



**Ponds Project Stakeholder Group  
DRAFT NOTE OF MEETING  
Monday 21 October 2013, 6.00pm  
Parliament Hill meeting room**

**Present:**

Karen Beare	KB	Fitzroy Park RA (Acting Chair)
Jeremy Simons	JLS	City of London elected member (Deputy Chair)
Tom Brent	TB	South End Green RA
Rachel Douglas	RD	Mixed Pond Association
Geoff Goss	GG	Highgate Men's Pond Association
Prem Holdaway	PH	Hampstead Heath Anglers Society
Harriet King	HK	Brookfield Mansions RA
Simon Lee	SL	Superintendent, Hampstead Heath
Mary Port	MP	Dartmouth Park CAAC
Susan Rose	SR	Highgate Society
Jane Shallice	JS	Kenwood Ladies Pond Association
Ellin Stein	ES	Mansfield CAAC
Will Temple	WT	Vale of Health Society
Peter Wilder	PW	Strategic Landscape Architect, Wilder Associates
Jennifer Wood	JMW	Communication Officer, City of London (notes)
Jeremy Wright	JW	Heath & Hampstead Society

**Alternate members observing**

Tony Gilchik	TG	Heath & Hampstead Society
Marc Hutchinson	MSH	Highgate Men's Pond Association
Ed Reynolds	ER	Oak Village RA

**Officers observing:**

Declan Gallagher	DG	Operations Service Manager, Hampstead Heath
Paul Monaghan	PM	Assistant Director Engineering, City Surveyors
Peter Snowdon	PS	Project Consultant, City Surveyors

**1. Apologies**

Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society), Harley Atkinson(Fitzroy Park RA), Mary Cane(Kenwood Ladies Pond Association), Nick Bradfield (Dartmouth Park CAAC)

**2. Approval of previous note**

- Approved
- KB thanked JMW for her support in getting the notes out.

**3. Matters arising**

**Legal Meeting**

- KB – a meeting took place between the H&HS and City's legal representatives and a note is to be distributed. This has not yet been agreed but it will be coming.
- JLS - H&HS put forward a first version which City received last week. City has now sent back their changes and hope to have a note agreed next week.

- WT – what is note about?
- JLS – it is about the differences in opinion over the legal basis for the project.
- JS – it is important to work out what these differences are before the public consultation, so it can be clearly presented to the public.
- JLS – we can't go into too much detail as the meeting was sought by H&HS on a privileged basis.
- CL – will it impact on the timetable?
- SL – probably not as the City is proceeding with the advice it has been given.
- RD – this legal difference needs to be made clear during the public consultation.
- SL – agreed that we will make our legal position clear. It is up to the H&HS to present their legal position.

#### **Meeting with Brookfield/EGOVRA and Atkins**

- SL – hoping to organise this meeting in the next week or two.
- MP – will it include West Hill Court Residents Association?
- SL – this would need to be discussed with the Chair and also Brookfield/EGOVRA.
- KB – this meeting is primarily to discuss the outstanding queries that Brookfield/EGOVRA have so perhaps not appropriate to invite West Hill Court, but they can be updated on the meeting and discussions can be shared with them.
- MP – West Hill Court should be invited to join PPSG
- SL – the membership of the PPSG will possibly need to be reviewed at some point and at this stage they can be perhaps be brought in. The City has met with them separately and has been keeping them updated.
- PH – Anglers should be involved in discussions about Highgate No.1 Pond

#### **Meeting with Prem Holdaway – Hampstead Heath Anglers Society**

- SL –important for PH to come in and be updated on any aspects he may have missed.
- PH – Anglers meeting next week.
- SL – need to get a specific meeting in the diary.

#### **4. Feedback on Preferred Options Report**

- SL – we started off six months ago on this iterative process. Comments tonight will form the basis of a report which goes to Consultative Committee. Important to remember this is not the detailed design, these are outline options which go to a wider public consultation.
- KB – we will go around the table and everyone can give their views.
- MP – still unclear about the proposals for mitigating the works which will have a profound effect on Heath and those who live nearby. The Model Boating Pond (MBP) is extremely artificial looking and to concentrate work here is the least unreasonable location. We support Highgate Society in their opposition to a floating island on Stock Pond. We need to be clearer about what the spillways will look like. H&HS made a proposal to increase depth of MBP – we are interested in this proposal. Need better visualisations.
- SR – spillway diagrams completely inadequate. Need to be marked out on ground and the depth must be made clear. Worried that the general ecology will make everything look far too tidy and manicured. What would be the purpose of a water channel in Bird Sanctuary Pond? There should only be absolute minimum raising of MBP. Access must be carefully considered. The digging out of MBP creates such a huge volume of storage we question why the embankment needs to be so high.
- HK – the threat to life and property at the end of the chain should be considered. Scour pipes can be adapted in a way to make them passive. Pipes need to be looked at in more detail. Thames Water need to be more involved. Lots of tables in the Design Flood Assessment have now been superseded – it is difficult to make comparisons. The idea of

creating a dry reservoir has not been given any serious consideration. The concerns of Brookfield and downstream residents have not been taken into account. The water that leaves the chain through the bottom spillway will create a lot of damage.

