



Heath Hands Activity Update

Timeframe: 1st May to 30th June 2025

Report to: Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee and Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee – September 2025 meeting

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. The first two months of the financial year has been a busy period for volunteering groups with 26 schools, 23 corporate and 8 community groups as well as the launch of drop-in garden volunteering at the Hive after work or school and on weekends for public.
4. Following the resumption of our wildlife monitoring programmes (grass snakes, butterflies and dragonflies) in April, we launched a stag beetle monitoring project in the Parliament Hill area in June.
5. Two paid work experience (providing entry-level posts in the outdoor sector) Activity Assistants recruited to assist with weekend programme delivery and planned opening of interpretation space at former tennis hut at Parliament Hill.

Strategic Objectives

6. 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

7. Practical conservation and garden volunteer sessions running across all parts of Hampstead Heath, led by CoLC Ranger and Garden teams, with 134 sessions and 1,451 hours.
8. Wildlife monitoring in full swing with five reptile, two butterfly and two dragonfly transects and a new stag beetle monitoring scheme this year.
9. Around Parliament Hill, our efforts to improve biodiversity are continuing, with work since April progressing on creating a new wildlife pond to complement the nearby wildflower meadow and hedgerow projects and the creation of a new butterfly and bee bank at the Adventure Playground in collaboration with the CoLC Learning Team.
10. 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, and we will be supporting CoLC and ZSL during August's National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme at the Heath Extension.

11. Corporate volunteering bookings popular, with 23 companies out since start of April completing tasks agreed with the Heath's Ranger and Conservation teams, focusing on maintenance, litter picking, fence line and ditch management, projects around the Hive.
12. Work progressing to develop a plant nursery at the Hive to support our gardening projects.
13. New drop-in gardening sessions successful, providing an opportunity for people to volunteer informally, after school/ work or at weekends and attracting a different audience. Work focusing on horticultural and conservation tasks around the Hive.

Community

14. To engage different audiences and bring new visitors to the Heath we collaborate with a range of local organisations. Our Community Newsletter now reaches over 550 organisation and members of the public - more info: www.heath-hands.org.uk/community-activities
15. Recent activities have included outings for Young Barnet Carers, Families for Peace (Ukrainian refugees), Umoja Health Forum, Woodcraft Folk, 7th St Pancras Guides with summer activities planned for the Regent's Park Estate, GOAL Youth Club, Eco Judaism, Kentish Town City Farm and more.
16. Our volunteers supported the delivery of Golders Hill Park Zoo's 120th anniversary celebration and the Kite Festival organised by the Heath and Hampstead Society and CoLC.

Learning

17. Our free weekend family-friendly weekend nature interpretation sessions attracted over 400 participants in May and June, with a focus on bugs, pond dipping and pollinators.
18. Refurbishment works on the former Tennis Hut at Parliament Hill being undertaken, which will enable us to start opening on a regular basis as a public information and nature interpretation base in late July.
19. Since the start of May, our staff and volunteers have delivered public walks on bird ID, pollinators, wildflower meadows, conservation management and tree identification.
20. We have run 26 Heath Friendly School sessions during the summer term, with age groups ranging from 5 to 17 and over 860 young people involved.
21. Our youth volunteering programme active until June with 113 hours contributed, and Work Experience week for Acland Burghley school planned in July 2025.

Wellbeing

22. Our free health and wellbeing programmes including three weekly health walks, regular walks for Mind in Camden, social prescribing and forest bathing workshops are continuing.
23. Development of new partnership with youth mental health providers, The Hive, Camden with activities planned over the summer.