

QUEEN'S PARK JOINT CONSULTATIVE GROUP
Wednesday, 4 June 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group held at Parliament Hill Yard, Highgate Road, London, NW5 1QR on Wednesday, 4 June 2014 at 12.00 pm

Present

Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman)
Karina Dostalova
Barbara Newman
John Blandy (Queen's Park Area Residents' Association)
Helen Durnford (Queen's Park Area Residents' Association)
Paul Stratton (Local Schools Liaison)

Officers:

David Arnold	Town Clerk's Department
Richard Gentry	Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Jonathan Meares	Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager
Lucy Anne Murphy	Assistant Operational Services Manager
Bob Warnock	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath

Also Present:

Michael Adeyeye

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from former Councillor Mary Arnold (London Borough of Brent) and Councillor James Denselow (London Borough of Brent).

2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were none.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2013 be agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Representation on the Joint Consultative Group

The Queen's Park Manager advised that this was under review and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Queen's Park Café Lease

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath reported that he had met with the Café owner to discuss an improvement plan. He also advised that the new lease – with a renewal date in October 2015 – would be signed soon. An online comment/suggestion card survey of the Café would be introduced shortly to gather public feedback. In response to a member's question, the Superintendent advised that internal improvements to the café were the responsibility of the licensee.

A member of the group added that there had been no improvement to the Café in three years, to which the Superintendent advised that he had been meeting with the Café owners on a monthly basis to develop performance indicators as well as an improvement plan.

A member of the group requested that the Café could be put out to tender when the lease renewal is due in October 2015 and the Superintendent confirmed that this was the intention.

4. SUPERINTENDENTS' UPDATE ON QUEEN'S PARK

The Queen's Park Manager provided a verbal update to those present on the following issues:-

Background

He advised those present that the park had experienced a very wet winter since the last meeting, which resulted in the main field being deemed unusable for formal sports activities for a period of five weeks due to extreme amounts of rainfall. He further advised that St. Jude's Storm had not had a severe impact on the park.

Members were advised that there had been 1 million visits to the park in the 2013/14 financial year, compared to 1.2 million visits to West Ham Park over the same period despite Queen's Park being roughly half the size.

Ecology and Environment

Perennial planting had replaced seasonal bedding in the Quiet Garden, which was in a good condition due to the recent mild weather. This had reduced the spend on seasonal planting. Lawn maintenance would be carried out by Hampstead Heath staff; this had been postponed due to the recent wet weather but would start soon.

It was reported that Amey were still the park's waste collection contractors but the London Borough of Brent also provided a service for green waste collection and recyclables at no cost to the City of London Corporation.

Sports and Recreation

It was noted that the tennis courts were cleaned and sprayed to reduce moss during winter. Additional funding for further improvements, particularly to courts five and six, may be available in 2015/16.

Members were advised that pedestrian signage and banners had been placed in the park to promote the tennis coaching sessions. The Queen's Park manager added that he would provide an update on the tennis coaching sessions at the next meeting.

The Pitch and Putt course remained open during winter whilst maintenance took place. There was an even split between use of the tennis courts and the Pitch and Putt course with 9,000 games of tennis and 7,000 games of golf; each generating approximately £23,000.

The installation of new equipment in the play area was running on schedule, with support being received from the Assistant Operational Services Manager of Hampstead Heath. The play area had generated positive comments from users but there had been some concern over the shortage of equipment for under-fives. It was noted that suitable equipment for this age group would be added to the play area during the Third Phase installation.

The Brent Sports Development Team would provide a free multi-sport Summer Sports Programme in summer 2014, which would be free of charge to users and have little impact on staff resources and time.

Members were advised that the Queen's Park Manager, together with other officers from the Open Spaces Department, was seeking legal advice from the Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department regarding the licensing of commercial activities at Queen's Park. In response to a member's question, he advised that Queen's Park Rangers Football Club would not be providing coaching sessions at the park this year as limited revenue for the Club was anticipated.

