

HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 21 October 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee held at Committee Room 2 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 21 October 2025 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Gregory Jones KC (Chairman)
William Upton KC (Deputy Chairman)
John Beyer
Simon Burrows
Karina Dostalova
Alderman Alison Gowman CBE
Jason Groves
Wendy Mead OBE
Alethea Silk
Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP (Ex-Officio)

In attendance:

Deputy Timothy Butcher - attended virtually
James St John Davis (Ex-Officio) - attended virtually

Officers:

Niranjan Shanmuganathan	- Chamberlain's Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Joseph Smith	- Corporate Strategy and Performance
Lisa Ward	- Corporate Strategy and Performance
Katie Stewart	- Executive Director, Environment
Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
Tom Hoyle	- Environment Department
Jo Hurst	- Environment Department
Andrew Impey	- Environment Department
Marguerite Jenkin	- Environment Department
William LoSasso	- Environment Department
Jonathan Meares	- Environment Department
Charlotte Williams	- Environment Department
Zoe Williams	- Town Clerk's Department

MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, wished to express their condolences to the London Wildlife Trust and the family of Matthew Frith, a representative of the London Wildlife Trust who served on the Committee from the beginning of 2023. The Chairman noted Matthew Frith's contributions to the work of the Committee.

The Chairman presented the Deputy Chairman with his framed Vote of Thanks.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Arjun Mittra.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

a) Draft minutes of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee

RESOLVED – That, the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting held on 16 July 2025 be approved as an accurate record, subject to the inclusion of Wendy Mead OBE in the apologies.

b) Draft Minutes of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee meeting held on 16 September 2025 be noted.

Matters Arising

The Deputy Chairman noted the request from the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee to hold a meeting at the Parliament Hill venue at Hampstead Heath and requested that this be further investigated. The Executive Director, Environment responded that they would further consider this with the Town Clerk's Department and contact the Chairman and Deputy Chairman with an update.

A Member raised a query regarding who was invited to attend the meetings of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, and the walks at Hampstead Heath. Another Member, also a previous Chair of the Committee, responded that the Chairman and one other Member from the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park (HHHWQP) Committee sit on the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, and all Members of the HHHWQP Committee were invited to attend the walk.

c) Minutes of the Hampstead Heath Sports and Wellbeing Forum

RESOLVED – That, the minutes of the previous Hampstead Heath Sports and Wellbeing Forum meeting held on 24 April 2025 be noted.

4. APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER OF ENGLISH HERITAGE

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk, seeking approval for the appointment of a new external Member, nominated by English Heritage, to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

A Member requested that some biographical information about Mr Cranmer be provided to the Committee prior to their first meeting.

RESOLVED – That, Simon Cranmer, nominated by English Heritage, be appointed as a Member of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee for the consideration of business relating to Hampstead Heath, in accordance with the London Government Reorganisation (Hampstead Heath) Order 1989.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH

5. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment which provided an update on matters relating to Hampstead Heath since the last Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee meeting.

The Assistant Director presented the report, noting that North London Open Spaces had recently been awarded five gold medals at the London in Bloom awards.

A Member noted their congratulations to the Zoo apprentice who passed their Level 2 Animal Care and Welfare apprenticeship with distinction.

In response to a Member's query regarding progress on the Hill Garden Pergola, Officers noted that they were preparing a submission to the National Lottery Heritage Fund on which they were receiving specialist advice. They noted the newly appointed Head of Development and Partnerships had also been working on this and considering a larger fundraising effort. Officers explained that they could not confirm an anticipated timeline at this stage, and an update would be provided once this was available.

A Member, also a representative of the Heath & Hampstead Society, noted their thanks to staff for supporting the recent events at Hampstead Heath, including the Natural Aspect Summer Concert and the Kite Display at Parliament Hill.

The Deputy Chairman requested an update on the works at the Model Boating Pond. Officers reported that planning permission had been granted by the London Borough of Camden in the previous week. They were in the process of finalising documentation outlining the anticipated biodiversity improvements resulting from the works. Officers explained that they aimed to secure consent to commence works in the following week, with the contractor expected to begin on 10 November. The Deputy Chairman expressed concern regarding the delay in obtaining planning permission and queried whether similar issues were anticipated in future interactions with the London Borough of Camden.

