

HAMPSTEAD HEATH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Monday, 6 July 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee held at
Parliament Hill Conference Room, Parliament Hill Staff Yard, Parliament Hill Fields,
Hampstead Heath, NW5 1QR on Monday, 6 July 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present

Members:

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)
Jeremy Simons (Deputy Chairman)
Ray Booth (Barnet Mencap)
Colin Gregory (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)
Dr Gaye Henson (Marylebone Birdwatching Society)
John Hunt (South End Green Association)
Nigel Ley (Open Spaces Society)
Susan Nettleton (Heath Hands)
Helen Payne (Friends of Kenwood)
Mary Port (Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Thomas Radice (Heath and Hampstead Society)
Steve Ripley (Hampstead and District Ramblers' Association)
Ellin Stein (Mansfield Conservation Area Advisory Committee)
Simon Taylor (Hampstead Rugby Club)
David Walton (Representative of Clubs using the Heath)
John Weston (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee)

Officers:

David Arnold	Town Clerk's Department
Paul Double	City Remembrancer
Nigel Lefton	Remembrancer's Department
Sam Cook	Remembrancer's Department
Bob Warnock	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Jonathan Meares	Conservation and Trees Manager
Declan Gallagher	Operational Services Manager
Richard Gentry	Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager
Adrian Brooker	Ecologist
Paul Monaghan	Department of the Built Environment

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Susan Rose (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee) and Richard Sumray (London Council of Sport and Recreation).

Chairman's welcome

The Chairman welcomed two new members of the Consultative Committee, Ray Booth (Barnet Mencap) and Thomas Radice (Heath and Hampstead

Society), to their first Committee meeting. She expressed members' sincere thanks to Xohan Duran for his contribution to the Consultative Committee as a representative of disabled users of the Heath.

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 previous meeting held on 9 March 2015 be agreed, subject to the following amendments:-

1. Apologies

The addition of Helen Payne (Friends of Kenwood).

5. Superintendent's Update

In response to a comment by Michael Hammerson the Conservation and Trees Manager agreed to consider whether the replacement would be a lime or **oak** tree.

Matters Arising

The Chairman and Superintendent of Hampstead Heath updated members on the following:

Park Champions

Councillor Melvin Cohen had agreed to be Park Champion for areas of the Heath within the London Borough of Barnet and Councillor Sally Gimson had agreed to be Park Champion for areas within the London Borough of Camden.

In response to a member's (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) question, the Superintendent advised that the Park Champions would act as a contact regarding local matters concerning or within their borough. The appointment of local Park Champions to the City of London Corporation's open spaces was important to the City Corporation as many sites are located within other boroughs.

Ivy House

No planning notifications had been received regarding Ivy House, which overlooked Golders Hill Park. The Superintendent would contact the London Borough of Barnet regarding this matter.

4. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH SPORTS ADVISORY FORUM MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum held on 11 May 2015 be noted.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update on management and operational activities across the

Heath since March 2015. The Superintendent advised members of the following matters:

Events

28,000 visitors to the Heath had attended the Affordable Art Fair (AAF) and GROW London in June 2015. This represented a 10% increase in visitors to the AAF and a 34% increase at GROW London. 2,000 people also attended the City of London Festival event and a good attendance was expected at the Give it a Go! Festival on 12 July 2015.

Members noted that the music nights held on Fridays had been working well.

Men's Pond Fatality

An inquest would be taking place in August 2015 at the St. Pancras Coroner's Court.

Conservation and Ecology

The stock pond meadow had recently been baled. The stumpery at Golders Hill Park had water flowing through and round it which would be monitored by staff on site.

In response to a member's (Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee) question regarding appropriate bird feed, the Superintendent advised that an advice notice had been drafted and would be installed at appropriate ponds following feedback from the Heath and Hampstead Society. Staff would ensure that notices were visible and not obscured.

In response to a member's (Highgate Society) question regarding the timing of the hay-making, the Ecologist advised that refuges for insect pupae would remain available in 20% of each meadow. Each meadow would be baled at different times so other meadows would be fully available as a refuge.

Parliament Hill

The mini roundabout at the Traditional Playground had been repaired and was back in use.

Ranger Team Update

The sink hole near the Vale of Health had been repaired and the gate and latch-post were removed.