- CL – our statement was joint with Brookfield. Beggars belief that only minimal communication has taken place between City, Thames Water and Camden Council. It should be a legal requirement for these organisations to work together. Still no idea about what the storm relief drain does. Happy that the standard of protection is going up. It is supposed to be a generational project, but how can it be if it doesn't take into account changing weather patterns. We urge City to put pressure on Thames Water and Camden Council to get more done.
- JS – Kenwood Ladies Pond relatively happy as the impact on their pond is minimal. The spillway will be in a wooded area and not visible. But swimmers are also users of the Heath and we are urging them to contribute during the public consultation. Worried that there isn't any room for manoeuvre. Very clear information on the flood estimates must be produced to allow people to have an educated choice. People must be convinced by the stats otherwise consultation is a waste of time.
- TB – too many vague stats. KB picked up the differences in the scales of the hydrographs – makes a mockery of the process. I support the principle of the works and when Catchpit was raised as a solution, it became a catch all and negated serious work south of the chain. However now we have a proposal to raise the Mixed Bathing Pond dam by 2m – I do not believe this is necessary. The figures are fantasy and there is no logic why there needs to be a raising here. I think we've been misguided and a lot of it doesn't make sense and is very confusing.
- RD – we've got to go back to basic principles. We need to know the City's legal obligations. I can't justify the project to any of my members. We haven't been told anything about early warning systems. We think the figures are designed to scare and would urge City to stop using them. Concerned about timing of public consultation – especially with Mixed Pond users as not around over winter. What is the purpose of the consultation exercise? Catchpit sounds like a good idea but we don't want a big walkway – it must remain as a wooded dell. Must be done in a sensitive way. Mixed Pond Association do not support the 2m raising and the idea of having a wall on top is horrendous. Strongly opposed to Option P.
- WT – support the high level comments that have been presented already. Atkins have been very conservative. The proposal to raise Vale of Health is now at 0.6m and has gone up from 0.2m – quite a big increase relative to the work required – needs explanation. We feel the best place for the spillway is at the south end as this follows the natural contours much better.
- GG – we do recognise there is a risk of flooding but we think the solutions are disproportionate. We want Atkins and the City to go back and look at combining a range of solutions and take into account early warning systems. We don't understand the hydrographs and they are difficult to read. Spillways should be shown on the maps and need to be more explicit. We proposed a solution which was discounted because it would have been a 60m wide channel running down the side of the ponds, but some of the spillway proposals are 60m wide. We want a solution which uses a combination of ideas – pipes combined with spillways etc.
- PH – all of the proposals take away angling from the ponds, especially where dams are being built up. Is it legal for a spillway to come off Highgate No. 1 and take water onto the public highway? Need to look at storm relief system and enlarging pipes.
- JW – we cannot support any of the options but will continue to work with the City to see if we can get the minimum that is legally required for the scheme. Consultation with this group is going too fast. The public consultation starts the day after the Management Committee – too soon. Unclear about the period after the public consultation. We have little faith in the figures, especially the QRA and we have not had answers to our questions and will not get them until after 28 October. Too much is required on Highgate No. 1 – it is a very visible dam. Our idea to have the whole of Mixed Pond as a spillway was not incorporated in the

report. Visualisations need to be better. We are worried about the landscape and ecological analysis – we thought it was indicative and we want site walks, but now worried these are set in stone.

