

## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee(s):</b>  Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	<b>Dated:</b>  21 October 2025
<b>Subject:</b>  Assistant Director's Report (Queen's Park)	<b>Public report:</b>  For Information
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li></ul>	-Diverse engaged communities -Leading sustainable environment -Vibrant thriving destination -Providing excellent services -Flourishing public spaces
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	£0
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b>	Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment Department
<b>Report author:</b>	Bill LoSasso, Superintendent, North London Open Spaces

### Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Queen's Park since the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting on 16 July 2025.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## **Main Report**

**Caring: We care for the Park to ensure it continues to fulfil its many functions for the benefit of the community, heritage and the environment, now and for future generations.**

1. The team at Queen's Park have been busy carrying out summer maintenance tasks of grass cutting and strimming. These tasks will continue until the weather and ground conditions change. This will ensure the Park remains a clean, safe and welcoming environment for everyone in the autumn months.
2. The long grass areas are established on the Field of Hope, the Milman and Harvest Road boundary lawns. These meadows will have their final cut in the next couple of months, after the later-flowering species have gone to seed.
3. Bird-nesting season has now finished, so the team at Queen's Park has now started the two-month task of reducing the park perimeter hedges. There are plans to also reduce the privet hedge at the back of the tennis courts this autumn.
4. Tree works have been carried out, which has included removal of dead, diseased and hanging branches in the last few months.
5. A tree safety inspection began on 1 September 2025, and all the internal trees will be inspected within the next 12 months. Works will include removal of deadwood from several London plane trees caused by *Massaria*, reduction and propping up the veteran hawthorn near to the Café, and reduction of decaying trees. This work will stabilise the identified trees or leave them as important standing deadwood habitat for a range of species.
6. Two small dead beech trees will be pollarded and left as standing deadwood in the woodland walk.
7. Wildlife surveying has been carried out by the team to record what birds, mammals and invertebrates are currently using the woodland. The data is being collected using a camera trap as well as visual and audio assessments.
8. Many birds have been recorded in the Woodland Walk and adjacent north-east section of the Park, including jay, dunnoek, wren, song thrush, blackbird, robin, chiffchaff, blackcap and blue tit.
9. The areas that were temporarily fenced off in the Woodland Walk to prevent erosion from visitors and to allow natural regeneration of woodland flora have

produced some positive results. The areas are being monitored so the biodiversity value can be enhanced within the woodland.

10. Hanging baskets have been displayed throughout the Park during the summer months. The mixed petunias provided plenty of colour to visitors and the local community. The baskets will be removed in the autumn.
11. Following playground inspections and ristograph tests, replacement beams have now been ordered for the hexagon swing and zip line. We are waiting for a date for the company to deliver and install the beams on the two pieces of play equipment. They will remain cordoned off and out of use until this essential work is carried out.
12. A test was also carried out on another piece of play equipment, named the 'Timberwood Tangle'. The results identified that several structural beams need to be replaced. It remains out of use whilst staff identify the necessary resources to either carry out the recommendations or identify another, more suitable piece of play equipment.

**Excellence: We maintain high environmental, conservation, heritage and horticultural standards.**

13. The team carried out summer maintenance tasks of weeding and grass cutting to ensure the gardens were of high horticultural standards for London in Bloom judging on 26 June 2025. The results will be announced on 20 October at RHS Wisley.
14. The Gardening Team will add spring-flowering bulbs to the beds and borders of the Quiet Garden this autumn. Displays of *fritillaria*, *galanthus nivalis*, *hyacinthus* and *narcissus* will be seen and enjoyed by all visitors in the spring.

**Inclusion: We ensure that the Park and its facilities are accessible to all and inclusive, so that all can enjoy the benefits of enhanced physical and mental well-being.**

15. The Head Gardener will carry out and lead annual bulb-planting sessions with Malorees School in October and November. They will be adding more *narcissus* (daffodils) to the existing displays in the Park.
16. The facilities were used by many local schools (ARK Franklin, Kilburn Grange, Islamia and Al Sadiq) for their sports day events over the summer term, which were busy and enjoyable.
17. A summer football camp was held in the Park during the school summer holidays, which provided children with an opportunity to enhance their football skills under the guidance of coaches.
18. Platform Cricket held their annual Kilburn, Queen's Park, Paddington and Willesden school's cricket festival in the park on the 26 June. Children from 26 different schools took part in the day's event, which was very successful.
19. Tennis remained popular throughout the summer months, with the courts being booked every day. Tennis summer camps were run by a professional tennis coach during the school summer holidays.
20. The Pitch and Putt course has continued to be very popular over the summer months, after the in-house team carried out extensive off-season maintenance works on the greens and fairways to improve the condition of the course and marketed the facility. There has been a significant increase in players and income compared to last year.
21. A public fundraising campaign has been launched to raise the necessary additional £100,000 needed to install the splash pad. The campaign with local community stakeholders is hoped to close the funding gap to fund this new accessible and inclusive play facility.

