

HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE **Monday, 11 March 2013**

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held at Education Centre, the Lido, off Gordon House Road, Hampstead Heath, NW5 on Monday, 11 March 2013 at 7.00 pm

Present

Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Deputy Michael Welbank (Deputy Chairman)
Xohan Duran
Colin Gregory
Michael Hammerson
Ian Harrison
John Hunt
John Rogers
Helen Payne
Mary Port
Susan Rose
Robert Slowe
Richard Sumray
David Walton
John Weston
Susan Nettleton

Officers:

Lorraine Brook	- Town Clerk's Department
Simon Lee	- Superintendent of Hampstead Heath, Queen's Park & Highgate Wood
Declan Gallagher	- Operational Service Manager
Richard Gentry	- Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Paul Maskell	- Leisure and Events Manager
Lucy-Anne Murphy	- Assistant Operational Services Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Alix Mullineaux (Marylebone Bird Watching Society) and Jeremy Wright (Heath & Hampstead Society).

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

There were none.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Committee views and suggestions

Whilst acknowledging that the Committee did not have decision making powers, it was agreed that, as a consultative committee, Members' views and suggestions should be reflected accordingly in the minutes.

National Planning Framework and Neighbourhood Planning - Implications for the City of London's Open Spaces

Following the discussion at the last meeting about resource implications associated with attendance at Neighbourhood Forum meetings, Simon Lee explained that Highgate Neighbourhood Forum had been invited to join him on a walk of the Highgate chain of ponds in order to highlight current issues.

Whilst acknowledging that attendance at all constituted Neighbourhood Forum meetings was not viable, it was agreed that maintaining a dialogue, wherever possible, was helpful.

Review of Annual Work Programme

Simon Lee explained that some responses had been received in respect of the annual work programme.

Minute circulation

Some Members asked whether the draft minutes could be circulated as soon as they became available, as opposed to being circulated in advance of the next meeting. The Committee was advised that all draft minutes, once cleared by the Chairman, were accessible via the City of London's webpages. However, the Superintendent undertook to circulate the draft minutes via email as soon as they were available. A check on Members' details would be undertaken prior to circulation of the minutes of this meeting.

4. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent was heard relative to the following matters:

Landscaping works at the entrance to the Heath

Simon Lee referred to the landscaping works that were underway at the entrance to the Heath and the substantive changes that these works represented in respect of softening quite a harsh municipal entrance and enhancing the Heath's impact on the area.

Lido works

Members were advised about the significant refurbishment works that would take place in the future one the longer term objectives of the works had been clarified.

East Heath Car Park

With reference to the East Heath Car Park which was currently shut whilst improvement works were taking place, Simon Lee explained that whilst some inconvenience was being caused as a result of the closure the works would be welcome as a result of enhanced aesthetics and improved parking facilities.

In response to a query, Simon Lee confirmed that the car park would be formally reopened after Easter. It was commented that the softening off on the East Side of the Heath had had a positive effect and it was suggested that, if possible, hedging around the entire car park should be pursued in order to bring the Heath closer to the road.

Some concern was raised regarding the poor condition of the grass and the paths which, in a large number of areas across the Heath, had widened. The Committee acknowledged that the exceptionally wet weather had had a significant impact on the condition of the Heath in some areas and that it would take some time for those areas to recover. As temporary fencing had been erected in some areas, it was felt that fencing in other areas as a responsive measure, on a short or longer term basis, should be used. Whilst noting that municipalisation of the area should be avoided, the Superintendent acknowledged that a holistic report outlining a strategic approach to dealing with such issues in the future should be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

Gas Leaks

With regards to the closure of the path next to the Men's Pond as a result of a gas leak, the Committee noted that the gas leak had now been fully rectified. However, the issue of perishing pipes and seals and consequently, future gas leaks in areas across the Heath remained a significant issue. Whilst further excavation work might have to be undertaken, the situation would continue to be closely monitored.

National Grid works

The Superintendent commented on the unfavourable condition of the site at the weekend following the completion of works and explained that a high-level dialogue was now underway with National Grid to ensure that there was a proper reinstatement of the area as soon as the ground was in a sufficient condition to allow for grass planting and seeding. It was hoped that matters would be resolved without unnecessary delay.

South East Cross-Country Championships

Following the deferral of the South East Cross-Country Championships as a result of exceptionally poor weather, it was noted that some concern and objections had been raised by the athletics fraternity and some residents. However, the large scale event had gone well and no long term damage had been caused to the Heath.

5. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT - PROGRESS REPORT**

Simon Lee (Superintendent, Hampstead Heath) was heard relative to progress with implementation of the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project (Water Management Project). He referred to the report before Members setting out project management activities, risk mitigation factors and also the work that is underway to develop a Communication and Engagement Plan. An indicative communication timetable, as set out at page 51, was highlighted, although it was noted that due to the complexity of the project, it would take some time to reach the final design stage.

With regards to initial public consultation, Atkins had received approximately 79 responses and the feedback had generally been very positive. Once the long and short-listing exercises had been undertaken, comprehensive consultation would commence involving the public, the Stakeholder Group and the Committee.

In respect of the appointment of the contractor, a number of tenderers had withdrawn within a short space of each other and so, due to the complexity of the project requirements which included substantial research into and understanding of the Heath, further work in respect of the procurement process was required to ensure that the most appropriate contractor could be identified. It was acknowledged that the "Hampstead Effect" could also be a contributing factor and therefore feedback from the contractors was important. With reference to the Special Meeting of the Consultative Committee which would take place on 8th April, the preliminary results of the fundamental review from Atkins would be circulated ahead of the meeting.

Ian Harrison (Vale of Health Society) then updated the Committee about the work of the Stakeholder Group in respect of the project, which had involved monthly meetings, a number of site visits to the principal chain of ponds and attendance at a number of workshops. Appendix 1 (Hampstead Heath Ponds - A Critical Review of key issues by the Water Management Stakeholder Group) set out the key issues, threats and opportunities relative to each pond, thus enabling a divergence of issues to be distilled into a single document for future reference. Whilst substantive revisions to the project were not anticipated and less intrusive works overall were expected, it was noted that the document could only serve as a snapshot of current issues.

In response to a query regarding the introduction of a new approach to the project, the Superintendent commented on the use of different terminology but assured Members that no major changes had been introduced. The Committee was advised that the issues had been reviewed afresh and appropriate options for dealing the problems were now being explored in detail. It was hoped that the scale of the works would be reduced but that the forthcoming reports from Atkins, including a technical summary, would clearly set out suggested options at the appropriate stages.

Members of the Committee thanked the Stakeholder Group and Peter Wilder (Strategic Landscape Architect) for their development of the critical review

document. Thanks were also conveyed to the City of London Corporation for its collaborative work with the Stakeholder Group, specifically in respect of the tender approval arrangements and also for the extension of the consultation period. It was suggested that future consultation should be set out in a clear strategy to ensure that any further consultation was based around clear propositions.

In noting that the project may now warrant reduced intervention, the Committee was advised that as no precise scheme was currently in place, it was difficult to gauge exact costs. However, delay to the project remained a risk and therefore all options to engage suitable contractors at the earliest opportunity, would be pursued.

NOTED.

6. REVIEW OF THE HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSTABULARY 2012

Richard Gentry (Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager) provided an overview of the main issues set out in the report before Members relative to the work of the Hampstead Heath Constabulary between 1st January 2012 and 31st December 2012, and progress made in respect of achievements on key objectives.

The Committee was updated about key activities in 2012 including a two week enforcement campaign to target illegal cycling hotspots on the Heath; the continuation of a number of successful partnership strategies; free micro-chipping for dogs events; an increase in responsible fishing within the ponds; an increase in Byelaw 32 offences; and the development of a response plan to maximise public safety at the lido.

In response to a question regarding the increase in Byelaw 32 offences, Richard Gentry explained that improved training amongst officers, enhanced patrolling and reporting arrangements; and greater awareness of, and reference to the Byelaws, were key factors as opposed to there having been an actual rise in such offences.

The Committee welcomed the report and the work undertaken by the Hampstead Heath Constabulary but suggested that a future report, detailing proposed actions and performance objectives, would be beneficial to enable the Committee to review outcomes rather than input.

Some concern was raised regarding the use of the Heath by commercial dog walkers, some of whom walked large numbers of dogs at one time and therefore potentially posed some risk to other users of the Heath, particularly other dog walkers and children. It was suggested that the issue posed a health and safety risk to the Corporation and a more stringent approach should be explored, either as part of a licensed scheme or by using Dog Control Orders. It was agreed that a report on dog walker issues be submitted to the autumn meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED - That:-

- (i) the Review of the Hampstead Heath Constabulary 2012 be noted; and
- (ii) a detailed report into issues associated with commercial dog walkers on the Heath be submitted to the autumn meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.