The Deputy Chairman also raised a query regarding the proposed stewards' huts and the recent planning application submitted to the London Borough of Camden. Officers explained that the upgrades were necessary to accommodate new hardware associated with the updated booking system, and to provide a more secure and suitable working environment for stewards at the Men's and Mixed Ponds. They further clarified that the planning application had been submitted by a member of staff earlier than originally intended or authorised by management. Officers noted that they had contacted individuals who had objected to the submission, and that some objections had since been withdrawn following the provision of additional information that would have been included in the initial application that provides helpful context. They noted that they were working with a planning consultant to ensure they were engaging with the London Borough of Camden appropriately and were in touch with anyone that had made a representation in this process.

Regarding water fountains at Hampstead Heath, Officers noted that the City Surveyor's Department had identified the funds to undertake the improvement project. They also informed the Committee that a member of the Heath & Hampstead Society had generously agreed to fund part of this project, and a plaque would be installed on the infrastructure to acknowledge this. The Committee acknowledged its thanks to the donor.

RESOLVED – That, Members noted the report and its contents.

6. HEATH HANDS UPDATE

The Committee received a report of Heath Hands, which detailed recent highlights, and its work towards its strategic objectives.

The Deputy Chairman queried whether the information hut would continue to be used throughout the winter. Officers responded that following the successful pilot they understood that the information hut would continue to operate during the weekends. It was noted that they would report back at the next meeting regarding a long-term plan.

RESOLVED – That, Members noted the report and its contents.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment which sought to assure the Committee that risk management procedures in place within the Environment Department and its Natural Environment Division were satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.

Noting the risks identified under work related stress, a Member commented that this stress should be taken into account when considering the charity's budget and the Natural Environment Charity Review. The Executive Director, Environment confirmed they would be taking staff welfare into account as part of the review.

A Member noted concern about the increasing instances of anti-social behaviour identified in the report. They commented that it would be useful to maintain an

ongoing monitor of this at future Committee meetings. The Member also requested further detail on the decline in the condition of assets at future meetings. The Chairman noted that it was disappointing to see the increase in anti-social behaviour, the significant increase in the use of drugs and needles at West Heath, and the need to provide supplementary security in the Lido.

Regarding the budget pressure risk noted in the risk register, the Deputy Chairman queried how the extension of the target date would affect the action taken to mitigate the risk. Officers explained that the revised timeline was influenced by two key factors; the implementation of the Grant Funding Model in April 2026 which would impact the understanding budgets in the short term; and the recent appointment of the Head of Development & Partnerships, whose fundraising impact would take time to have effect. Officers noted that the revised target deadline would provide time to assess how these factors would impact the budget.

In response to a query about the new Head of Development & Partnerships, Officers confirmed that the remit of their role had a broad definition, and they would be considering all available opportunities for fundraising, including legacy fundraising. The Chairman noted that although previous efforts had been made to set up accounts for charitable fundraising, this was the first time a dedicated fundraising officer had been appointed. They commented that this change would require a shift in culture at the City Corporation and consideration should be given to ensure the appointment was as productive as possible.

RESOLVED – That, Members confirmed, on behalf of the City Corporation as trustee, that the register appended to this report satisfactorily sets out the key risks to the Hampstead Heath charity and that appropriate systems were in place to effectively identify and mitigate risk.

8. **OPERATIONAL FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT Q1 2025/26 - HAMPSTEAD HEATH**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment which provided an update on the operational finance position as at period 3 (April – June) 2025/26 for the Hampstead Heath charity and set out the charity's revenue operating budget position to date and projected year-end outturn, current live capital projects and outstanding debt position.

Officers presented the report, noting an error that reference to 'latest approved budget' should be referred to as the budget going forward.

