

HIGHGATE WOOD JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 19 November 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee held at
Committee Room 4 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 19 November
2014 at 11.45 am

Present

Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman)
Ann Holmes
Professor John Lumley
Barbara Newman
Stephanie Beer (Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association)
Jan Brooker (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Councillor Gail Engert (London Borough of Haringey)
Councillor Bob Hare (London Borough of Haringey)
Lucy Roots (Muswell Hill Friends of the Earth)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)

Officers:

David Arnold	Town Clerk's Department
Bob Warnock	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Jonathan Meares	Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager
Richard Gentry	Constabulary & Queen's Park Manager

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Marguerite Clark (Highgate Society), Peter Corley (Tree Trust for Haringey), and Alison Watson (Friends of Queen's Wood).

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Professor John Lumley and Councillor Gail Engert to their first meeting of the Committee.

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

There were none.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the last meeting held on 30 April 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

LiDar Survey

In response to a question from Michael Hammerson, the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath advised that results of the LiDar survey would be made available to Members upon request.

Conservation Management Plan Objectives – Progress

The Superintendent advised that events in Highgate Wood during summer 2015 would be publicised on social media and a new online newsletter. Staff at the Wood had also recently obtained an iPad to aide with the publicising of events through social media.

Tree Management

The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that a short presentation on iTree would be provided at the next meeting once the results of a London-wide survey had been finalised.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE FOR NOVEMBER 2014

The Consultative Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update to Members on management and operational activities in Highgate Wood over the past six months.

Budget-identifying cost saving and increasing income

The Superintendent advised the Committee that the Open Spaces Department was required to find £2.189 million of savings over the next three years. However, there was minimal scope for savings and reductions at the Wood other than increasing income from licensing, operational efficiency of sports pitches, and turnover at the Café. Members commended the Open Spaces Department for identifying the minimal savings at the Wood.

In response to a question from Councillor Bob Hare, the Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that it would be difficult to increase income from filming as the Wood was not very vehicle-accessible and closures of certain areas would affect users of the Wood and local residents. He added that the fees charged for filming tended to be quite low.

In response to a question from Michael Hammerson, the Superintendent advised that the possibility of increasing income through the provision of higher and further education courses on conservation and woodland management would be considered as part of the Education Strategy, which was currently being developed. The Deputy Chairman suggested that the Strategy should be presented to the Education Board for consideration.

Roman Kiln Project progress

The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that a Gateway Two report regarding this joint community project would be submitted to the Corporate Project Board Sub Committee shortly. Members suggested that the report should include other historical aspects of the Wood too.

In response to a member's question regarding publicity for the project, the Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that local media had covered a re-enactment of Roman Kiln use in 2010. The Chairman noted that a paper on the re-enactment had been published in the London Archaeologist journal.

The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager added that information was provided for users of the Wood and the project was referenced on the City of London Corporation and the Highgate Wood websites. Further profile-raising would be possible once the project had progressed through the Gateway Two stage.

Sustainability

The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that the bi-annual Sustainability Audit was coming to an end and the results would inform the Departmental Improvement Plan to be drafted soon.

Members were advised that the Wood's overall sustainability performance had been very good. The photo-voltaic system performed well over the protracted good weather during summer 2014 and there had been an increasing emphasis on moving away from petrol engine-powered toward battery-powered equipment.

Conservation Management Plan Summary Document

Members were advised that the maps, path profiles and fonts had all been amended and the Middlesex Forest quote removed following discussion and suggestions made at the previous meeting in April 2014. The document would be circulated shortly so Members were asked to submit any final minor comments to the Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager as soon as possible.

Oak Decline

The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that Oak Decline had reduced but there was still some significant leaf damage; a 'do nothing' approach could result in a loss of all Oak trees within 90 years. He added that 2014 had seen very few acorns at the Wood, which was not unusual due to the prolific mast year in 2013.

In response to a member's question, the Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that there had been few leaf-lying moths found in this year's survey but a wide variety of weevil species were identified.

Tree Disease and Biosecurity issues

Members were advised that a programme of containment and eradication of Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) was launched by the Forestry Commission in summer 2013. There had been further advances by the pest and there was now an infestation at the Regent's Park Zoo, just over two kilometres from the Wood. The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager and the Division's Tree Officer were finalising an action plan to deal with OPM's inevitable arrival at one of the North London Open Spaces.

In response to a question from Councillor Bob Hare, the Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that OPM would have little effect on established healthy trees but it could have a detrimental effect to stressed trees at the Wood.

Play Area and Recreation

The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that the play area safety surface improvements were successfully completed in time for the busy summer holiday period. A total area of 350m sq. was converted to a rubberised surface consisting of the space net unit and the cluster of units immediately adjacent, all of which must have an impact-absorbing surface to protect against injuries. Members were also advised that the roof of the hut in the Play Area would be repaired shortly.

The Superintendent added that the new safety surface had received much positive feedback from users of the Wood. The feedback was endorsed by Stephanie Beer, who had recently experienced the new surface with her grandchildren.

Community and Events

Members were advised that the volunteering sessions led by Heath Hands, in which volunteers would carry out clearing and trimming throughout the Wood, were becoming more popular and more frequent. The Committee thanked Heath Hands' dedicated team of volunteers for their hard work over the past six months.

The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that a Friends of Highgate Wood group could be developed to allow local volunteers to concentrate their work at the Wood. It was suggested that further incentives could be offered to volunteers, such as staff at the Wood giving CV references to acknowledge the important work they carry out.

Members were also advised that Heritage Day attracted around 2,000 visitors to the Wood. The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager added that the number of visitors in a year could reach one million soon.

Pavilion Café

The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that a temporary covered dog-friendly area had received only positive feedback since its inception so members of the Consultative Committee were whether or not it should be made a permanent feature. Members supported the dog-friendly area and agreed that it be made more permanent.

Development Issues

Members were advised that the Open Spaces Department had submitted an objection to the proposed redevelopment of the former Haringey Magistrates Court as it would have an adverse effect on the landscape at the Wood.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. **FEES AND CHARGES REPORT**

The Consultative Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that set out the proposed increase to fees and charges for cricket and football at Highgate Wood in 2015/16. Members were advised that a more fundamental review of fees and charges, including full benchmarking, would be carried out by the end of 2015.

Members were advised that the charges for children's football coaching at Queen's Park would not be included in the proposed changes to fees and charges as they would become part of the licensing regime with effect from spring 2015.

In response to members' questions regarding the possibility of weddings and civil ceremonies being held at the Wood, the Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised the marriage licence would have to be attached to a built structure such as the Café or a named tree. Members noted that the lack of available car-parking at the Wood would be an issue for weddings but acknowledged that a limit could be placed on numbers within the licence. The Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager would look into the possibility of weddings and civil ceremonies being held at the Wood.

RESOLVED – That:-

- a) the proposed fees and charges for 2015/16 be noted; and
- b) the possibility of weddings and civil ceremonies being held at Highgate Wood be considered and a report be presented to the next meeting if appropriate.

6. **QUESTIONS**

In response to a question from Councillor Bob Hare, the Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that bee hives had been reintroduced to the Wood in spring 2014. He added that the Wood is an ideal environment for bees and reported that the general insect population had increased significantly in recent years.

It was **RESOLVED** that an update would be provided at the next meeting.

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

The Chairman advised members of the Consultative Committee that the Wood had recently been awarded a Green Flag and a Green Heritage Award.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED – That the date of the next meeting of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee, to be held on Wednesday 22 April 2015, be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: David Arnold
David.Arnold@cityoflondon.gov.uk