

HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 14 January 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 14 January 2025 at
5.30 pm

Present

Members:

William Upton KC (Chairman)
John Arnoldi (Heath Hands)
Nick Bradfield (Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Colin Gregory (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)
Helen Payne (Friends of Kenwood)
Richard Sumray (London Council for Sport and Recreation)
Jeff Waage (Heath & Hampstead Society)
John Weston (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee)

In Attendance:

John Etheridge (South End Green Association)
Gaye Henson (Marylebone Birdwatching Society)
Susan Rose (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Michele Martin Williams (Vale of Heath Society)

Officers:

Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Adrian Brooker	- Environment Department
Colin Houston	- Environment Department
Bill LoSasso	- Environment Department
Jonathan Meares	- Environment Department
Charlotte Williams	- Environment Department
Joseph Smith	- Town Clerk's Department
Callum Southern	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Liz Andrew.

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

No declarations were made.

3. MINUTES

3.1 Draft Minutes of Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 16 September 2024

It was agreed by the Committee that minor amendments be made to items 9c and 9d.

RESOLVED – That, the public minutes and non-public summary of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 16 September 2024 were approved, subject to amendments.

3.2 Minutes of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee

The public minutes and non-public summary of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held on 22 October 2024 were formally noted.

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

The public minutes and non-public summary of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held on 3 December 2024 were formally noted.

3.4 Minutes of the Hampstead Heath Sports & Wellbeing Forum

The public minutes of the Hampstead Heath Sports and Wellbeing Forum held on 28 November 2024 were formally noted.

Matters Arising

The Committee discussed the resignation of David Walton and expressed gratitude for his exemplary work representing various sports groups over many years.

4. APPOINTMENT OF THE MEMBER OF HAMPSTEAD RUGBY CLUB TO THE HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Committee noted the report.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report.

5. 2025 SPORTS & WELLBEING FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee discussed the 2025 Sports and Wellbeing Forum Terms of Reference and raised the following points:

- a) The Chair noted that the Chair and Deputy Chair of Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee would be selected as Members of the Hampstead Heath Sports and Wellbeing Forum (HHSWF). The Chair added that Members of the Consultative Committee with an interest in sport should also be Members of HHSWF.
- b) A Representative of the Heath & Hampstead Society observed that the Heath Hands had previously participated in the HHSWF, as an effective part of the City Corporation, and suggested that they would be useful participants going forward as representatives of 'an organization devoted to volunteering,' which formed part of the membership criteria. Officers confirmed that the Heath Hands did participate in the last meeting of the HHSWF in which the Terms of Reference were created. However, in creating the Terms of Reference, they were cautious not to cite organisations specifically, as a more strategic approach was preferred whereby members were appointed generally from areas of interest and expertise among Heath users.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report.

6. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

The Committee received the Assistant Director's report which presented an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since the last Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee meeting on 16 September 2024.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- a) The Chairman informed the Committee that the 'Night of the 10,000 metres Personal Bests' event would not be taking place this year. Officers confirmed that the event was anticipated to return next year.
- b) The Chairman asked for an update on the status of repairs to the Lido and sauna. Officers responded that the Lido was due to undergo urgent electrical repairs between 3rd and 14th February, during which it would be out of operation. Officers assured the Committee that they were working closely with City Surveyors to ensure that the repairs be complete as quickly as possible.
- c) The HGSRA representative requested an update on Legionnaires' in the changing rooms. Officers reported that the changing rooms were re-tested twice for Legionnaires', with both tests coming back negative. The changing rooms were therefore re-opened and operational, being fully utilized by all the teams and flushed weekly to prevent the return of Legionnaires'. Officers indicated that they were working alongside City Surveyors to ensure that the changing rooms be retested and resampled, and that funding was being sought to install an automatic dosing flushing system that would alleviate the reliance on staff.

