

Committee(s):		Date(s):
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee	For information	3 rd November 2014
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	For decision	24 th November 2014
Subject:	Public	
Hampstead Rugby Club request for a third rugby pitch.		
Report of:	For Information	
Superintendent of Hampstead Heath.		
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>This report sets out a request received from the Hampstead Rugby Club to create an additional third rugby pitch on the Hampstead Heath Extension. The request meets the guidance set out in the Hampstead Heath Management Plan for alterations to existing sports provision or the creation of new sports facilities in designated sports areas. The report outlines the out-reach school work and the development of junior and female rugby by Hampstead Rugby Club.</p>		
Recommendations		
It is recommended:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the views of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, on the request for a third pitch on the Heath Extension, are conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee. • A third rugby pitch is allocated to Hampstead Rugby Club with usage to be reviewed at the end of the 2016/2017 playing season. 		

Main Report

Background

1. Hampstead Heath is a popular Open Space for organised sport, as well as for informal recreation. The Heath's proximity to central London puts it within reach of a large potential audience. Hampstead Rugby Club (the Club) has been active since 1968 and has been based on the Heath since the mid-1970s. Last season the Club was crowned Middlesex Development Champions for the minis and midis section, as well as receiving a Middlesex Presidential Award for its development of junior and senior female rugby.
2. The Club currently plays its games at weekends on two rugby pitches at the Hampstead Heath Extension. Last season 85 matches were booked, although a number of games were cancelled due to poor weather conditions. The senior male and female players train at Parliament Hill Athletics Track and

surrounding playing fields on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The junior section train each Saturday morning at Parliament Hill.

Growth of Hampstead Rugby Club

3. The Club currently runs six senior male, and two senior female teams. The female section was launched in 2003 and is the fastest-growing ladies' section in London. The junior section was launched in September 2010 with just 15 children, although by the start of the current season, this had increased to 185 children. The Club currently manages 12 junior teams, and this is forecast to increase to 15 teams in the 2014/2015 playing season.
4. The Club is part of the 'All Schools Programme', an initiative sponsored by the Rugby Football Union in 2012. Its aim is to take rugby to 750 state secondary schools, with core values of teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline, sportsmanship, making school life happier and healthier, reducing anti-social behaviour, enhancing learning, and increasing self-esteem for students. Currently the Club has links with four local schools in the 'All Schools Programme': William Ellis Secondary School, Haverstock Secondary, Parliament Hill School for Girls and the New Archers Academy.
5. Last season the Club launched 'Ruggerbugs' at Gospel Oak Primary School. 'Ruggerbugs' is a project sponsored by Rhino Sports, which aims to develop and enhance children's basic motor skills, as well as assisting with a child's Early Year Foundation Stage Development.
6. Rugby will be at the forefront of United Kingdom sport in 2015, with the Rugby World Cup taking place in ten cities across England, with the final being played at Twickenham.

Proposal

7. The Club is formally seeking permission to have a third full-size rugby pitch on the Hampstead Heath Extension (Appendix 1) for Saturday club matches and for mid-week training sessions for schools, including matches. On one full-size pitch, two training sessions and/or games can take place at the same time.
8. During the National Grid gas works in 2012, one of the current rugby pitches was temporarily relocated to the proposed new pitch site for the duration of the works. This area of land is currently part of one of the two cricket outfield squares at the Extension (figure 1). Cricket provision would not be effected, as rugby is a winter sport and the turf can be renovated before the start of the following cricket season.
9. The Club actively encourages players and parents to use public transport to reduce pressures on car parking facilities on Hampstead Heath at both the Extension and Parliament Hill Fields.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan of the proposed 3rd Pitch
(Please also refer to Appendix 3 – Map of Sports facilities)

Corporate and Strategic Implications

10. The proposal for a third rugby pitch supports The City Together Strategy: The Heart of a World Class City 2008-2014 “supports our communities” and the Open Spaces Business Plan 2013-2016 to “*Promote opportunities to value and enjoy the outdoors for recreation, learning and healthy living*”.
11. The Sports Chapter of The Hampstead Heath Management Plan: Towards a plan for the Heath 2007-2017 has the overriding objective to “*Work collaboratively in maintaining and developing the existing sports facilities and activities in response to changing demands ensuring appropriate provision for all sections of the community*” – appendix 2.
12. The Heath Extension is one of three areas designated as sports areas on Hampstead Heath, the other two being Parliament Hill and the north end of Golders Hill Park. With reference to alterations to existing sports provision, or the creation of new sports facilities within the three identified sports areas, the Hampstead Heath Management Plan states the following considerations must be met:
 - There is no threat to public safety
 - It is consistent with good turf management practice
 - There would be no significant increase in noise or light pollution affecting neighbouring residents.