Tree Team Update

An Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) nest was discovered and removed from Queen's Park in June 2015. Subsequently, seven nests had been discovered at Hampstead Heath and contractors would be instructed to remove those on City Corporation land in the next two days. Nests had been discovered in a variety of other London boroughs including Lambeth, Southwark, and Epsom and Ewell.

In response to a member's (Highgate Society) question regarding the financial implications of monitoring OPM nests, the Chairman advised that the City

Corporation's Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee had requested funding from the Chairman of Policy and Resources. The Superintendent added that the initial surveys carried out by the Forestry Commission were at no cost to the City Corporation.

In response to a further member's (Heath Hands) question regarding access restrictions, the Superintendent advised that plastic fencing was being erected around nest trees before the nests were removed. Regular monitoring and inspections should reduce the risk of having to restrict public access to certain areas. The Conservation and Trees Manager added that occurrences of people actually coming into contact with the caterpillars (i.e. skin contact) were rare. A leaflet produced by the Forestry Commission was circulated to all members present.

Swimming

The hot water system at the Kenwood Ladies' Pond had been repaired and the boiler replaced.

Awards

Judging for the Green Flag and London in Bloom awards had been completed recently. Results were expected to be announced in late July for the Green Flag award and mid-September for the London in Bloom award.

RESOLVED – That the Superintendent's update be noted.

6. **HAMPSTEAD HEATH PONDS PROJECT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update on the progression of the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project since March 2015.

In response to a member's (Friends of Kenwood) question regarding access at the Viaduct Pond, the Superintendent advised that the new pathways would be open to the public from mid-July. He added that Heath users would be discouraged from using the network of informal paths through undergrowth recently created by members of the public.

In response to a further member's (Highgate Society) question regarding the turf to be installed at the grass spillway, the Superintendent advised that the area would be watered sufficiently once the turf arrived. The seed mix for the turf comprised 80% grass and 20% wildflower seed. Some access may be restricted in the form of stock fencing to allow turf and seeded areas to establish.

Members were also advised that the time-lapse camera had been stolen twice so a third camera was to be installed at a higher level to avoid further theft. The Assistant Director of Engineering advised that it would be too costly to remove and re-install the camera each night and day and this would affect the quality of the images as it may not be installed to the exact same position.

RESOLVED – That the Ponds Project update report be noted.

7. **PONDS PROJECT EDUCATION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath regarding the progress of the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project Education Programme, which was launched in March 2015.

Members were advised that the Education Project Officer would welcome any further connections with local secondary schools. The monthly activity report could be circulated to members electronically upon request.

RESOLVED – That the Ponds Project Education Programme update report be noted.

8. **REPTILES ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH - AN UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update of the status of reptiles on the Heath since the London, Essex and Hertfordshire Amphibian and Reptile Trust (LEHART) survey of reptiles was carried out in 2008/09.

The Ecologist advised that there had been an increase in the reptile population since the survey as the number of sightings had consistently increased. He added that an updated version of the map of historical and recent grass snake records would be circulated again after the meeting. In response to a member's question, the Ecologist advised that sightings of reptiles in local private gardens could not be included in the map as there was no official record of these.

RESOLVED – That the update of reptiles on Hampstead Heath be noted.

9. **PARLIAMENT HILL VIEWPOINT INTERPRETATION**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that informed members of an interim solution to provide up-to-date interpretation of the iconic views from Parliament Hill.

The Superintendent advised that a QR Code linked to an annotated image of the view on the City Corporation website had been installed at the summit of Parliament Hill at the beginning of July. He added that a working group would be established to consider how best to develop interpretations of both strategic views, the second being on the east side of Parliament Hill, lower than the summit. Pruning of trees to one side of this area would be carried out in autumn 2015 to help open up views of all the principal towers of the Palace of Westminster. The working group would also consider the type of signage and the inclusion of appropriate markings of the historical landscape.

In response to members' questions, the Superintendent advised that English Heritage were responsible for information signage at viewpoints on Kenwood land. A member (Friends of Kenwood) added that the latest proposal involved an image of historic buildings engraved on stone, which would require planning permission in November 2015 if agreed.

In response to members' questions regarding the erection of new buildings within the strategic sight-line, the Superintendent advised that although officers

would like to be able to monitor future planning applications for developments that might affect the strategic view but staff resources were limited and directed towards protecting the Heath from the impact of development adjacent to or in close proximity to the Heath. It was ultimately the responsibility of the local planning authority to consider the impact of planning applications upon the strategic views.