7. UPDATE ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH - PUBLIC SEX ENVIRONMENT OUTREACH WORK, 2012

Richard Gentry (Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager) provided an overview of the main issues set out in the report before Members relative to the Public Sex Environment Outreach Work undertaken in 2012, the second year of such work.

The Committee was advised that the overriding objective of the outreach work was to ensure that use of the Heath as a Public Sex Environment did not adversely affect others' enjoyment, or the natural aspect of, the Heath. It was noted that the Heath was regarded internationally and locally as a safe area to visit and whilst visitors to West Heath had declined over the past ten years, littering, including sexual detritus, remained a key issue. Consequently, litter pick events had proven successful not only to reduce litter but also the enable stakeholders to engage with those using the Heath and profile sexual health messages.

It was noted that the Heath incorporated a number of different public sex environments and therefore different issues such as public decency. Consequently, all of the issues had to be carefully monitored and, going forward, a partnership approach in 2013 would ensure that an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour on the Heath was minimised.

RESOLVED - That the Committee notes the partnership work that has been carried out by the Hampstead Heath Constabulary, Terence Higgins Trust and other agencies, in promoting the safe and responsible use of Hampstead Heath during 2012.

8. A REVIEW OF HAMPSTEAD HEATH 2012 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES - GREEN TO GOLD ACTIVITIES

Paul Maskell (Leisure and Events Manager, Hampstead Heath) provided an overview of the main issues set out in the report before Members relative to a Review of Hampstead Heath 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games - Green to Gold Activities. The report detailed the success of the Green to Gold Campaign and events held on Hampstead Heath in support of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Committee was appraised about a number of key achievements of the campaign included the delivery of a number of significant sporting events on the Heath, including the English National Cross-Country Championship and the 14th Duathlon. Reference was made to successful cultural events on the

Heath such as the artistic installation by Jeremy Deller; the "Play me, I am yours" piano as part of the City of London Festival and increased partnership work with individuals, organisations and other local authorities including the London Boroughs of Barnet and Camden.

The Committee thanked Paul Maskell and the team for all their hard work in delivering such a successful programme of activities in 2012.

NOTED.

9. HAMPSTEAD HEATH EDUCATION SERVICE - ANNUAL REPORT 2012

The Committee considered a report relative to the Hampstead Heath Education Service Annual Report 2012, reviewing the success and key achievements of the Hampstead Heath Education Service, including its work on formal and informal education, community education and partnership working.

Paul Maskell (Leisure and Events Manager, Hampstead Heath) outlined some of the key educational activities delivered through both the formal and informal education programmes which have resulted in an increase in public engagement and enhanced the use of educational resources by schools.

With regards to City Bridge Trust funding, it was noted that the education service formed an essential aspect of the City Bridge Trust application and was on track to complete all of its targets for 2012, including continuing work on the teaching garden at the Kenwood Eco-field. The Superintendent reminded the Committee that funding would cease in March 2014. Therefore new objectives and performance indicators in respect of a range of services including integrated play and education provision would need to be developed if an extended funding bid to the City Bridge Trust were to be pursued. Alternatively, new initiatives, in line with the City Bridge Trust criteria, would have to be explored. It was noted that if City Bridge Trust funding were not forthcoming, alternative sources of revenue to fund educational activities would have to be considered or potentially, services reduced.

NOTED.

10. REVIEW OF THE HAMPSTEAD HEATH SUMMER EVENTS PROGRAMME 2012

Members received a report of the Superintendent, Hampstead Heath relative to a review of the Hampstead Heath Summer Events Programme in 2012.

Paul Maskell (Leisure and Events Manager, Hampstead Heath) outlined the main issues set out in the report before Members, including implementation by the Education and Play Teams on Hampstead Heath of 31 nature focussed events during the summer holidays to inspire children and families about nature. It was noted that the summer programme had been adapted to appeal to other audiences including those under 5. As demonstrated by the participation figures in Appendix A, the events had proven very popular.

As previously suggested, a Member of the Committee requested that further consideration be given to the development of an interpretation centre on the Heath.

The Committee welcomed the report and praised the team for its efforts and achievements.

RESOLVED - That the Committee notes the success of the Summer Events Programme 2012.

11. REVIEW OF AFFORDABLE ART FAIR ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH IN OCTOBER 2012 AND PROPOSALS FOR 2013 AND BEYOND

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent relative to a review of the Affordable Art Fair on Hampstead Heath in November 2012 and proposals beyond 2013.