Implications

Financial implications:

13. It is the Club's intention to generate usage of the third pitch by actively encouraging schools to use the facility. The Club estimates a minimum of 25 games will be played in the 2014/15 season. Income from hire of the pitch has been set as per agreed charging:

- £70.00 reserved adult match pitch
- £40.00 reserved junior match pitch
- £607.00 ten games – adult season
- £380.00 ten games – junior season
- £42.00 changing accommodation

NB charges are reviewed annually in November, for implementation the following April.

14. Maintenance cost of an additional rugby pitch would be in the region of £3,000.00 per annum (excluding spring and summer grass cutting). Maintenance works would include marking-out, making sure the surface is fit for play, and end-of-season renovation.

15. Cost of maintenance will be met from the Superintendent's Local Risk Budget, although the Club has agreed to purchase additional posts and flags for the third pitch. It is acknowledged that the income from adding a third pitch will only contribute to the cost of on-going maintenance. However, the Heath has a crucial role to play in providing sporting opportunities and promoting good health, community cohesion and improvements to the quality of life.

Ecological Impact

16. There are no ecological implications, as the area is already a designated sports activity location. In 2007 there were seven cricket squares on this parcel of land and this has been reduced to two, due to a fall in demand.

Legal and Property implications:

17. There are no legal or property implications.

Consultation

18. At its meeting on 22nd September 2014. The Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum agreed in principal to the creation of the additional rugby pitch.

Conclusion

19. In order to facilitate the growth of Hampstead Rugby Club, and particularly junior teams and school activities, it is recommended a third pitch be granted, with its usage to be reviewed at the end of the 2016/2017 playing season.

20. The addition of a third pitch would allow Heath staff to rotate usage and spread wear and tear, in order to accommodate the anticipated additional mid-week and weekend junior games.

21. Hampstead Rugby Club has already achieved great success in setting up junior, female and outreach school rugby in the local area.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Request from Hampstead Rugby Club

Appendix 2a - Hampstead Heath Management Plan – Sports Chapter

Appendix 2b - Hampstead Heath Management Plan – Sports facilities and designated sports areas on the Heath

Appendix 3 - Map of Sports Facilities & Areas

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Appendix 1 - Request from Hampstead Rugby Club for a 3rd rugby pitch.



Hampstead RFC, 154 Fleet Road, Hampstead, London NW3 2QX
www.hampsteadrugbyclub.co.uk
info@hampsteadrugbyclub.co.uk

Re: Third pitch for Hampstead RFC

To: [REDACTED]

CC: [REDACTED]

Dear Sirs,

I have previously highlighted Hampstead RFC's wish for a third pitch to the Sports Forum Committee. I now wish to actually make an official approach to having this third pitch on the Heath Extension.

I would like to highlight how much the Club appreciates all the support we have received from Paul Maskell, Declan Gallagher and John Slapp, with accommodating the Club and appreciate all the hard work their teams put in in terms of ground maintenance. The two existing pitches are of the highest quality, and the help we receive for our Junior Section has been a major factor in the exceptional growth we have seen.

We started with 15 children, just over four years ago, and now have 200 plus players, ranged from 6 to 16, from both sexes. On top of this we have been crowned Middlesex Development champions this season and have just picked up a Middlesex Presidential award for development in Ladies and Girls rugby and our active involvement with the RFU's All School's scheme. We are also one of the few clubs within London who can maintain five senior men's sides.

