

HAMPSTEAD HEATH SPORTS ADVISORY FORUM

MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2013

MINUTES OF THE HAMPSTEAD HEATH SPORTS ADVISORY FORUM HELD AT THE STAFF YARD, PARLIAMENT HILL FIELDS, LONDON NW5 ON MONDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2013 AT 6:30PM.

Present

Members:

Richard Sumray (Chairman)	-	Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee (London Council for Sports and Recreation)
Marc Hutchinson	-	HH Winter Swimming Club/ Heath & Hampstead Society
Rudolph Benjamin	-	HH tennis coach
John Carrier	-	Camden CCG
Richard Priestley	-	Highgate Harriers
Simon Taylor	-	Hampstead Rugby Club
David Walton	-	Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee (Sports Users Representative)

In attendance

Jeremy Simons (Hampstead Heath Management Committee Chairman)

Rob Marshall (British Military Fitness)

Officers

Natasha Cendrowicz	-	Note taker (also Highgate Harriers)
Simon Lee	-	Superintendent, Hampstead Heath
Declan Gallagher	-	Manager, Parliament Hill
Paul Maskell	-	Leisure & Events Manager, Hampstead Heath

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dave Bedford, Virginia Rounding and Nigel Robinson.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 20 May 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

3. **Matters Arising**

Update on Places, People and Play (item 4) Simon Lee referred to the ongoing funding deficit, which meant that any project seeking funding from the Places, People and Play scheme would need to be wholly funded from grant aid. Of the options being considered, he felt that the London Marathon Trust would be more comfortable contributing towards refurbishing the athletics track, rather than upgrading the cricket pavilion. The Chairman agreed that while the LMT would be happy to receive bids for both projects, the athletics track had a greater chance of success. The lack of staff time to progress the cricket pavilion bid at this point, however, means that the PP&P December deadline could not be met.

Gas Works at the Heath Extensions (item 8) Simon Taylor inquired as to whether there would be scope for a third rugby pitch at the Heath extensions, now that the gas works had finished. A brief discussion followed regarding whether and where a third rugby pitch could be installed. As the need was not immediate, Simon Lee agreed to discuss further with Simon Taylor the options for a third rugby pitch to cater for growing demand for rugby at Hampstead Heath.

4. **Fatality at Kenwood Ladies' Pond**

Simon Lee provided an account of the events surrounding the fatality at the Kenwood Ladies' Pond, that had happened early in August. An inquest had been opened and adjourned. Whilst the verdict was awaited, a full review of all the swimming facilities had been conducted by an independent assessor as well as an internal accident investigation. Some recommendations were now being considered and would be presented to the Swimmers' Forum in the first instance. He would report back to this group once the Swimmers' Forum had had the chance to consider the recommendations. He noted that this was the first fatality in living memory at any of the bathing ponds.

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5. **Verbal Presentation by British Military Fitness**

Rob Marshall, the North London Regional Manager of British Military Fitness gave a presentation on the activities of the organisation. Rob Marshall explained that all the BMF instructors were ex-military and BMF had been operating on the Heath since 2007.

During the course of discussion, the following points were made:

- Some Heath users found the shouting by instructors off-putting.
- BMF had not sought to target hard to reach groups.
- HH operations had been shifted from East Heath car park to the Lido side of the Heath, where the bulk of leisure activities were based.
- All clients undertook a basic medical assessment (by a qualified BMF instructor) before they were allowed to join.

- BMF had a good Health & Safety record.
- The training sessions did not cater for children, clients needed to be over 16 to join.
- BMF operated with £10million insurance cover.
- BMF had engaged in some HH events, offering free classes as the recent 'Give it a Go' event.
- More could be done to alert instructors and clients about shared space etiquette.
- The annual fee paid by BMF to use the Heath represented a sizeable contribution towards the HH budget.
- There might be scope for BMF to host team building type events for other sport groups.

Rob Marshall was thanked for his presentation and he agreed to ensure the concerns raised would be followed through.