- d) The representative of the London Council for Sport and Recreation requested further information on the 11 separate emergency works that were identified for the Pergola and what that would mean for people wanting to use it. Officers provided detail of the stabilising repairs that were made by the City Surveyors to keep the structure safe and standing. Details were also provided of the work being done to generate a strategy and funding for the full long-term £4 million Pergola restoration, taking place in tandem with the stabilising repairs.
- e) It was queried by the London Council for Sport and Recreation representative how £50,000 had been raised for the Model Boating Pond Wildlife Sanctuary. Officers were thrilled to have raised £6,000 through crowd funding from local residents, with the remainder being funded by a local resident and Member of the Heath & Hampstead Society.
- f) The Chairman drew attention to the impact of several major storm events since September 2024 and queried whether officers were likely to review the current Met Office and local data being used. Officers reported that a review was underway, with a focus on benchmarking activity across other London sites, particularly the Royal Parks, in terms of tree management and criteria for which speeds other sites would close at. Officers confirmed that the Committee would be provided with more information at the next meeting.
- g) The Heath & Hampstead Society representative questioned whether the Zoo received accreditation at the end of 2024 as suggested by the report. Officers explained that a report was received in December detailing several recommendations that must be implemented and submitted for full accreditation and membership to be awarded.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report.

7. HEATH HANDS UPDATE

The Committee heard an update from Heath Hands, which detailed recent highlights, feedback received from the 2024 opinion survey and strategic objectives.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- a) The representative for London Council for Sport and Recreation queried the reasons for the reduction in volunteering hours on walks and talks, despite the strong focus on this area. Officers assured members that the data only shows volunteer led, however most walks are led by staff which are not covered in the report. As such, the walks have not reduced per se. The Chairman suggested that non-volunteer-based walks and talks be included in the report, underselling yourselves.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report.

8. FIVE-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)

The Committee received the Assistant Director's report which provided a working draft of the first five-year business plan for Hampstead Heath.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- a) The Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association representative suggested that the discussion be postponed and that the Five-Year Business Plan be discussed in conjunction with the following item on the Project Prioritisation Process.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report.

9. PROJECT PRIORITISATION PROCESS

The Committee received the Natural Environment Director's report which proposed a project prioritisation process for Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- a) The Chairman sought clarity on which of the two different maximum prioritisation scores contained in the report were to be taken forward (one being 44 and the other being 45). Officers responded that there was an error in the calculation and that the correct scores would be reported to the Committee at the next meeting.
- b) The representative from HGSRA questioned how the order of the Five-Year Business Plan was determined considering that the prioritisation process and funding were both given as factors in determination. The HGSRA representative also questioned whether funding was a factor in the project prioritisation process. Officers suggested that the financial and staffing resources required for project delivery were not considered in the prioritisation process. One of the prioritisation criteria was that a project achieves income generation, however this was assessed separately to the cost of delivery. Once all projects were prioritised, Officers would assess them in a cascading fashion until the point that a project was reached where no funding was available. Unfunded projects would need additional resource and fundraising, and Officers noted that a fundraising plan would be produced by a fundraising consultant, with effort being made to fund the higher priorities in the unfunded category.

- c) The LCSR representative stated that the Annual Work Plan should be an integral part of the prioritisation process and that it should emanate from the Five-Year Business Plan. Officers confirmed that the Hampstead Heath Strategy was the primary document for reference but indicated that numerous plans would inform their work on the Heath. Officers agreed that there was a need to bring all the plans into one place.
- d) The representative from LCSR suggested that it would be beneficial if upcoming projects were separated into three categories: essential, desirable or aspirational. Officers confirmed to the Committee that many 'essential' tasks fell under business-as-usual work, with the prioritisation process being applied to all remaining projects.
- e) The representative from LCSR asked that officers clarify the meaning of local risk. In response, Officers told the Committee that local risk refers to local budget, with the other budget being central risk and recharges.
- f) The LCSR representative advised that it would be useful if Officers could provide information on which projects require revenue, and which require capital. The LCSR representative also expressed concern that the potential to fundraise for a project would not be known until it is scored as a priority and fundraising is sought. Officers indicated that the Project Prioritisation Process was a work in progress and that a lot of further work was needed to take place, including the introduction of a standard project planning process. Officers assured Members that the Natural Environment Charity Review (NECR) would bring greater clarity.
- g) It was queried by the Heath and Hampstead Society representative whether the prioritisation process was introduced to enable the Heath to identify what could be done within the fixed budget, or whether it was a process by which the Heath would develop proposals or negotiations for funding. Officers stated that its primary function was to establish what we can do with existing resources, with the additional ability to identify unfunded projects and develop funding bids.
- h) A representative from the Vale of Heath Society enquired when the Fundraising Consultant was likely to be hired and sought clarification on their exact role and whether further plans existed for the establishment of a fundraising team. Officers advised that the consultant would hopefully be in place by April or May 2025 and would be appointed to identify fundraising potential by site and identify the fundraising capacity needed to realise that potential. Officers added that an initial budget totalling £1.5 million was requested from Finance Committee, Resource Allocation Sub-Committee and Policy and Resources Committee, with some allocation for fundraising, and it was clearly articulated the cost of establishing a fundraising team would be identified during the first year.
- i) The representative from London Council for Sport and Recreation questioned whether the budget setting for 25/26 would be the same as it had previously been. Officers advised that this would be determined by

