

Hampstead Heath Sports & Wellbeing Forum

28 November 2024 at 18:00

Parliament Hill Conference Room & MS Teams

ATTENDEES:

Members:	Richard Sumray (Deputy Chair, acting Chair)		Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee
	Jen Lovell		Highgate Harriers
	Joseph Lowe		Highgate Harriers
	Sandy Nairne		Hampstead Heath Croquet Club
	Jeremy Watson		Highgate Men's Pond Association
	Felicity Moir		Mixed Pond User Group
	Ann Griffin	Online	Kenwood Ladies' Pond Association
	Karen Smith		Parliament Hill Fields Lido User Group
	Emma Rea		Parliament Hill Fields Lido User Group
	Marc Hutchinson		Hampstead Heath Winter Swimming Club
	Robert Gibbs		Hampstead and Highgate Angling Society
	Anandi Shah	Online	Parkrun
	Ella Mitchell	Online	Hampstead Rugby Club
	Max Sagre	Online	Camden Borough Council
Officers:	Bill LoSasso		Superintendent, City of London Corporation
	Charlotte Williams		Head of Operations and Parks, City Corporation
	Richard O'Mahony		Parliament Hill Fields Manager, City Corporation
	Paul Jeal		Swimming Manager, City Corporation
	Colin Houston		Volunteer Co-Ordinator, Heath Hands
Enquiries:	Helen Evans		PA to Superintendent (Minutes), City Corporation

AGENDA

1. Apologies

Greg Jones had offered his apologies, with Richard Sumray acting as Chair for the meeting.

2. Introductions

The Chair went around the table and those attending via Teams, by way of introduction.

3. Review of minutes from 15 July 2024

The Forum agreed the draft minutes from the meeting on 15 July 2024 were an accurate record.

4. Actions and matters arising

None

5. Updates from City of London Corporation

5.1 Projects

- a. Officers noted that the Ponds Access Project is very close to completion. There are some final snagging items at Men's Pond being agreed, with the facilities fully open and works completed by Christmas.
- b. The refurbishment of one lane of the cricket net structure on the Heath Extension has been started, and ought to be completed next week.
- c. The Ladies' Pond is currently undergoing phase 2 maintenance works of the boiler and changing rooms, due to take place in February-March 2025.
- d. A discussion ensued on the diving board at the Men's Pond:
 - i. This is currently out of action due to issues at the jetty with various items failing, including the concrete, slabs, steps and handrail.
 - ii. Two quotes have been obtained, and funding is being investigated, as it is not within the reactive works budget. Officers will therefore need to seek internal funding.

ACTION (COL): to provide clarity on funding streams, budgets and processes, including cyclical repair and bidding for funds.

- iii. Officers stated they are committed to getting this addressed, but that there is little control over the availability of funds as bidding for internal funding is a competitive process.
- iv. Officers noted that the income from the swimming facilities goes into the running of the Lido and Ponds, and the City Corporation makes substantial investments into these assets, such as ongoing operational costs and projects like the £2m recently spent on the Ponds Access Project.
- v. City Corporation is not currently able to offer a breakdown of the figures on the swimming fees and income.
- vi. It was agreed that this issue with the Men's Pond diving board needs to be raised at the Swimming Forum prior to this Forum, which is for strategic issues rather than operational issues.
- e. New leisure management system and contract with XN Leisure:
 - i. CW noted that the building of the new swimming booking system will begin soon.
 - ii. It is estimated this will take around six months of building and testing, but as the coding is complex there might be delays and no timescales are being currently offered for its official launch.
 - iii. Once launched, City Corporation will look at putting this in place for other sports across the Heath.
 - iv. User groups offered to test the new system to check for issues before roll-out.
 - v. Once the new system is in place, the City Corporation will have access to more data on usage.

5.2 Events

- a. The Forum discussed the 'Give it a Go' (GIAG) event, which has been running for 10 years, but with participation reducing this year. The discussion raised the following points:
 - i. We need to improve the event in order to bring people to the Heath and encourage engagement in physical sport, social cohesion and wellness.
 - ii. It needs to be planned and advertised well in advance, ensuring no clashes with other major sporting events.
 - iii. It was suggested we could get people to register interest to enable communication and encourage engagement.

- iv. Swimming is not included in GIAG, but we could consider incorporating this next year.

ACTION (SMT): to re-think the event and update the Forum on the planned date in 2025 and share suggestions on how the Forum can help to improve the GIAG event.

- b. Other recent events on the Heath were discussed, including the London Youth Games cross-country, where there were Olympians present, among 1700 other runners, and the 25th Duathlon with 400 entrants. It was also noted that we would once again host the upcoming national cross-country in February 2025.
- c. Next year will be the 40th anniversary of KLPA and the 100th anniversary of the Ladies' Pond. The discussion on potential events to celebrate will occur in the Swimming Forum.