Landscape Management

It was reported that the storm-damaged Weeping Willow tree on the Pitch and Putt course had started to grow back successfully following pollarding and two further Willow trees would receive the same treatment. Reduction work had also been completed to the Laurel tree hedge along Kingswood Avenue.

The Conservation and Trees Manager provided a verbal update on tree disease. He explained that tree disease was a concern at Queen's Park due to the threat of Ash Dieback, Massaria of Plane, and Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) close to the site; whilst Ash Dieback was being monitored, it had not yet been discovered in Central London. An industry guidance document had been produced to help manage the threat of Massaria of Plane. The disease had affected limbs of trees in Queen's Park but had not killed any. He reported that Queen's Park was currently on the edge of the OPM risk boundary. This was the second year of spray treatment against OPM financed jointly by the Forestry Commission and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). In response to a member's question, the Conservation and Trees Manager advised that spraying aimed to reduce collateral damage of other species.

Operational Management

The Queen's Park Manager reported that the budget could be reduced significantly by 2017/18 as part of the Service Based Review. Whilst small events at the park would be useful for income generation it would be difficult due to licensing restrictions in respect of commercial activities.

It was noted that the process of booking tennis courts and Pitch and Putt could be improved by the introduction of an online booking system.

A member of the group added that additional funding for sports development could be requested through the Wembley National Stadium Trust fund.

With reference to the Children's Farm and the introduction of four Giant Rabbits, which had proved very popular with visitors, the Chairman suggested that a voluntary donations box might generate some income. Following some discussion, the Superintendent advised that some donations boxes at the Hampstead Heath ponds had been successful. However, a member of the group expressed their opposition to a voluntary donations box as visitors to a park expect its facilities to be free of charge. The Chairman suggested this case was different as the Children's Farm's animals needed to be fed and housing needed to be maintained.

It was noted that repair works to the Paddling Pool were currently underway.

Visitors and Community

It was reported that the Whitsun Bank Holiday Weekend event had not been as successful as anticipated due to the inclement weather.

The Queen's Park Manager advised that a local school had recently visited a pilot session at the Children's Farm, with a view to generating income by holding education days at the farm for schools in the future.

RESOLVED – That the Queen's Park update be noted.

5. QUEEN'S PARK CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Group received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath regarding the Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan (CMP).

The Queen's Park Manager advised the Group that Chris Blandford Associates were appointed in 2012 to prepare a CMP for Queen's Park. The CMP contained five key objectives that related to: heritage; managing information about heritage; built environment and infrastructure; natural environment; and community and recreation.

During the consultation feedback period, it was reported that the park was loved by regular users but some believed the Pitch and Putt was underused and improvements were required to the Café and toilets. The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath added that customer survey cards would be placed in the Café next week.

Members of the Group agreed with the report and supported the Queen's Park CMP. It was also agreed that a draft summary document of the CMP would be produced for the next meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Queen's Park Conservation Management Plan be noted.

6. **QUESTIONS**

In response to a member's question, the Superintendent advised that it was difficult to charge for football on the field due to the legislation surrounding the licensing of commercial and other activities at Queen's Park. The Queen's Park Manager added that they were working with the Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department to establish whether the legislation allowed them to charge for football at the park. He advised that an update on this matter would be provided at the next meeting.

In response to a further question from a member, the Queen's Park Manager advised that developments of the CMP would be reported back to the Group but actions that required large-scale funding would be submitted to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee for consideration.

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

The Group expressed their thanks to Dennis Cotgrove, and former Councillors Michael Adeyeye and Mary Arnold for their contributions to the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group.

Michael Adeyeye thanked the Chairman and Deputy Chairman for their support and for the opportunity to serve on the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group. He further thanked the Queen's Park Manager and his staff for the excellent contribution that Queen's Park continued to make to the local community.

8. **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

RESOLVED – That the next meeting be held on 19 November 2014 in the Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall.

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

Chairman

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