RESOLVED – That the Parliament Hill viewpoint interpretation be noted.

10. OUTDOOR GYM LOCATION PROPOSAL

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that sought members' views regarding the outdoor gym to be located at the Trim Trail at Parliament Hill. The proposal for the installation of outdoor gym equipment met the guidance set out in the Hampstead Heath Management Plan for alterations or creation of new sports facilities in designated sports areas.

The Operational Services Manager advised that, subject to funding provided by the London Borough of Camden (LBC) and the proposal being approved, the new outdoor gym equipment would be installed alongside the existing Trim Trail equipment which would remain in place. Members were supportive of the outdoor gym being located at the Trim Trail but noted concerns such as the dangers for young children playing on or with the equipment given its close proximity to the children's playground.

In response to a member's (Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association) question, the Operational Services Manager advised that LBC had managed and maintained the eight other outdoor gym locations within the borough. The Committee noted the resolution of the City of London Open Spaces Committee that decisions on sport and play equipment funding offers should be based on the principle that any offer should be self-funding for the lifetime of the equipment and its removal. The Operational Services Manager added that a representative from LBC had reported no instances of vandalism at other outdoor gyms in the borough.

RESOLVED – That the proposed location of the outdoor gym be supported by the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee.

11. OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2015-18 SUMMARY

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces that provided details of the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan 2015-2018.

Members requested that a summary text of the Business Plan and Risk Register, including references relevant to the Heath such as tree disease and the sports programme, be presented to the Consultative Committee in future. In response to a member's question regarding possible surplus assets, the Superintendent advised that the City Corporation was currently undertaking an operational property review that may result in various huts, cabins, tool sheds etc. being deemed surplus to requirement in order to alleviate pressure on the repairs and maintenance budgets.

The Remembrancer addressed members regarding the proposed changes to the legislation governing the Heath, which could be sought through a City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Bill. The Bill would be deposited in Parliament as a Private Bill in November 2015 subject to the approval of the Policy and Resources Committee in July and the Court of Common Council in September or October. The Remembrancer noted that interested parties could petition against the Bill during the Select Committee stage in Parliament, but expressed the hope that a consensus could be achieved through prior discussion. Members agreed that it was best for their views to be discussed with the Open Spaces Department and the Remembrancer's Office prior to the Bill being deposited.

Members representing the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association and the Heath and Hampstead Society expressed concerns that the conservation and preservation aspects of the Hampstead Heath Act 1871 should be maintained. Members also suggested that the Consultative Committee be given the opportunity to scrutinise eventual changes to management powers such as the terms of any future proposed lettings or licences.

Meetings could be scheduled with relevant officers upon request and members were encouraged to express the views of their organisations in writing to the Open Spaces Department and the Remembrancer's Office as soon as possible.

RESOLVED – That the Open Spaces Business Plan 2015-18, including the changes to management powers, income generation and enforcement which might be sought through the promotion of a City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Bill, be noted.

12. **QUESTIONS**

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath updated the Consultative Committee regarding three questions raised by a member (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee) prior to the meeting. He advised that the frequency of litter collections remained consistent; a perceived increase in build-up of litter around bins was due to the current busy summer period. Wire cages were added to many bins at this time of year to add capacity and timber cladding would be introduced around bins in popular areas.

In response to the member's question regarding restoration of meadows following the National Cross-Country event, the Superintendent advised that there had been a slow response to the grass and wildflower seed mix that was sown after the event due to the cold, dry spring. Lighter touch techniques would be used after future events and staff would be more responsive to areas drying quickly rather than focussing on particularly wet areas.

In response to the member's final question, the Superintendent advised that the condition of pond viewing shelves would be monitored regularly and improved where necessary.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Superintendent advised that 2,800 people visited the Lido on 1 July 2015, the hottest day of the year so far. He added that the figures for voluntary donations collected during this busy period would be available shortly. The remainder of the week and weekend were also extremely busy so the Constabulary were present to monitor queues. Ten successful rescues were carried out in the Mixed Pond on 1 July and it was suggested that this good work from Heath lifeguards should be publicised as a reminder to non-regular swimmers not to misjudge their ability.

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

There was none.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED – That the date of the next meeting to be held on Monday 9 November 2015 be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

Chairman

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