The drawback with this level of commitment we have on the playing side means a lot of effort, not only to maintain the status quo, but to manage the expected growth. We launched Ruggerbugs last season, so now have 50 pre-school children involved in rugby activities, thus ensuring a constant flow of new recruits to our Mini ranks. The RFU see us as 'a go to club' for school activities, and O2 are talking to us in regards of hosting an event as part of the RWC 2015 build-up and their targeting of inner city school participation. If we have the influx of players we received last Rugby World Cup, then the Club will be huge.

Therefore, we see a third pitch as key to our growth, and see it primarily used by the junior teams, for school activities, and on a few occasions, by the seniors, when the Fixture exchange throws up the odd third home game. We envisage this pitch being located where the temporary pitch was set up, and can come in a few yards, length and width ways. In terms of posts, a small set would suffice, and the Club would be happy to meet the cost of these.

I will be more than willing to meet up to discuss this proposal.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED], Chairman, Hampstead RFC

Appendix 2a - Hampstead Heath Management Plan – Sports Chapter

HAMPSTEAD HEATH MANAGEMENT PLAN PART I – TOWARDS A PLAN FOR THE HEATH 2007 – 2017 SPORTS SECTION

7.7 SPORTS

Context

- 7.7.1 The Heath is a popular open space for organised sport as well as for informal recreation. There is no doubt that the special character of the Heath will continue to attract large numbers of visitors, particularly as the need to escape from the stresses of modern urban life increases. The Heath's proximity to central London puts it within reach of a large potential audience.
- 7.7.2 National and regional policy statements highlight the importance of sport in open spaces and facilities such as are found on Hampstead Heath. Examples of such statements are:
- Department of Culture, Media and Sport/Strategy Unit, *Game Plan strategy document*, 2002
 - Department of Health, White Paper, *Choosing Activity: a physical activity action plan*, 2005
 - Sport England, *The London Plan for Sport and Physical Activity, 2004 – 2008*, 2004
 - Greater London Authority, *Offside – the Loss of London's Playing Fields*, 2006.
- 7.7.3 Some of the sporting activities have a high reputation and profile regionally and nationally. For example, Hampstead Heath is traditionally regarded throughout the country as the home of cross-country running.
- 7.7.4 With a lack of open space in neighbouring boroughs, the Heath has a crucial role to play in providing sporting opportunities and promoting good health, community cohesion and improvements to the quality of life. Of the four London Boroughs closest to the Heath, three are in the top ten for poor health in the capital: Camden, Islington and Haringey (2001 Census). Without Heath facilities, including outdoor grass pitches and the Athletics Track, many primary and secondary schools would not be able to provide key sports activities as part of a physical education programme. There are particularly strong links with the four local secondary schools – Parliament Hill, William Ellis, Acland Burghley and La Sainte Union Catholic – indeed, Heath staff presently assist William Ellis School in the development of the major part of their physical education curriculum activities.
- 7.7.5 More than 40 different schools have booked Heath sports facilities in the past two years; more than 80 different sports clubs have booked Heath sports facilities in the past two years. There are approximately 215,000 visits made to the Swimming Ponds each year. There were approximately 75,000 visits made to the Lido in the summer of 2006.
- 7.7.6 This section specifically refers to the sports and activities that require active management. At least 16 sports take place on the Heath: athletics, bowls, cricket, cross-country running, duathlon, fitness training, football, golf practice and putting, hockey, orienteering, petanque, rounders and softball, rugby, swimming, tennis and water polo.
- 7.7.7 The City of London recognises the difference between swimming (active exercise) and bathing (passive immersion). However, for simplicity this document uses 'swimming' to include swimming and bathing.
- 7.7.8 Some of the sporting activities and associations on Hampstead Heath have a very long history. Many sports have established clubs and a recognised voice.