The Superintendent commented on the success of the 2012 event which attracted over 18,000 visitors over the course four and a half days and which led to the sale of £2.8m of art work being sold by the 107 exhibitors. With reference logistical issues associated with staging the event, it was noted that some problems had been encountered in respect of the marquee contractor but that similar problems were not anticipated in 2013.

In respect of costs, the Superintendent confirmed that the event was profitable and in June 2013, the position was expected to be further strengthened as the Affordable Art Fair sought to link into other community events. Whilst some scepticism was expressed regarding the costs associated with marketing and staffing and it was suggested that the City of London Corporation should explore the opportunities to increase its fees in future years, it was noted that the event had been most successful and that this bode well for future events.

A Second Event Proposal (Contemporary Garden Fair) from the Affordable Art Fair was tabled at the meeting, outlining a possible option to deliver a second event that would be held in the same temporary structure constructed for the Affordable Art Fair in 2014. It was noted that the Affordable Art Fair had undertaken a significant amount of research and it was felt that the 2nd event would be of significant interest and therefore benefit not only to the local community and Hampstead Heath but also to the City of London Corporation in terms of generating additional revenue.

RESOLVED - That:-

- (i) the Committee note the success of the 2012 Affordable Art Fair in welcoming 18,500 (adult) visitors to the Heath and raising additional income to support management of the site;
- (ii) the Committee note the plans that are underway with regards the June 2012 event; and

- (iii) the Committee support, in principle, the hosting of another event on the back of the Affordable Art Fair in June 2014, subject to consideration of a more detailed report later in 2013.

12. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH SPORTS ADVISORY FORUM MINUTES**

Members received the minutes of the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum meeting held on 4th February 2013 and received a verbal update from Bob Slowe (representative of clubs using facilities on the Heath) about the walk that took place on Sunday in respect of securing funding from Places People and Play to build a new cricket pavilion. It was noted that funding remained a challenge.

In respect of the separately circulated paper relative to the Hampstead Heath Draft Charging Policy, Bob Slowe explained that the paper had been drafted to reflect a number of factors that ultimately affect charging for a wide range of informal and formal sports and recreational activities on the Heath. It was hoped that the suggested framework for charging would, at a more strategic level, enable the Sports Forum and the Superintendent to review and agree future charging increases in a consistent and considered manner.

With reference to the long term possibility obtaining a second lawn for the Croquet Club, Ian Harrison explained that informal discussions had taken place with the Superintendent in respect of the possible location of a second croquet lawn, subject to securing appropriate funding and approval in the long term.

RESOLVED - That:-

- (i) that the minutes of the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum meeting held on 4th February 2013 be received; and
- (ii) the Committee endorse the Draft Charging Policy as set out in the separately circulated report (appended to the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum Minutes).

13. **QUESTIONS**

Planning Decisions around the Heath

A query was raised regarding the creation of supplementary guidance in collaboration with neighbouring London Boroughs to highlight planning considerations around the Heath and preserve outward views. The Superintendent explained that due to the Local Development Framework, it was difficult to engage London Authorities such as Camden on such matters from a policy perspective. It was however suggested that the issues could be progressed further at a Neighbourhood Forum level. The Superintendent confirmed that he would circulate the "Fringes of the Heath" document that had been produced some time ago and could possibly serve as a helpful discussion tool at neighbourhood forums.

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

Thanks to Bob Slowe

The Chairman expressed, on behalf of the Committee, his thanks to Bob Slowe (representative of clubs using facilities on the Heath) upon his relinquishment as Chairman of the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum and his membership of the Consultative Committee. The Chairman praised Mr Slowe for his commitment to encouraging sports on Hampstead Heath whilst also recognising the natural beauty of the landscape. It was noted that Mr Slowe recognised the importance of both competitive and non-competitive sports on the Heath, as highlighted by the success of the Highgate Harriers who were enjoying record membership applications. The Chairman thanked Mr Slowe for his wise counsel and commitment to the work of the Committee and wished him, on behalf of the Committee, a happy and healthy future.

Mr Slowe replied in suitable terms.

RESOLVED - That the Committee's thanks to Bob Slowe, upon his relinquishment as Chairman of the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum and his membership of the Consultative Committee, be noted.

15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee will take place on 8th April 2013, primarily to consider the Fundamental Review of the Hampstead Heath Ponds Projects. Thereafter, the Committee will meet on 8th July 2013.

The meeting ended at 9.01 pm

Chairman

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