

HIGHGATE WOOD CONSULTATIVE GROUP
Wednesday, 31 May 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Highgate Wood Consultative Group held at Highgate Wood Offices, Highgate Wood, Muswell Hill Road, N10 3JN on Wednesday, 31 May 2017 at 12.00 pm

Present

Members:

Karina Dostalova (Chairman)
Anne Fairweather (Deputy Chairman)
Stephanie Beer
Marguerite Clark
Councillor Gail Engert
Councillor Bob Hare
Jan Brooker
Lucy Roots
Alison Watson
Michael Hammerson

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	Town Clerk's Department
Bose Kayode	Town Clerk's Department
Peter Cannon	Town Clerk's Department
Colin Buttery	Director of Open Spaces
Jonathan Meares	Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager
Richard Gentry	Constabulary and Queen's Park Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy John Tomlinson and Peter Corley (Tree Trust for Haringey).

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. APPOINTMENT OF THE HIGHGATE WOOD CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Members noted a report of the Town Clerk detailing the appointment of the Consultative Group.

The Chairman noted that John Barker, a longstanding Member of the Grand Committee, had recently passed away.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2016 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising Planning – Water House

A Member noted that the appeal concerning the Water House development had been dropped and the house subsequently sold. The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that he had met the new owner, who had been sympathetic to the issues around the site. Members noted that the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee had been invited to visit the site.

Hedgehogs

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that a survey in early 2017 had produced no evidence of a significant population in the Wood.

5. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE REPORT

Members considered an update report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath regarding Highgate Wood and the following points were made.

Working Arrangements

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that new closing times were working well, in that there had been few complaints and the new routines was easier for staff members.

Roman Kiln Project

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that the Comptroller and City Solicitor was reviewing the issues around the role of a charity governing the kiln. In response to a question, the Town Clerk replied that Catherine West, the local parliamentary candidate, had attended the Roman Kiln item on that morning's walk in a private capacity and had been advised that the visit was not to be used for party political purposes.

Sustainability

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that new boilers had been installed in the Wood.

Conservation

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that Storm Doris had caused some damage to the Wood, with some work required by tractors to clear the public highways. He further reported that work had been conducted on the 2017 Conservation Area between December 2016 - March 2017, which had involved some excellent examples of joint working with colleagues and volunteers across the City's North London Open Spaces. Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager agreed to note a Member's suggestion that a resistivity survey be conducted in the 2017 Conservation Area.

Squirrel Traps

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that these had been installed at a cost of £60 each and had captured 20 thus far. The reduction in grey squirrel population would help prevent bark stripping of trees such as hornbeam in the Wood. The Director of Open Spaces noted that the Prince of Wales had set up a House of Lords Group to monitor the control of grey

squirrels. The Town Clerk agreed to circulate a weblink on the initiative to the Group outside of the meeting.

Volunteer Activity

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that the Wood benefited from a very committed group of volunteers, whose work on the bluebell area had been particularly welcome.

Oak Decline and Oak Regeneration

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that this work was ongoing and would be included in the new Woodland Management Plan.

Tree Disease and Biosecurity Issues

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager reported that Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) had been detected in Queen's Wood and was expected to arrive in Highgate Wood during Summer 2017. In response to a question, he replied that spraying against OPM was intensive and involved a 50m radius.

The Director of Open Spaces noted that he chaired the National Oak Processionary Moth Group. It had been reported all across London since it first appeared in Richmond in 2007. Containment measures had ensured the spread of OPM had slowed. Other countries such as Germany had attempted to control the spread through using aerial spray. In response to a comment regarding the public health risk, the Director of Open Spaces agreed to review whether epipens could be made available at sites where OPM had been identified.

Sport and Recreation

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that the football teams using the Wood had been reimbursed for the fees paid for the changing rooms that had faulty showers.

Pavilion Café

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that a three year lease had been granted to the current operators by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at its meeting on 15 May 2017.

Community and Events

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that the winter programme of walks had been well attended and had resulted in an income of £11,000. A decision had been made to maintain future programmes at the same level as any increase would have an impact on staff capacity. In response to a question, he agreed to provide a report at a future meeting on average attendee numbers, fees, and rules on attendance.

In response to a comment from a Member on the use of the Wood by schoolchildren, the Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that it was a challenge to encourage local schools to engage with the Wood. The Queen's Park & Constabulary Manager noted this was a similar issue affecting Queen's Park. The Chairman added that the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Group

had reported that school budgets appeared to be having an impact on the use of open spaces such as the Heath, and committed to raising the issue at the next meeting of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee.

Infrastructure and Buildings

The Highgate Wood & Conservation Manager noted that the electric gates at the Onslow Entrance were now operational.

6. OPEN SPACES & HERITAGE BUSINESS PLAN 2017/18

Members discussed a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Open Spaces & Heritage Business Plan 2017/18 and the following points were made.

- In response to a question, the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that his department had a lot of survey data which gave him confidence that the plan covered all of the open spaces assets managed by the City of London Corporation.
- In response to a question, the Director of Open Spaces replied that a overarching customer satisfaction survey had not been conducted recently but some specific surveys had been conducted i.e. on cafes.
- In response to a question, the Director of Open Spaces agreed that the use of 'outcomes' and 'outputs' was potentially confusing and agreed to review the language used in the plan.

7. QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT Timings and venues of meetings

In response to a question from the Chairman, Members agreed to hold both of their annual meetings at the Wood, and to commence the walk at 4.00pm followed by a meeting at 6.00pm with afternoon tea.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the next meeting would be at the Wood on 1 November 2017 at 6.00pm, preceded by a walk at 4.00pm.

The meeting ended at 1.23 pm

Chairman

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