

HIGHGATE WOOD JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 22 April 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee held at
Highgate Wood Offices, Highgate Wood, Muswell Hill Road, N10 3JN on
Wednesday, 22 April 2015 at 12.00 pm

Present

Members:

Jeremy Simons (Chairman)
Ann Holmes
Professor John Lumley
Barbara Newman
Stephanie Beer (Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association)
Peter Corley (Tree Trust for Haringey)
Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society)
Alison Watson (Friends of Queen's Wood)

Officers:

David Arnold	Town Clerk's Department
Bob Warnock	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
Jonathan Meares	Highgate Wood Conservation and Trees Manager

Also present:

Stephen Baron

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman), Jan Brooker (Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee), Marguerite Clark (Highgate Society), Councillor Gail Engert (London Borough of Haringey), Councillor Bob Hare (London Borough of Haringey), and Lucy Roots (Muswell Hill Friends of the Earth).

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

Ann Holmes declared a non-pecuniary interest in any discussions relating to the Pavilion Café as she was a personal friend of the owner.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the last meeting held on 18 November 2014 be approved subject the following amendments:-

Oak Decline

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

Tree Disease and Biosecurity issues

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 **Hampstead Heath**.

Matters Arising

Conservation Management Plan Summary Document

Members were provided with the Summary Document which was tabled at the meeting.

Play Area and Recreation

Members were advised that repairs to the roof hut would start shortly.

Community and Events

In response to a member's question, the Highgate Wood and Conservation Manager advised that a Friends of Highgate Wood group would not be developed as contributions and participation from Heath Hands was increasing.

Development Issues

Members were advised that a planning application for the redevelopment of the former Haringey Magistrates Court had been approved by the London Borough of Haringey.

Weddings and Civil Ceremonies

In response to a member's question, the Superintendent advised that the possibility to provide weddings and civil ceremonies at Highgate Wood would not be pursued due to licensing and access issues.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE REPORT

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

Saving and Income Generation

By the 2017/18 Financial Year, the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces Department would be required to find £2.2m of savings, with £332,000 of savings identified across Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park in 2015/16.

Savings were being addressed through seven programmes that focussed on the following areas: learning; sports; Various Powers Bill; promotion of services; energy efficiency; fleet and equipment; and wayleaves. The Superintendent advised that officer project boards had now been set up for each of these programmes.

The Highgate Wood Conservation and Trees Manager added that Highgate Wood would be particularly affected by the Sports programme during a review of the true costs of its sports facilities. This would include benchmarking of fees for other sporting activities provided locally.

In response to a member's question, the Superintendent advised that donations for guided walks were not currently asked for but this could be considered.

Roman Kiln Project

Work was now underway to gather all the supporting documents that had to be submitted with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application. Letters of support would be obtained from local schools, The Museum of London and Bruce Castle Museum.

In response to a Member's question, the Superintendent advised that a fee of £4,500 would be paid to the small consultancy who had already produced the Interpretation and Display Plans for the reconfigured education building to help with assembling and submitting the Heritage Lottery Fund application.

Sustainability

The Open Spaces Department had recently launched its Sustainability Improvement Plan 2015-2017, which focussed on three actions: an increased focus on driving down energy and water usage; a department wide review and rationalisation of vehicle and machinery use; and a programme of delivering further Solar Power Projects or other sustainable energy technologies.

Conservation Management Plan

The images from the recent LIDAR survey of Highgate Wood and Queen's Wood were extremely interesting but the definition of the survey was not sufficiently detailed to be of any real value. A better way to carry out the survey would need to be established.

Woodland Conservation and Tree Management

Work continued with Heath Hands Volunteers to construct dead hedging around sensitive areas where there had been significant compaction, and encourage natural regeneration and soil remediation.

Tree Disease

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) was advancing ever nearer and may well reach Hampstead Heath in summer 2015. The caterpillar had been found in several locations in Regent's Park, and was also present a few kilometres to the west in Brent Park just off the North Circular. The Division now had an Action Plan for OPM which had been circulated to all the sites and a number of staff attended training days organised by the Forestry Commission.

Play Area and Recreation

The sports field was gradually recovering from the wet winter months and starting to dry out, although there are some drainage issues to be resolved before the cricket season gets underway.

Pavilion Café

The current lease holder had used the quiet winter trading period to make a series of improvements to the internal serving area and also carried out a spring clean of the storage area next to the compactor. Meetings would continue to take place to discuss further improvements.

