

QUEEN'S PARK JOINT CONSULTATIVE GROUP
Wednesday, 19 November 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group held at
Committee Room 3 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 19 November
2014 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman)
Ann Holmes
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
Bob Warnock	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Richard Gentry	Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Jonathan Meares	Conservation and Trees Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Karina Dostalova and Councillor James Denselow (London Borough of Brent).

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Ann Holmes as a new Member of the Group and noted that Councillor Neil Nerva and Councillor Eleanor Southwood, although not present, would in future both represent the London Borough of Brent.

The Chairman also noted that Kensal Rise Residents' Association and Transition Town Kensal to Kilburn had been invited to observe this meeting, with a view to nominating a representative to become a member of the Group, but were not present. They would continue to be invited to observe meeting(s) and then consideration would be given to their addition to the Group as members.

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 4 June 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Licensing of Commercial Activities

The Queen's Park Manager advised that legal advice was being sought from the Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department regarding fees for commercial activities, such as football coaching, taking place at the Park. He reported that charges for these activities should come into effect by spring 2015.

The Chairman added that private legislation regarding licensing of all commercial activities across the Open Spaces Department was being considered. The earliest a Private Bill could be deposited would be November 2015.

Recreation

In response to a member's question, the Park Manager advised that there had been a delay to maintenance of the paddling pool due to slower than expected response times from the contractor.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE REPORT

The Consultative Group received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update to Members on management and operational activities in Queen's Park over the past six months.

The Park Manager advised that the Park had been very busy and well-used by the local community; there had been 978,450 visits to the Park between October 2013 and September 2014. This included 194,382 to the playground and 100,136 to the Farm.

Ecology and Environment

Members were advised that a Sustainability Audit was completed in May 2014, which had informed a Local Improvement Plan for the Park. Electric vehicles were being used extensively in the Park to move machinery, supplies and equipment, and the Park had also invested in quieter battery-powered hedge cutters and blowers to benefit park-users, local residents, and the environment. The Park Manager also advised that a compost tumbler had been purchased which had the capacity to compost up to 650 litres of garden waste and would enable the Park to produce as much as 4,000 litres of compost yearly.

A poppy meadow was seeded in the summer of 2014 as part The Centenary Poppy Campaign, a national initiative by the Royal British Legion to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the start of World War I, but the bund at the bottom of the Park had been seeded with limited success.

Sports and Recreation

Members were advised that tennis coaching sessions had attracted 31 participants during summer 2014, compared with 51 participants in 2013. The sessions were well-advertised through banners and posters. Consultation would take place with the tennis coach and the Hampstead Heath Sports and Leisure Manager to maximise income potential in 2015.

The Park Manager advised that he had met with the City Surveyor's Department to discuss maintenance issues on tennis courts five and six, which were currently closed. It was hoped that resurfacing and root barriers could be added to courts five and six in 2015/16. Members were also advised that the height of the hedges around the east, south and western side of the courts would be reduced and the hedge on the northern side would be removed. This would improve visibility of the courts and reduce on-going maintenance.

Members requested that regular users of the tennis courts should be consulted before the northern hedge was removed. It was agreed that all four hedges would be reduced in height by one metre during winter and that consideration of the possibility to remove the hedge on the northern side be postponed until 2015.

The Park Manager also reported that number of suggestions had been made by the local community regarding the installation of outdoor gymnasium equipment in the Park. In response to a member's question, he advised that it would be installed in the current Petanque square as it was an under-used facility. A Member of the Group added that the on-going maintenance costs of this equipment should be considered before its installation.

Conservation and Heritage

Members of the Group congratulated staff at the Park for receiving the Green Heritage Award, which the Park Manager advised would be displayed at the Café.

The Park Manager also advised that a summary document of the Conservation Management Plan was currently being finalised and would be made available to the public in early 2015. This summary document would be presented to the next Group meeting for information.

Children's Play Area

The Park Manager advised that funding opportunities were still being considered to complete the redevelopment of the Play Area. He added that members of the Queen's Park Area Residents' Association had been supportive in moving the project forward. Work still to be completed included repairs the rubber surface in the Play Area and repairs to equipment in the sandpit area.

Landscape Management

The Conservation and Trees Manager advised members that Massaria of Plane and Ash Dieback were still present at the Park due to the high population of Plane Trees and Ash Trees.

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. The Conservation and Trees 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. A small number of Oak Trees at the Park would have to be monitored closely.

In response to a member's question, the Conservation and Trees Manager advised that the OPM spray treatment could damage other feeding caterpillar species on treated trees but the threat of OPM was large enough to necessitate this.

The Park Manager also advised that he had worked with the Park Supervisor to develop an Annual Work Programme for the Park, which would pick up on the general maintenance of the Park and a number of projects. Members were asked to contact the Park Manager with feedback after the meeting.

Operational Management

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath advised the Group 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 Park other than increasing income from licensable activities, increasing operational efficiency and reducing staffing costs, and increasing turnover at the Café.

It was suggested that weddings and civil ceremonies and marquee receptions could be held at the Bandstand to generate additional income. Ann Holmes noted that cost implications on staff and loss of revenue elsewhere in the Park would have to be carefully considered. The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath advised that he would carry out some business planning to determine the viability of holding weddings and civil ceremonies and receptions at the Bandstand and would submit a report to a future meeting.

It was also suggested that a Beer and Pie Festival could be held at the Park, which members supported as a good way to increase visitor numbers, raise the profile of the Park and to generate additional income. The Park Manager would consider this and would approach Breweries to seek further advice.

Visitors and Community

Members were advised that four outdoor cinema screenings were held at the Park during summer 2014; 2,500 tickets were sold which generated an income of £5,700. Given the success of this year's screenings, the Group agreed that five events should take place in 2015 instead of four.

Queen's Park Day was held on 14th September 2014 and was attended by an estimated 14,800 visitors. The Group thanked volunteers from the Queen's Park Area Residents' Association for the organisation of this successful annual event.

The Park Manager advised that the Queen's Park Community School contacted the Park in the summer and, as a result, a number of sessions with seven Duke of Edinburgh Award students were held. Members were advised that pupils from other local schools in the area were currently planting bulbs in the Park and the Quiet Garden.

The Park Manager reported that the Park Supervisor was working with the Animal Attendant on the purchase and installation of an appropriate donation box for the Children's Farm to be installed by December 2014. Income would help support this facility and its longer term sustainability. In response to members' questions, the Park Manager advised that he would look into the possibility for park-users to sponsor animals and would submit a report to the next Group meeting providing the figures for the amount collected from the donation box.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. **FEES AND CHARGES REPORT**

The Group received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that set out the proposed increase to fees and charges for Petanque, Pitch and Putt, and tennis at Queen's Park 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 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.

RESOLVED – That the proposed fees and charges for 2015/16 be noted

6. **QUESTIONS**

In response to a question from Helen Durnford regarding the financial challenge, the Chairman advised that the annual Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee dinner was an important function to thank all local stakeholders who contributed to the management of the North London Open Spaces over the past year. He and the Deputy Chairman added that discussions were taking place within the Open Spaces Department to assess the appropriate level for such hospitality.

A second question was raised by the same member regarding the financial challenge and the provision of a large lunchtime meal at the winter meeting of the Group.

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

The Chairman thanked members of the Group for their hard work and assistance towards Queen's Park matters over the past three years, as this was his last meeting as Chairman of the Group.

8. **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

RESOLVED – That the date of the next meeting of the Queen's Park Joint Consultative Group, to be held on Wednesday 10 June 2015, be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

Chairman

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