6. Terms of Reference

6.1 New Terms of Reference

The final proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) were included in the agenda pack, and the Forum had a lengthy discussion on the new Terms. Points of note being:

- a. This Forum is not about being a representative body; its aim is to have a strategic voice whilst considering the Heath holistically to improve wellbeing, sport and activity.
- b. Officers adopted most items suggested at the last meeting, apart from representation on swimming reps., remaining with one swimming rep. due to creation of a separate Swimming Forum, clarifying that additional reps. can be invited to participate if specific issues warrant it.
- c. The swimming groups advised they would like this reconsidered, and requested that it be noted that this had not been discussed at length in the Swimming Forum. Officers noted that this had been discussed at length in the previous Forum meeting, and was considered in updating the new ToR, and that the proposed membership would be the new format.
- d. The Chair clarified that this is a consultative Forum: the group creates a discursive space, and is not a decision-making body, the minutes are reported back to and taken into account by the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee (HHCC).
- e. It was noted that discussion was the purpose of the last meeting, with the current meeting to reflect on the discussion and confirm the new ToR.

- f. Some wording was discussed in the new ToR, including 'deliver capital investments' and 'human benefit', and officers will consider and circulate the final version.

ACTION (COL): to consider the wording of 4c 'deliver capital investments', and 'human benefit', and consider alternative phrasing.

- g. The Chair raises that a sinking fund would be a sensible approach to plan for and assign budget to various facilities rather than doing this on a reactive basis as it's currently handled. BL noted that capital fund and reactive maintenance is not controlled locally, but by City Surveyors. The Corporation is reviewing this.

ACTION (COL): offer explanation on financials and funding at COL to offer clarification on the structure.

7. Hampstead Heath Management Strategy review and sports on the Heath

- a. BL updated the Forum that the review is going to HHHWQP committee on 3 Dec for decision.
- b. RS noted there is greater emphasis on sports in the newly reviewed Strategy, bringing recognition to the value of sports and recreation and the need to balance this with the ecology of the Heath.
- c. It was noted that sportspeople are fundamental to the protection of the Heath.
- d. Officers will share details of the implications of the Charity Review in due course.
- e. Officers noted the City Corporation spends more money on managing its open spaces than we make from respective activity fees. Discussions on finance are confidential even to members of HHCC.
- f. It was noted that limited notice was given to members for the consultation, rendering the consultation process difficult for some members. Officers noted that the timeframe was restrictive due to the timing of the management committee meeting and deadline for Green Flag applications, and that this was a valid point to be considered in future.

8. Ensuring diversity and inclusion on Sports & Wellbeing Forum

- a. It was agreed we need to ensure our work represents the voices of those not at the table, to reflect, acknowledge and learn from these, to ensure we are relevant and relatable.
- b. Diversity on age, race and disability needs work for representation.
- c. The Forum discussed whether a survey could be appropriate, to allow the Forum's approach to be data driven. However, it was decided that a survey could be

expensive, misinterpreted, flawed and self-selecting. MH noted that one had been conducted in the last 10 years.

ACTION (COL): to try to locate historical survey results.

- d. The representative for Highgate Harriers noted that ethnic and social diversity is good among its membership but not known about its users.
- e. It was noted that diversity and inclusion are critical; with improved diversity among users of the Heath, they will be able to be brought into these meetings and discussions.
- f. It was noted that potential Heath and facility users need to be represented by the Forum reps., not just the current membership.
- g. The diving board and sauna bring in different people and offer gateways into facilities; if there is a focus on fixing these facilities (both are currently not in use) then people will be attracted to the Heath.

ACTION (COL): we will try and find historical surveys.

9. Wellbeing and social prescribing: Defining and furthering these terms

Officers noted this is the beginning of the conversation to re-orient our actions and bring a focus to the Heath's role in physical and mental wellbeing. The discussion centered around the below points:

- a. Heath Hands are exemplary in this, with activities offered including practical volunteer work, forest bathing, mindful walks, making the Heath accessible.
- b. The group put forward the need to link up with key local groups, such as the Royal Free Hospital, the Havisham Group, local GPs, British Heart Foundation etc.
- c. It was remarked that there is difficulty in getting these initiatives off the ground, as they require support through collaboration and funding.
- d. The need to consider the Heath's current contribution to wellbeing in order to inform future direction in how we approach public health services, GP practices, UCL medical students, and improve accessibility for volunteers.
- e. It was advised that to inform strategic discussions, officers could prepare papers to discuss and develop and reflect on.

ACTION (COL): officers to have offline conversation and give a presentation on social prescribing with substantive details to inform the topic and conversation.

- f. Disability access and demand: we have several scooters and disabled hoists, but data on the use of these facilities to see whether we have enough provision would be helpful.
- g. The Lido has many sessions aimed towards making the facilities accessible to those with accessibility needs, but no plan and no reporting on this.
- h. It was suggested we could use people's stories to showcase health and wellbeing using social media.

10. Agenda setting for next meeting

- a. Wellbeing and social prescribing: to be main topic with next steps on how to take this forward with actions shared by all the group.

11. Any other business

- a. Water quality on Heath is affecting wildlife and ecosystems in the ponds and water courses.
- b. Jen Lovell noted the need to understand the strategic approach to how maintenance and budget are determined.

ACTIONS (COL): To provide information on the process for maintenance of assets.

- c. The Forum gave thanks to Marc Hutchison, of the Winter Swimming Club, for his contributions, and the Chair thanked contributions of other people who might no longer be incorporated into the newly reconstituted Forum.

Date of Next Meeting: TBC

Meeting ended: 20:04