- 7.7.9 Open-air swimming on the Heath is long established and takes place at the Men's Pond, the Ladies' Pond, the Mixed Pond and the Lido. The formal opening of the Men's Pond took place in 1890, although open-air swimming on the Heath long pre-dates this. The Hampstead Heath Winter Swimming Club self-regulates winter swimming at the Mixed Pond. A detailed description of the swimming facilities and their management can be found in *Sports Baseline Condition and Management Issues* (Land Use Consultants, 2006) and *Sport on Hampstead Heath* (Sports Working Group, 2006).
- 7.7.10 The Swimming Ponds are internationally famous. The Men's Pond and the Ladies' Pond are unique in the United Kingdom in being the only life-guarded open-water swimming facilities open to the public every day of the year. They are attractive to swimmers of all ages and backgrounds for various reasons, including their chemical-free water, lack of artificial heating and beautiful surroundings. The Ladies' Pond provides a unique, secluded retreat for female swimmers. In the summer many families come to swim in the Mixed Pond. The Men's Pond provides a male-only swimming environment. The Ponds attract many visitors from London and even overseas. Approximately 100 'regulars' swim in the Ponds throughout the year.
- 7.7.11 The Swimmers' Forum was established in 2005 and allows representatives of the swimmers to discuss issues of concern. The Forum has proved very useful in this respect. It is a valuable addition to the Heath's consultation process and may act as a good model for similar interest groups elsewhere on the Heath.

Overriding Objective

- S1 Work collaboratively in maintaining and developing the existing sports facilities and activities in response to changing demands ensuring appropriate provision for all sections of the community.**

Essential Actions

- S2 Promote and provide for managed sports activities in three identified Sports Areas:**
- **Parliament Hill area (Sports Area A)**
 - **The Heath Extension (Sports Area B)**
 - **North end of Golders Hill Park (Sports Area C)**

Appendix 2b - Hampstead Heath Management Plan – Sports facilities and designated sports areas on the Heath

- S3** **Establish a Sports Advisory Forum to advise the Superintendent on sporting matters.**
- S4** **Promote and provide for managed swimming facilities at the Swimming Ponds and the Lido.**
- S5** **Allow alteration of existing sports facilities or the creation of new sports facilities within the identified Sports Areas subject only to the following considerations:**
- **There is no threat to public safety**
 - **It is consistent with good turf management practice**
 - **There would be no significant increase in noise or light pollution affecting neighbouring residents.**
- 7.7.12 Other than pond swimming, the only sports that take place outside the Sports Areas at the date of this management plan are cross-country, orienteering, fitness training, a charity event (Race for Life) and the Duathlon. With new sports emerging and/or an excess demand for the current facilities at some future time, consideration may need to be given for sports to take place outside the Sports Areas.
- S6** **Allow sports to take place outside the identified Sports Areas only if all the following eight criteria are fulfilled:**
- 1. The new sport or relocation of an existing sport is recommended by the Sports Advisory Forum following an assessment of perceived demand.**
 - 2. The sport cannot be accommodated within one of the Sports Areas.**
 - 3. There is no significant detriment to the general public’s enjoyment of the Heath.**
 - 4. There is no significant threat to the natural Heath.**
 - 5. The practice of the new sport or new location does not expose the City of London to a material risk of criminal or civil liability, and is permitted by the City’s insurers.**
 - 6. The adverse impact, if any, on established informal sport in the relevant area must be outweighed, in the view of the Sports Advisory Forum, by the demand for, and public benefit of, the new or relocated sport.**
 - 7. It is consistent with good turf management practice.**
 - 8. No permanent structures are needed by the sport in question.**
- S7** **Develop the role of sporting facilities in providing opportunities to promote good health, community cohesion, social inclusion, quality of life and lifelong learning.**
- 7.7.13 Sports facilities on the Heath should be available to a broader spectrum of users, including young people, families, disabled people and others.
- 7.7.14 The Heath should encourage more use of its diverse facilities and in doing so promote healthier life and fitness through sports. It should collaborate with the London Boroughs of Camden, Barnet, Islington and Haringey to help them provide a service where they are currently unable to do so using their own facilities. Links should also be made with local primary care trusts to promote use of the Heath and its facilities.

- S8** Encourage and support connections with surrounding schools and the provision of proper sports instruction.
- S9** Set up systems to monitor patterns of use, so as to better identify opportunities for increased or improved use.
- S10** Explore the establishment of a club to encompass a range of Heath sports – an Umbrella Sports Club.
- S11** Work in partnership with other agencies to develop opportunities to realise the sporting and wider cultural opportunities of the 2012 Olympics. For example, local sports events could be held during the Olympics to take advantage of heightened interest.

Aspirational Goals

- S12** See Aspirational Goals B10 relating to the Lido and B11 relating to the Athletics Track Pavilion and the Sports Changing Rooms.