

Committees	Dated:
Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee	7 March 2016 14 March 2016
Subject: Hampstead Heath Ponds Project – Progress Report	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath Project Director	For Discussion

Summary

The Ponds Project is now 10 months through its 18-month programme and is scheduled to finish by the end of October 2016. The construction works have now reached their maximum intensity, and BAM Nuttall have a team of 50 staff on site, spread across seven separate sites across the Heath. There remains a delay at the Model Boating Pond, caused by an issue with the temporary sheet-pile dam last year, but this should not extend the overall programme.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that members:

- Note this report.

Main Report

Background

1. As previously reported, the Ponds Project was initiated following a series of hydrological studies which revealed that, in the event of a severe storm, there was a risk the reservoirs on Hampstead Heath could overtop, potentially leading to erosion and dam failure, putting lives, property and infrastructure at risk. A wide range of options was evaluated, and one selected and approved in June 2014 for each chain of Ponds, on the basis that it met the necessary legal, operation and design criteria. Planning consent was granted in January 2015 by the London Borough of Camden's Development Control Committee, subject to Conditions and a Section 106 agreement. Preparation works took place in February and March 2015, with the main works starting on 13 April.

Planning Conditions and Section 106

2. City Officers are continuing to liaise with colleagues in Atkins and the London Borough of Camden to discharge the Planning Conditions associated with the approval, in line with the work programme. The final three Conditions relate to the finishes of the new Kenwood Ladies' Pond changing rooms and are still to be submitted to Camden.
3. A separate planning application has been submitted to cover a revised design of a small section of the end of the new wall at Highgate No. 1 Pond. This section is to be constructed in private property and, following local consultation, the design has been altered to meet the requirements of the landowner and minimise impact

on the trees. A separate application is required as the property is listed and in a Conservation area.

4. The Community Working Group established as part of the Conditions continues to meet monthly to hear about the programme for the next two months, and to monitor various aspects of the project including complaints, environmental data and the programme. Guided walks for this group and other stakeholders also take place regularly. Camden's request that three apprentices be employed has now been fulfilled.

Construction work

5. On the Highgate Chain, the large-scale earthworks have been concentrated at the Model Boating Pond and as previously reported there have been delays caused by issues with the temporary dam. At the end of last year an extension to the work compound was requested (to the west of the current compound) by BAM Nuttall as the nature and treatment of the wet silt was not as anticipated. This area has now been fenced off and is being used to store the silt enabling the borrow pits in the existing compound to be opened up and clay extracted.
6. BAM Nuttall slowed down work in this area due to the winter conditions, which make moving clay and silt more difficult. BAM have been moving the stored silt to the extended compound area to free up space for clay excavation, and we expect final silt removal from the dam site and then clay excavation from the pits to start in the next few weeks. Officers are looking at the final shape of the hillside leading down to Model Boating Pond in the light of the revised position of the gas main, the volumes of silt recovered, and the fact that testing has confirmed more of the clay has been found to be suitable for use in the dam construction.
7. Desilting work, using a suction technique, has taken place on three of the ponds (Stock Pond, Men's Bathing Pond, Mixed Bathing Pond) and is currently underway at Viaduct Pond.
8. A value engineering process took place at the end of last year on the new prefabricated changing and lifeguard facility for the Kenwood Ladies' Pond. This saved a total of £30k through a process of re-sourcing fixtures and fittings, although this was offset by the need for shutters to be included in the specification for the new building. The whole design process took part in consultation with the lifeguards and Kenwood Ladies' Pond Association. The building, which is under construction in a warehouse in Yorkshire, has been visited by members of the project team, representatives from the Kenwood Ladies' Pond Association and the staff who will be based at the new facility.
9. In early April, the building will arrive in five separate large pieces and will be craned into position on the new slab. A trial run took place in February to ensure the lorry carrying the building sections would fit when delivered. This was successful apart from at one location on the path close to Model Boating Pond where there was no way round an Alder tree on the boundary path. If this tree is felled, a replacement semi-mature tree will be replanted in an appropriate location.

10. While the Ladies' Pond is closed for the construction work, the Mixed Pond has been operating as a Ladies only facility. We have agreed with BAM that they may work on Saturday mornings (as permitted by the planning permission) at the Ladies' Pond so the construction programme can be met.
11. On the Hampstead Chain, the major earthworks are focussed on the Catchpit area and also include a large borrow pit and compound in Pryor's Field with a connecting haul route to the Catchpit. Work in this location started in January with the borrow pit area and haul road being fenced off and top soil removed. Works will be taking place in this location until summer. Work on Hampstead 1 and 2 Ponds is proceeding as planned.

Education

12. The Ponds Project Education Programme launched 11 months ago, with the aim to engage and educate children in a range of curriculum based topics, utilising opportunities provided by the Ponds Project. The main focus is on Secondary Schools and to date we have run 40 secondary sessions for 921 students, putting us behind schedule on this aspect of the project. We had planned to have delivered 67 at this stage. The reason this figure is behind is due to lack of uptake from secondary schools. We have also run 19 primary sessions for 512 students, putting us ahead of schedule for Primary engagement. Our sessions have received excellent feedback from teachers.
13. There are currently seven education sessions on offer, as well as bespoke secondary sessions. The Ponds Project education team is looking into developing and delivering a cross-curricular event with the Museum of London, and British Science Week activities with BAM Nuttall.
14. Over the winter we ran a Writing Competition for Secondary school students. Their challenge was to write a short story, up to 1000 words long, describing how a Ford Cortina ended up in the Model Boating Pond. Ninety entries were received, and the winners for both the younger and older age groups attend Camden School for Girls. Their entries can be found on the Ponds Project education webpage, www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/pondsprojecteducation.

Conclusion

11. The project is now progressing at the expected speed. Communications and consultation with stakeholders is working well and complaints continue to be low in number (four logged in February), despite the project now being widely spread across the Heath. Due to ground conditions and bad weather, the winter period brought challenges, but as we leave this period behind, we expect progress to pick up speed. The Project remains within budget and within the original programme.

Previous committee reports are available at: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/committees

Jennifer Wood

Ponds Project Liaison Officer

T: 020 7332 3847

E: Jennifer.wood@cityoflondon.gov.uk