- ES – we share concerns of other downstream community representatives about lives and properties at risk and worried about where water will be sent out. We need to know more about drainage. We don't have the information we need to make decisions. The likelihood of various events needs to be clarified. The information for the public consultation needs to be simplified and in plain English. It must address the issues people are concerned with. A cost benefit analysis must be presented and simply explained. Money, inconvenience and time are big questions.
- KB – the changes through the document have been difficult to track. A lot of work has gone into presentation but the documents are hard to read. No information on spillways and it is regrettable there are no contour maps. It has been helpful to meet with CL and HK but lots of anomalies were discovered - hopeful that the meeting due to take place will resolve these. Still not sure how early warning will affect the design. Visualisations need to be clearer. Consultation is about listening and paying respect, which the City has done. Consultation is not about agreeing.
- PW – I've drafted a report about the effectiveness of the consultation process. Not everyone in the PPSG is happy with the outcome but I feel that people might have been a little unfair and dismissive of what has happened so far. Atkins have gone to great lengths but perhaps they need to be clearer. If you look back at the Critical Review you will see your initial ideas have been taken on board. The legality issue is overhanging but are these the best results we can achieve? I'm hearing around the table that this group does not think they are the best and that many are still not convinced about the scale and that it is too much.
- CL – not everyone thinks it is too much.
- PW – how can this group come back and vocalise what they are not convinced about? We have been on a balanced journey, not everyone agrees with the outcome but it has followed the original brief, set out by this group.
- SL- PPSG thinks the designs are too conservative. With regards early warning, the Met Office will not give us a guarantee on an accurate prediction of a convection storm. If people are truly unhappy then a judicial review may be the only thing to settle it. We are proceeding with the advice we have and following industry standard.
- KB – let's now have a Q & A for 15 mins.
- JS – PW wrong that the question of law as the only way this is being judged, the biggest issue will be what the public consultation throws up. Clarity in the public consultation is key.
- SL – we understand we must set out the City's story.
- TB – still lots of vague aspects that need sorted out. Scales on hydrographs must be like for like.
- GG – from an engineering perspective, it is the optimisation which concerns me. None of our suggestions, such as extra pipes have been taken on board. Heath is a special place, if it takes 3 to 4 months to thrash out a better plan that would surely be better.
- JW – H&HS have put forward alternative approach.
- SL – unfortunately our lawyers could not accept that approach.
- JW – SL challenged the H&HS to bring a judicial review.
- SL – Not true, did not say H&HS, but if those who don't agree with our proposals, we would prefer this challenge sooner rather than later.
- JW – no judicial review until a report on final design is taken to Management Committee.
- SL – if we do not progress the project at deliberate speed, a section 10 could be called. If this happens, the work must take place without the City being able to control and influence and works could be focused on the three statutory reservoirs. The implementation to resolve risks would be would be time bound.
- GG - is Section 10 part of 1975 Reservoirs Act?
- SL – yes

- RD – there has been a change in emphasis from Government recently that moves away from flood defence to reduction in flood risk, as the authorities realise they cannot defend against a flood.
- SL – yes this is true and very important.
- WT – seems absurd that the flood relief system has not been taken into account.
- SL - on 14 Jan, the PPSG heard a presentation from Thames Water and in this it was said that the flood defense system under the Heath can only deal with a 1 in 70 year size flood. In the PMF event this system would be full and would not help the situation.
- PH – if all pipes are enlarged, then the dams wouldn't need to be so high.
- SL- we've looked into this option but it is not viable with the amount of water we are talking about.
- HK – what is the percentage of the PMF that can be stored in Option 4?
- SL – not sure
- HK – is the purpose of the 2010 Act not to protect life and property? If not should it be?
- CL – after public outcry in 2011 a more landscape led approach was put forward. Is there any way this could be peer reviewed?
- KB – having run through the figures, we are not convinced that the standard of protection increases.
- TB – why can't more height be put at Catchpit to reduce work downstream?
- TB – what is the build-up time of a convection storm?
- JW – City rejected early warning because MET office can't warrant a convection storm, but in the Design Flood Assessment they talk about several hours of overtopping before collapse.
- JW – please retitle Preferred Options Report, Proposed Options Report
- SL – no – it is the the City's lead designers (Atkin's) Preferred Options.
- KB – we'll take item 6 next.

## **6. Update on Communications and Consultation**

- SL – important to stress this is the City's consultation exercise. We take on board all of your comments about setting out all of the facts clearly and giving people as much context as possible.
- JMW – we've been working with our consultants Resources for Change to design a consultation which will reach as many people as possible. Using a mixture of methods – drop-in center, consultation stands, mail shot of questionnaire, online questionnaire.
- ES – could a question and answer session which is open to the public, but moderated beforehand be useful?
- WT – perhaps an event on the Heath, which could attract a large number of people.
- KB – need targets to demonstrate value in the consultation. Dismayed that Resources for Change were not planning to consult upon the background of the project.
- SL – they are now. All of the comments made by the group have been taken on board

## **5. Update on Contractor Appointment and Programme– Simon Lee**

- SL – thanks to JW and SR for giving up their time to be part of the contractor appointment process. Moderation took place earlier that day and hopefully very close to appointing.
- JW – very impressed by the rigorous procedure.
- SL – a report on this process will be taken to Management Committee.
- JW – need to flesh out the timetable after the public consultation.
- KB – perhaps a calendar could be produced?

## **7. Next meetings**

Monday 2 December

Monday 13 January

Monday 24 February

## **8. AOB**

- SL announced he would be leaving his position as Superintendent to become Chief Executive of Wimbledon and Putney Commons.
- PPSG said it had been a pleasure working with SL and he will be sorely missed on the Heath.