A Member queried whether the charity received filming fees from Hampstead Heath. Officers responded that the majority of filming fees that were coordinated by Officers in the Natural Environment division was retained by the respective charities. They noted that they were in discussion about how the financial arrangements operated where other support was provided. Officers explained that they were exploring a 'menu of services' model, which would outline both core and optional services along with the associated fees.

The Chairman asked whether the transition to the grant funding model would impact such financial arrangements. Officers responded that they were exploring a range of workstreams as part of the transition, including the development of service level agreements with various providers. They explained that this would help improve clarity around service expectations and enable effective monitoring of service delivery.

A Member noted that recharges made up a large portion of the expenditure. They queried whether this could be mitigated under the grant funding model by securing services locally. Another Member noted that the City Bridge Foundation's experience in developing service level agreements had been prolonged, largely due to the complexity and timing involved. They also emphasised the importance of ensuring that locally secured services met a consistent standard of quality.

RESOLVED – That, Members noted the report and its contents.

9. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025 - HAMPSTEAD HEATH

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment which presented a draft version of the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 for Hampstead Heath charity.

A Member commented that they had spotted a number of errors in the annual report and financial statements which included incorrect dates and typographical errors. Officers responded that this was an early draft of the annual report and there would be an updated version circulated to the Committee that was in its final stages of completion. The Chairman requested that, in future, Officers notify them in advance when an updated version of a report was intended to be provided.

The Member requested that the names of Committee Members be included in the report to reflect the Committee's oversight of the charity. They noted that this suggestion had been raised in previous years and that similar practices had been adopted in other charities' annual reports. Officers acknowledged the recommendation and confirmed they would consider it and follow up to ensure it was taken into account in future reporting. The Member further commented that, whilst the City Corporation was the corporate trustee, including the names of the members on this Committee would provide greater transparency and clarity for readers seeking to understand who was responsible for running the charity. The Chairman requested that Officers report back to them in the interim once they consider how this information would be presented in the report.

RESOLVED – That, Members noted the report and its contents.

HIGHGATE WOOD & QUEEN'S PARK

10. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT (HIGHGATE WOOD)

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment which provided an update on matters relating to Highgate Wood since the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee's previous meeting.

Regarding the Kiln Project at Highgate Wood, the Deputy Chairman noted the issues that they had faced in determining how the Kiln would be displayed and queried whether these could be addressed within the existing project budget. Officers responded that there was insufficient funding to realise the aspiration of a fully rebuilt or renovated information hut to house the Kiln. They explained that the project was funded solely by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and while they had hoped to supplement this with funding from the Cyclical Works Programme, the anticipated costs exceeded the available funding. Officers further noted that they were prioritising urgent repairs to the roof of the existing structure to ensure the Kiln was protected from the elements.

A Member noted they had not had a visit to Highgate Wood as a Member of the Committee and requested that this be arranged in the future.

RESOLVED – That, Members noted the report and its contents.

11. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT (QUEEN'S PARK)

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment which provided an update on matters relating to Queen's Park since the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee's previous meeting.

The Deputy Chairman requested an update on the Queen's Park Splash Pad project and its start date. Officers confirmed that the public fundraising campaign was launched in the summer and £12,101 had been raised to date. They also noted that Flannery Equipment had supported the preparation of an HS2 bid application, which they intended to submit by the end of the week. In addition, an application had been made to the Community and Environment Fund. Officers explained that the HS2 grant application process involved a six-week turnaround period, including a meeting with a panel.

The Deputy Chairman noted that there was not a fundraising target advertised when the fundraising campaign was promoted at Queen's Park Day. Officers responded that they had since advertised a target of £100,000 on social media posts. They further commented that they had visited splash pads within the Greater London area to further understand the operating costs of the splash pad and day to day maintenance. They explained that any funding raised from bids and the public in excess of the £100,000 target would go towards further work on the above ground space and the ongoing cost of maintaining the facility.

Regarding the timeline for works on the splash pad, Officers noted they were reluctant to provide any estimated dates before the funding was secured. They also noted that they would need to go through the City Corporation's "Gateway" process and procurement processes as part of this. The Deputy Chairman requested that an update be provided on the splash pad as soon as possible. Officers further explained that the time to confirm the result of the HS2 bid

application would be dependent on when it was submitted as the panel met every six weeks.