the NECR; budgeting for the current financial year would remain the same, but from 2025/26 a different model was to be implemented for Epping Forest & West Ham Park Charity, with the remaining charities, including Hampstead Heath due to transition in 2026/27.

- j) The Highgate Society representative enquired whether the fundraising consultant would help mitigate the problem of different charities competing for money from same sources. Officers advised that this would be a part of their role.

As this point, the Chairman sought approval from the Sub-Committee to continue the meeting beyond two hours from the appointed time for the start of the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 40, and this was agreed.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report.

10. HAMPSTEAD HEATH DOG SWIMMING AND PESTICIDE INTRODUCTION

The Committee received the report of the Senior Ecologist which presented a summary of a recent scientific study focused on the link between dog swimming and pesticide introduction into Hampstead Heath ponds.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- a) The Chairman sought further clarity regarding the timescale and next steps. Officers informed the Committee that the paper was due to go to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee. Immediate actions were also to be taken, including new signage and engagement with visitors to change behaviours.
- b) The representative of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association queried how quickly the water would recover following the removal of chemicals. Officers cited recent evidence of the chemicals breaking down quickly into different constituent parts but advised the Committee that the pollution could be worse following the breaking down of the chemicals.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report.

11. RE-OPENING OF FORMER TENNIS HUT AT PARLIAMENT HILL

The Committee received the report of the Volunteer Coordinator which provided an overview of the pilot re-opening of the former tennis booking hut at Parliament Hill.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- a) The representative of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association favoured the proposal and expressed hope that a similar interpretation base might be opened at the shelter by the entrance to the formal gardens at the northern end of the Heath. The HGSRA representative also suggested that information on management topics, for example the leaky dams, be added to the information boards.
- b) The Chairman queried whether the information hub was in addition to the existing one at Kenwood House dairy. Officers informed the Committee that the plan for early summer was to open the tennis hut on a Saturday and the dairy on a Sunday, depending on Heath Hands' resources.

The Committee endorsed the proposals.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report.

12. HAMPSTEAD HEATH FEES AND CHARGES FY'2025-26 (1 APRIL 2025 – 31 MARCH 2026)

The Committee received the report of the Superintendent which proposed procedure to guide the annual review of fees and charges on Hampstead Heath and proposes fees and charges for financial year 2025-26.

During the discussion, the following point was raised:

- a) The Chairman requested that officers introduce their suggestions in terms of general percentages. Officers responded that a process has been laid out which would be replicated each year. It was proposed that all fees increase by the rate of inflation in September, which was 2.7%.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report.

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

There were no questions relating to the work of the Committee.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business considered urgent raised by the Chairman.

15. 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.

16. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

16.1 Draft Non-Public Minutes of Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee

RESOLVED, that, the non-public minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 16 September 2024 were approved.

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

RESOLVED, that, the non-public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held on 22 October 2024 were formally noted.

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

RESOLVED, that, the non-public minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee on 3 December 2024 were formally noted.

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

There were five questions relating to the work of the Committee.

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 other business considered urgent raised by the Chairman.

The meeting ended at 8.05 pm

Chairman

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