

Queen's Park Consultative Group Minutes

Date: 14 May 2025

Time: 12:00 Walk; 13:00 Meeting

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

ATTENDEES

Members:	William Upton KC (Chair)	(Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queens Park Committee)
Co-Optees:	Vicky Zentner	(Kensal Rise Residents Association & QPARA)
	Cllr Steve Crabb	(London Borough of Brent)
	Cllr Lesley Smith	(London Borough of Brent)
	Flavia Rittner	(Queen's Park Area Residents Association, QPARA)
	Alastair Balfour	(Queen's Park Area Residents Association, QPARA)
	Patrick Flannery	(Flannery Plant Hire)
Officers:	Bill LoSasso	(Superintendent)
	Emily Brennan	(Natural Environment Director)
	Charlotte Williams	(Head of Operations and Parks)
	Ciaran O'Keeffe	(Formal Parks Manager)
	Paul Brown	(Queen's Park Senior Ranger)
	Paul Jeal	(Swimming Manager)
	Helen Evans	(PA to Superintendent - Minutes)
Enquiries:	Helen Evans	helen.evans2@cityoflondon.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. Apologies

Cllr Neil Nerva, Robin Sharp, Alethea Silk, Clare Gillan, Ruby Sayed.

2. Introductions

The Chairman introduced everyone at the meeting, including new attendees Patrick Flannery and Alasdair Balfour, who is the newly inaugurated Chair of QPARA. The Chairman thanked Flavia for her hard work during her 3-year term as Chair of QPARA.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and accepted as presented as an accurate record of the Queen's Park Consultative Group meeting held on 20 November 2024.

3.1 Matters Arising

- a. Officers confirmed we have allocated budget to provide children's entertainment and that there will be two funfairs held in the Park this year.

4. Updates

a. Cafe update

- i. Officers noted we are still on track to remarket this year having received approval from the Management Committee to progress, but the timeline is still being developed.
- ii. We will communicate plans to the existing operators.
- iii. It was noted that the current cafe operators remain open until 7pm now, which is well received, with the cafe busy during these new times.

5. Assistant Director's report

- a. The Chairman noted that Hannah, whom the Group met on the walk, is the new team member from the recruitment process for the Farm's Operative Ranger.
- b. It was noted the forward-looking management plan, dated 2025, is in place, and thanks were given to Cllr Crabb for his contributions on the local history.
- c. It was noted that there is local appetite for volunteer sessions. There is currently coordination taking place on this between the local team and Heath Hands, to create some suitable introductory volunteering sessions. The following was discussed:
 - i. The team is looking to establish this this calendar year, likely in the autumn. We already have volunteering in the Farm.
 - ii. Heath Hands offers strong models on volunteering, also to consider the likes of: TCV, Friends of local parks (Gladstone and Brondesbury), and Kendal to Kilburn Transition Trail.
- d. Trees and wind events leading to site closures:
 - i. Officers advised the Group that we are reviewing wind speed closure thresholds across the four spaces to ensure they are fit for purpose going forwards. It is possible that Officers will propose an increase to the closure threshold from 40 mph to 45 mph if supported by the review.
 - ii. City Corporation will be purchasing equipment to collect on-site data to continue analysis and build up data, which will improve accuracy of decision on closures.
- e. Woodland Walk (WW): Officers shared details on the review of the woodland walk, noting:
 - i. We need to consider the effect on Pitch-n-Putt revenue to any potential change to the woodland walk.
 - ii. Signage is required to ensure pathway is clearly demarked and communicated.
 - iii. The Group suggested that the current fencing requires improvement. Dead hedging or laid hedging is an option due to biodiversity gain.
 - iv. Due to the proposed significant redesign of the Park, the necessary first step is to collect baseline data to inform decision making. Ongoing biodiversity surveys will require several years of data for management decisions, meaning that in 2-3 years' time we will be in a position to consider any potential next steps.
- f. Sports income generation data is not shared with the Group, but it is recorded in reports to the Charity Commission.

- g. The Farm was discussed, during which the following points were raised:
- i. Consider the opening hours being extended to capture after-school crowd.
 - ii. Signage needed on the gate to inform the public not to feed the animals. We have taken down the signage on Bella's death.
 - iii. Feeding of animals was discussed during the recent Zoo Ethics Board Meeting, during which it was advised and decided public feeding should not be allowed for various reasons, including welfare and overfeeding.

ACTION: (HE) circulate the finalised management plan with minutes.

ACTION: (COL) Woodland Walk: share a timeline for the review of the baseline information for the woodland walk once known.

ACTION (COL): Farm: consider signage on the front gate requesting the public not to feed the animals.

6. Water play feature

The water play feature report was presented and discussed, and the proposal to pursue installation of a splash pad was generally supported, with the following points raised:

- a. Research is complete, and options will now go to the main committee. Fundraising is required for delivery, with plans and timelines to follow.
- b. Crowdfunding will be essential, alongside support from Brent Council, NCIL, and other grants. A larger budget could allow for a more advanced system, but a 10% contingency fund is needed.
- c. The City Corporation has ring-fenced funds for the project. Patrick Flannery highlighted a potential HS2 grant (£75k–£250k) aimed at community projects near the line. Queen's Park may be a strong candidate due to its location and the impact locally from HS2. Patrick and officers will collaborate where possible on an application.
- d. The Chair thanked Charlotte Williams for her work on the report and progression of the project.

ACTION: (CW) to work with PF to create an application for HS2 grant, with the launch of fundraising in time for book festival and Queen's Park Day.

7. Wind speed threshold closures

The report was taken as read.

8. Queen's Park Day

- a. The Superintendent is meeting with event organisers in the next few weeks to discuss this year's event and the charity's event charging framework.

9. Any other business

- a. The group discussed adopting a disused phone box in the park. Ideas include converting it into a mini gallery, library, or coffee kiosk. Cllr Crabb is exploring options with Brent and BT, with positive early signs. The City Corporation is conceptually supportive, and the box is confirmed to be within Queen's Park's boundary.
- b. No tree, bird, or ecology events are currently planned for this year.
- c. A new planning application has been submitted for the Sainsbury's site, proposing a mixed-use development with high-rise buildings. This may impact park views and increase footfall. QPARA will share visuals of the proposed plans with the group.
- d. The group congratulated Flavia on completing her term as QPARA Chair and welcomed Alasdair as the new Chair.
- e. Thanks were extended to the Queen's Park team for their ongoing work.
- f. The QPCG Chair's term has ended. The Chair was thanked at his final formal meeting and is expected to continue as Deputy Chair.

ACTION: (COK) to look at capacity for tree, bird or ecology event this year at Queen's Park.

ACTION: (COL) to submit comment on local planning application for Sainsbury's development.

Meeting ended: 15:03

Next meeting date: 12 November 2025