



Heath Hands Activity Update

Timeframe: 1st to 30th April 2025

Report to: Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee and Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee.

Heath Hands overview

1. Heath Hands is a registered charity delivering conservation, community, learning and wellbeing programmes across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Keats House and at the Kenwood Estate.
2. This short report summarises the charity's main activities on NLOS during the above timeframe according to its strategic and charitable objectives and Strategy and pursuant to the Partnership Agreement signed with the City of London Corporation through until 2029.

Highlights

3. Our annual wildlife monitoring programmes restarted in April 2025, with a fifth reptile transect being added to cover the Hampstead pond chain. Grass snake eggs were found at one of our breeding sites during set up, showing continued evidence of successful breeding on the Heath for a second year – a conservation success story. Butterfly and dragonfly monitoring has also restarted.
4. Following a successful fundraiser, we have launched a new programme of drop-in volunteering sessions to broaden access, and support those who cannot volunteer regularly, or would like to volunteer with their children. More information: www.heath-hands.org.uk/drop-in-volunteering

Strategic Objectives

5. The Heath Hands' Strategy (2021 - 2030) provides strategic direction and outlines our aims and objectives and priorities through 2025/26. This report outlines below our work in furtherance of these four strategic aims (Community, Conservation, Learning, and Wellbeing) since our last report to this committee.

Conservation

6. Heath Hands' practical volunteering sessions are running across all parts of Hampstead Heath, led by CoLC Ranger and Garden teams, with 30 sessions across the sites.
7. We have expanded wildlife monitoring and are now running five reptile transects, two butterfly transects and one dragonfly monitoring scheme this year. We have taken over coordination of the LNHS's year-round plant phenology Nature Calendar project. We have also supported the team at Golders Hill Park Zoo to start a reptile transect on their site.
8. Around Parliament Hill, our efforts to improve biodiversity are continuing, with work since April progressing on creating and fencing off a new wildlife pond to complement nearby wildflower meadow and hedgerow projects.



9. This year our Hedgehog Friendly Heath project is continuing with support for a hedgehog survey at Highgate Wood and Queen's Wood in June 2025 in collaboration with CoLC and ZSL's London Hogwatch.
10. Corporate volunteering bookings popular, with thirty-two companies booked in before August, completing tasks agreed with the Heath's Ranger teams, focusing on fence line and ditch management, projects around the Hive, meadow and garden maintenance.
11. We have secured funding to develop our plant growing and propagation capacity at the Hive

Community

12. To engage different audiences and bring new visitors to the Heath we collaborate with a range of local organisations including QCCA, Umoja Health forum, GOAL youth club and New Citizen Gateway. Our Community Newsletter now reaches over 550 organisation and members of the public, with more info here: www.heath-hands.org.uk/community-activities
13. We are currently setting up a new collaboration with Families for Peace (Ukrainian refugees) and planning holiday workshops with Young Barnet Carers and QCCA.

Learning

14. Our free weekend family-friendly weekend nature interpretation sessions and Dairy Nature Interpretation Centre open days are ongoing, with a focus on bug hunting, pond dipping and pollinators during the Spring.
15. Refurbishment works on the former Tennis Hut at Parliament Hill are being scheduled, which will enable us to start opening on a regular basis as a public information and nature interpretation base.
16. Since the start of April, we have delivered public walks on signs of Spring, bird identification and geology, with upcoming walks planned on pollinators and butterflies.
17. We have twenty-four Heath Friendly School sessions booked in during the summer term.

Wellbeing

18. Our free health and wellbeing programmes including four weekly health walks, social prescribing and forest bathing workshops are continuing.
19. We presented a summary of our wellbeing programmes to Hampstead Heath's Health and Wellbeing forum in April 2025.