Community and Events

The Highgate Wood Heritage Day Event had been renamed 'Community Day' and would be held on Sunday 6 September 2015. Members noted the name change and the Highgate Wood Conservation and Trees Manager advised that staff would be open to suggestions for the name of the event in 2016. He added that the Monkey Do climbing event would be available for two days this year instead of three in order to reduce costs.

Members suggested that the London Wildlife Trust could be invited to attend the event as long as this would not involve additional costs.

Infrastructure and Buildings

Repairs to the main pathways were underway, which should make a major difference to the quality of the surface. The Superintendent added that the office had a new boiler installed and this was now working well.

RESOLVED – That the Superintendent's update be noted.

5. **OPEN SPACES LEGISLATION**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath regarding an informal consultation concerning possible modifications to the legislation governing the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces.

Members were advised that the changes would help to increase income generation at the Pavilion Café, which was currently restricted to a maximum three year licence under current legislation. Changes to management powers could lead to the consideration of dog control orders at Highgate Wood and the provision of licensed fitness sessions. Alison Watson (Friends of Queen's Wood) suggested that Queen's Wood be consulted on any future dog control policies.

The Superintendent added that any comments from members on the Changing Legislation document could be sent to him and the Highgate Wood Conservation and Trees Manager.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. **UPDATE ON TREE SAFETY MANAGEMENT AT THE NORTH LONDON OPEN SPACES DIVISION**

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath that provided an update on areas of Tree Safety Management such as tree risk management guidance, tree inspections process, tree incident reporting, and tree health.

Members were advised that one quarter of the 25,000 trees across the North London Open Spaces Division were found in the 28 hectares at Highgate Wood. It was not practicable to inspect every single one of these trees as there was not sufficient resource to do this. An inspection process based on risk assessment and priority zoning was used at Highgate Wood.

In response to a member's question, the Highgate Wood Conservation and Trees Manager advised that there were 60-70 incidents of tree failure each year amongst the stock of 25,000 trees. An external risk audit was carried out by a qualified Tree Safety Consultant.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. **CYCLING IN HIGHGATE WOOD**

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath regarding the enforcement of Byelaw 10, which currently imposed a ban on cycling at Highgate Wood.

Members noted that there was and should be an emphasis on pedestrian priority in Highgate Wood, despite the increased usage of bicycles in London in recent years. The Highgate Wood Conservation and Trees Manager advised that staff would consult with the London Borough of Haringey (LBH) to help make Muswell Hill Road a safer cycling route if the recommendation to maintain Byelaw 10 was agreed. In response to a member's question, he added that the LBH would be looking into funding for improved cycling routes from Transport for London.

The Committee heard from the member of the public who had requested for the prohibition of cycling in Highgate Wood to be lifted based on the safer cycling environment the Wood offers compared to local roads. After careful consideration, members noted that the risk of collision with walkers would be too high as the current network of pathways in the Wood was not wide enough for both cyclists and pedestrians and that the surfaces were not suitable. The addition of separate cycling paths would also not be possible without the cutting down of trees to widen pathways, which would not be acceptable.

The Chairman noted that the view of this Committee that Byelaw 10 be maintained and enforced but that children under the age of 12 be allowed to cycle under close supervision would be passed on to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

RESOLVED – That:-

- a) the report be noted; and
- b) the views of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee in May 2015.

8. **THE STATE OF UK PUBLIC PARKS 2014 - RENAISSANCE TO RISK?**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the issues relevant to the Division in managing and supporting green spaces across London.

Members were advised that the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee were in favour of appointing those members of the Highgate Wood Joint Consultative Committee who were elected local Ward

Councillors as Park Champion(s). The Superintendent added that he would approach the two members of this Committee who were Councillors for the LBH to appoint one or both as Park Champions for Highgate Wood.

RESOLVED – That the report and recommendation of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen’s Park Committee be noted.

9. **QUESTIONS**

In response to a member’s question regarding Alexandra Palace railway land, the Highgate Wood Conservation and Trees Manager advised that it would be difficult to restrict access to the area under the bridge but it would be monitored.

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

The Chairman informed members that this meeting was his last in his term as Chairman. He thanked the Committee for their support, participation and input during his term.

In response, the Committee thanked the Chairman for his positive influence and contribution to Highgate Wood during his term as Chairman.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED – That the date of the next meeting to be held on 18 November 2015 be noted.

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm

Chairman

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