The Chairman noted that the City Corporation should also be utilising Community Infrastructure Levy support as the surrounding local authorities benefit from the open space. They commented that assistance from Members would be useful in progressing with this.

RESOLVED – That, Members noted the report and its contents.

12. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE (HIGHGATE WOOD & QUEEN'S PARK)

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment which sought to assure the Committee that risk management procedures in place within the Environment Department and its Natural Environment Division were satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.

A Member raised concerns about the increase in anti-social behaviour at Highgate Wood. Officers acknowledged the issue, noting that while the situation was less severe than at Hampstead Heath, there had been a general rise in anti-social behaviour across the open spaces. They assured the Committee that appropriate measures would be implemented to manage such behaviour proactively and consistently across all sites.

The Chairman requested further examples of the types of anti-social behaviour occurring in the area, noting the importance of understanding the nature of the incidents to develop effective responses. Officers confirmed that they would review the matter and provide more detail in the next report. They also reassured the Committee that there had not been a significant increase in drug use at Highgate Wood, and that the observed behaviour was primarily related to members of the public refusing to follow directions given by Officers.

In response to a Member's query regarding the position of the Constabulary. Officers confirmed that interviews were being arranged for the appointments of four additional Constables at Hampstead Heath and they had received a strong response from the job advertisement. They further explained that the current size of the Constabulary did not allow for full-day patrols at Highgate Wood and Queen's Park, although regular patrols continued at Highgate Wood. Officers noted that the appointment of the additional Constables would enable a more proactive approach in these areas, and that the impact of the increased staffing would be reviewed after one year.

RESOLVED – That, Members confirmed, on behalf of the City Corporation as trustee, that the register appended to this report satisfactorily sets out the key risks to the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park charity and that appropriate systems were in place to effectively identify and mitigate risk.

13. OPERATIONAL FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT Q1 2025/26 - HIGHGATE WOOD & QUEENS PARK

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment which provided an update on the operational finance position as at period 3 (April - June) 2025/26 for the Highgate Wood & Queen's Park charity and set out the charity's revenue operating budget position to date and projected year-end outturn, current live capital projects and outstanding debt position.

Officers noted that since the report was produced, they had undertaken a Quarter 2 revenue forecast in which the £6,000 underspend had increased to £19,000, due to payroll adjustments and a £5,000 underspend in premise expenditure.

RESOLVED – That, Members noted the report and its contents.

14. **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025 - HIGHGATE WOOD & QUEENS PARK**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment which presented a draft version of the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 for the Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Kilburn charity.

The Chairman noted that the same comments applied as those discussed under item 9 and confirmed that an updated annual report would be circulated in due course.

RESOLVED – That, Members noted the report and its contents.

15. **UPDATE ABOUT HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD AND QUEEN'S PARK ADDITIONAL MEETING**

The Chairman noted that invitations had been sent to Members for an additional meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee on Monday 8 December. It was also noted that there would be an additional meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee on Monday 17 November.

16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

Regarding the meeting venue for the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, the Deputy Chairman noted that this matter would need to be addressed and followed up on.

17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no urgent business to be considered.

18. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That, the following matters related to business under the remit of the Court of Common Council acting for the City Corporation as charity Trustee, to which Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 public access to meetings provisions did not apply. The following items contained sensitive information which it was not in the best interests of the charity to consider in a public meeting (engaging similar considerations as under

paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act) and would be considered in non-public session.

19. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

a) **Non-Public minutes of Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee**

RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 July 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

b) **Non-Public minutes of The Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee**

RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the previous Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held on 16 September 2025 be noted.

20. **CAFES - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update on the Cafes from Officers of the Environment Department.

21. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH PONDS - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update on the Hampstead Heath Ponds from Officers of the Environment Department.

22. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

Three questions on matters relating to the work of the Committee were discussed.

23. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

One matter of urgent business was discussed.

The meeting ended at 6.34pm.

Chairman

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