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6. Charging Policy – Athletics and Cricket

A report (prepared by Declan Galagher) setting out the charging policy and rates for athletics and cricket, was considered.

During discussion of athletics charges the following comments were made:

- the athletics season ran from April til September.
- There was no attempt to attract big corporate event to cross subsidise other track usage.
- More could be done to encourage take up of the annual season ticket for using the track.
- There were no sports development officers available to help diversify usage of the track.
- Corporate events were not without their drawbacks, due to expectations of what would be permissible at these events.
- Currently the track received a significant subsidy towards its upkeep.
- There might be scope for outsourcing management of corporate events under tight guidelines.
- Introducing an electronic card reader would improve payment rates.

During discussion of cricket charges the following comments were made:

- There was an untapped capacity for more cricket at the Heath Extension.
- Comparative information about cricket usage in Camden and Barnet would be helpful.
- The Parliament Hill Fields cricket square was too small for league matches.
- As Camden was promoting cricket as a key focus sport, there was scope for working with outside organisations to promote cricket.

It was accepted that the papers as presented couldn't provide by themselves the basis on which recommendations for charging could be made. The chairman said that before the next meeting he would meet with the officers to discuss the structure of future reports.

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7. **Update on Athletics Track/Property Maintenance**

Simon Lee reported that the boiler at the athletics track was proving to be temperamental and had been out of action for fifty days out of the last twelve months. Various repair options were being considered, some of which could be very expensive. Temporary facilities to ensure hot showers could be provided, were being considered. Paul Maskell responded to Richard Priestley's suggestion of opening up the old football changing rooms, by explaining that these were currently being used by the RSPB. Simon Lee apologised for the delay in resolving this problem and Declan Gallagher added that it could take a further eight weeks to resolve.

In addition to problems with the boiler, Simon Lee also reported on leakage from the steeple chase water jump as well as floodlight problems.

RESOLVED: That the general problems with maintenance be followed up.

8. **Bowls and Croquet – New Lease**

Simon Lee referred to the need for a facilitated meeting between the bowls and croquet clubs and requested that the Chairman intervene. Rudolph Benjamin added that he had noticed increased usage of the croquet lawn as well as an agreement that had been reached for shared usage of their storage facility for a nominal fee.

RESOLVED: That it be agreed that the Chairman attend any meeting that was set up.

9. **Draft Cancellation Policy Large Events – Adverse Weather Conditions**

A report (prepared by Simon Lee) updating the earlier version of the draft cancellation policy report was considered. Marc Hutchinson offered to provide legal comments outside the meeting as he had some concerns about omissions. Natasha Cendrowicz referred to the omission from the report of an early offer of an alternative date where possible as well as making use of social media to inform users.

RESOLVED: That with the inclusion of any comments arising from the above interventions, the report be supported.

10. **Update on Summer Activities**

Paul Maskell reported on summer activities, notably:

- the night of the 10,000m race on 6 June, hosted by Highgate Harriers, which will be repeated in 2014.
- City Dip on 8 & 9 June raising £1,500 for the Lord Mayor's charity.
- 4,800 taking part in the Race for Life on 28 June.
- 40 children trained during the water awareness week at the end of July.
- over 200 participants taking part in the Heath duathlon on 1 September.
- 'Give it a Go', hosted jointly with Camden Council on 8 September.
- Highgate Harriers Open Meeting on 11 September had good take up despite poor weather.

In addition, the English National Cross Country Championships would once again take place on Hampstead Heath in 2015.

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11. Any other business

Lido income In response to a question by Natasha Cendrowicz, Simon Lee confirmed that the income from the Lido had been above expectations due to sustained warm weather. Income from the ponds had also been reasonable.

Floodlights Simon Taylor thanked the Committee and Declan Gallagher for the successful introduction of portable floodlights, which had proved a revelation for winter rugby training.

12. Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED: That the next meeting be held on 27 January 2014 starting at 6:30pm.

The meeting closed at 8:06pm.

CHAIRMAN

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