry.
- g. It was noted that there is commitment from local residents to fundraise to support reactivation of a water play feature, but the size of the fundraising need is very important to ensure it is achievable.
- h. It was noted that officers are awaiting a quote for potential costs to install a splash pad at the site, with an indicative estimated cost understood to be as high as £350,000. It was noted that a splash pad would require less cleaning, less water due to recirculation, less management and no staff, meaning the ongoing costs would lessen the facility cost over time. Other benefits include: its accessibility improvement compared to the paddling pool, and capacity for up to 47 children.

ACTION (CW): to talk to parks operating a splash pad to obtain feedback on the experience, and share visuals of splash pad alternatives to the Group and provide comparable options on costs of paddling pool and splash pad.

8. Any other business

- a. BL offered his thanks to staff at Queen's Park for their commitment and efforts in ensuring that Queen's Park remains a beautiful, award-winning Park.

Next meeting date TBC

Meeting ended: 15:06