#### Cafe remarketing

22. As previously reported to this Committee and following approval and instructions from this Committee, the cafe at Queen's Park is being remarketed, inviting proposals from all interested parties, including existing operators. As a registered charity, we have an obligation to ensure that we are achieving the best overall outcome for the Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Kilburn Charity itself and our visitors when we lease our spaces commercially, which requires us to competitively remarket the café space in the building.

23. All cafes at North London Open Spaces, including the one at Queen's Park, are currently operating under tenancies at will, which are not meant to be long-term arrangements, and it has been many years since the cafe offer was holistically reviewed and marketed competitively. This remarketing process will provide greater clarity and long-term security for our café operators and the Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Kilburn Charity, supporting investment in the site and enhancing the visitor experience. We did this with a specialist agent to promote the sites more widely, reaching beyond our usual channels, and to ensure as many suitable operators as possible were aware of the opportunity and were able to express interest.
24. Officers recognise and value the cafes as hubs of community and gathering places and seek to build upon this. The remarketing is not a purely profit-driven process. Consideration will be given to numerous criteria, including café concept, menu and food offer, environmental management, community and social value, management approach, experience and references, as well as the financial offer and overall strength of the business plan. This approach has been directly informed by the previous process and experience in 2016, and it benefits from the work done following that process to ensure the evaluation reflects several important factors, noted above.
25. The remarketing process began in mid-July and the deadline for bids was 24 September. The remarketing process received a very strong response, and Officers from NLOS and City Surveyor's Department are now reviewing the submissions and conferring with the agent and will prepare a report with recommendations for decision of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee.

**Community: We work in partnership with our local community and engage visitors and the local community in understanding and caring for the Park.**

26. We have increased the signage around the Farm to inform the local community and visitors about public feeding and the risks to our animals. The next Zoo Ethics Board Meeting will discuss whether the signage has been effective and has had a positive impact on the reduction of feeding by the public.
27. As part of the public fundraising campaign for the proposed splash pad, meetings have also been held with the Queen's Park team and stakeholders to explore grants and other funding opportunities. A JustGiving campaign has been set up

and the QR code is available on posters and banners, which have been put up around the park.

28. Letters of support have been received from representatives to the Queen's Park Consultative Committee, and a grant application to HS2's Community and Environment Fund will be submitted in October to help raise the additional funds for the splash pad.

### Events

29. Shakespeare in the Squares was held on 28 June. This year's production of The Taming of the Shrew celebrated the eighth year of Queen's Park hosting this event. A matinee and evening performance was held in the quiet garden. It was a very warm day but enjoyed by all those that attended.
30. The Book Festival was held on 30 and 31 August. Queen's Park once again hosted a successful weekend of literature and arts. It included talks with authors such as Lyse Doucet, Alan Hollinghurst and Sophie Elmhirst. The event was very popular, and large numbers enjoyed the event.
31. Eight children's entertainment shows were held in the summer holidays, every Wednesday and Friday from 6 August until 29 August 2025. The good weather resulted in all the shows being extremely popular, with up to 300 attending each performance.
32. Queen's Park Day was held on Sunday 14 September. Despite the inclement weather conditions, the event was very popular and thousands still visited the Park and supported the event. It was also a great opportunity to raise awareness and talk to visitors about the public fundraising campaign for the splash pad. Local community stakeholders and visitors were supportive and have helped to close the funding gap for this new accessible and inclusive play feature.
33. QPARA's Christmas Carols event will be taking place in Queen's Park on Saturday 6 December.

### **Additional Relevant Matters**

34. Recruitment is underway to appoint an Operative Ranger. Interviews will be taking place in September.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

#### Strategic implications

35. This report furthers strategic aims of the new Queen's Park Management Plan and the Corporate Plan.

#### Financial implications

36. No implications.

#### Resource implications

37. No implications.

#### Legal implications

38. No implications.

#### Risk implications

39. Risks are monitored and recorded through the various risk registers, including the Division and Departmental Risk Registers.

#### Equalities implications

40. No implications.

#### Climate implications

41. Included within the business plan for 2025-26 are a series of projects which contribute towards achieving the City of London's Climate Action Strategy.

#### Security implications

42. Security implications are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk register.

#### **Conclusion**

43. This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to Queen's Park since the last since the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting on 16 July 2025.

**Appendices:** none

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