

HIGHGATE WOOD CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Date: Tuesday 22 April 2025
Time: 12:00 Walk; 13:00 Meeting
Venue: 432 Archway Road, London, N6 4JH

Attendees:

Members:	William Upton KC CC (Chair)	(Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee)
	Pauline Lobo	(Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee; Hampstead Ramblers)
Co-Optees:	Stephanie Beer	(Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association)
	Therese Gray	(Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
	Michael Hammerson	(Highgate Society)
	Cllr Pippa Connor	(London Borough of Haringey)
Officers:	Bill LoSasso	(Superintendent & Assistant Director, City of London Corporation)
	Declan O'Brien	(Ranger Manager Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood, City of London)
	Rob Shakespeare Online	(Head of Heritage and Museums)
	Michaela Wright	(Roman Kiln Project Officer)
	Helen Evans	(PA to Superintendent - Minutes)
Additional:	Karin Oleinikova	(Heath Hands)

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AGENDA

1. Apologies

Jason Groves, Emily Brennan, Jonathan Meares, Laura Dekker, Cllr. Scott Emery

2. Introductions

The Chairman welcomed those around the table and announced that his tenure as Chair is coming to an end, but that he will likely remain as Deputy Chair.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the previous Highgate Wood Consultative Group meeting held on 14 November 2024 were reviewed and accepted as presented.

4. Actions and matters arising

- a. Report on Wood closure and wind speed figures in April (separate report)
 - i. The group discussed the report.
 - ii. The Superintendent explained that information had been gathered on recent closures of the Wood due to periods of high winds/projected high winds. Although the review is still ongoing, he noted that Officers may recommend to the management committee a return to the previous wind speed closure threshold of 40 mph, which had been lowered to 37 mph in 2024.
 - iii. After a discussion, the Consultative Group expressed general support for reinstatement of the 40mph threshold should it be recommended and be able to be reimplemented safely.

ACTION (COL): complete review of existing wind speed event and site closure protocol and report back in November meeting.

- b. Verbal update on cafe re-marketing
 - i. The Superintendent noted that the City Corporation still intends to remarket the cafes in 2025.
- c. Development of the Information Centre

- i. RS gave a verbal update on the progress on refurbishment of the Information Hut. Proposed designs have been developed and there has been consultation, but additional quotes are being sought. The initial quote received via City Surveyor's Department far exceeded the available budget, and the budget for future maintenance, and it is not advisable to proceed with it.
- ii. A refurbishment of the hut is more likely than a complete rebuild, focusing on the roof repair and light improvement of the structure. Nature-related displays will remain in the hut regardless of how it is improved.
- iii. The National Lottery-funded project is funded until May 2026.

5. Updates

- a. Assistant Director's Report
 - i. The report was noted as read.
- b. Report on Wood closure and Extreme Weather Protocol
 - i. This item was discussed in the above agenda item, 4a.
- c. Heath Hands update on Highgate Wood
 - i. KO presented this report to the Group, furnishing it with more detail.
 - ii. It was noted that numbers are likely to go up with increased sessions being hosted this year.
 - iii. A hedgehog survey is taking place in June, funded by the Central Grants Team. This will include surveying hedgehog numbers in neighbouring areas to build a picture of the network of hedgehogs in the local area.
 - iv. It was agreed that local groups could be engaged in this undertaking.

[Cllr. Connor gave apologies and left the meeting at 14:15]

6. Any other business

- a. Grant funding model and Charities Review
 - i. A question was raised around the future of the funding for Highgate Wood and the impact of the Charity Review.
 - ii. The Superintendent noted that the forthcoming grant model will provide greater flexibility and allow for better longer term financial planning.

- iii. This will require further discussion, looking at statutory rights, funding from the centre and competition for this funding.
- iv. West Ham Park, which is also managed by the NLOS Team, has this month moved over to grant funding from deficit funding so we are still understanding the process and implications of this change.
- v. Highgate Wood will (along with Hampstead Heath and Queen's Park) transfer to this grant-funding model on 1 April 2026.

ACTION (COL): Officers will share additional information at future meetings on the Natural Environment Charity Review.

Next meeting date: TBC

Meeting ended at 14:25