

Committee Queen's Park Consultative Group	Dated: 29 November 2017
Subject: Superintendent's Update – Queen's Park	Public
Report of: Bob Warnock – Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	For Discussion
Report author: Richard Gentry – Constabulary & Queen's Park Manager	

Summary

This report provides an update on management and operational activities within the Park since June 2017, including an update on the recent Café tender process.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that:

- Members provide feedback in relation to the events proposed for 2018.
- Members provide feedback in relation to the Café tender evaluation.
- The views of the Queen's Park Consultative Group will be conveyed to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee at their next meeting in February 2018.

Main Report

Background

1. The Park continues to provide a much loved and cherished Open Space in the London Borough of Brent. Facilities available in the Park include an inclusive Children's Play Area, tennis and pitch & putt facilities, a Paddling Pool and a Children's Farm. The Park contains a number of valuable habitats and heritage features.

Operational Management

1. Two recruitment campaigns have been run in 2017 in an attempt to fill a vacant Team Leader post following a restructure of the Queen's Park Team. The post was offered to a candidate but was turned down as the applicant had been offered a secondment to work elsewhere. The Park Manager is working with the HR Business Partner to review the Job Description and Person Specification for this post, before re-advertising in early 2018. A further update on this post will be given to this group in April 2018.

2. The Queen's Park Team are now operating a 1:3 weekend rota, with a full time equivalent establishment of 8 members of staff. No issues have been encountered with the rota either by the staff or operationally. During the summer months and in to the autumn, casual staff have supported the full time staff with the ongoing maintenance of the Park.
3. Cyclical works have been carried out in the Park as part of the City of London Surveyor's Department Cyclical Works Programme. Works in the current 2017/18 Financial Year have included; resurfacing of the Paddling Pool; the installation of new pump equipment; an electrical rewire at the Pool. The Play Area toilets have also been rewired and the lighting replaced. The installed lighting is now operated by a sensor.
4. The City Surveyor's Department is in the process of obtaining quotations for the resurfacing and repainting of the tennis courts.

Projects and Programmes

5. Queen's Park Children's Farm.
 - The Project Team have been meeting to discuss the project plan for the Children's Farm. This has included costings for the project and a delivery timescale. Staff will aim to deliver much of this project internally, utilising skills from within the Division and working in partnership with colleagues.
6. Queen's Park Play Area Toilets
 - There is evidence of movement in the walls and floor of the Ladies' Toilets by the Play Area. The defect has been reported to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), part of the City of London Surveyor's Department. Floor tiles in the toilet have begun to lift and there are cracks in some of the walls. Any suggested works to improve this facility will be placed on hold until further investigation and a report has been received from the TAG Team.
7. Queen's Park Sandpit
 - The City of London Procurement Team is undertaking a tender for the procurement of play equipment, including installation. The tender ends on the 21 November 2017 and an evaluation process will follow. Much of the ground works and preparation will be carried out internally, to ensure the project remains within the agreed budget.
8. Queen's Park Café
 - The City of London Procurement Team has run a tender for the lease of the Queen's Park Café. In the interim, Hoxton Beach have provided a catering offer following the departure of the previous tenant on 1 October 2017. The tender closed on the 12 November and bids received will be evaluated after this date. Engagement has taken place with local stakeholders, enabling them to consider the catering concept and menu offers. A further update on the tender will be presented to this Group at their meeting on the 29 November 2017.

Sustainability

9. Recycling continues to be removed from the Park by an external contractor, Veolia. In the Financial Year 2016/17 the Park spent £2,680 to provide this service.
10. Green waste is removed from the Park by a City of London contractor, Amey. In the Financial Year 2016/17 £10,810 was spent removing green waste from the Park. The removal of recycled materials and waste is funded through the Superintendent's Local Risk Budget.

Ecology and Environment

11. The Park succumbed to Oak Processionary Moth in June 2017. The Arb Team have visited the Park 11 times since June 2017. The works carried out by the Team included:
 - Surveying for Oak Processionary Moth nest were undertaken in July. Three nests across two trees (one oak tree north west of the staff yard, and one oak tree in the southern end of the staff yard) were identified. Removal of the three nests was carried out by a specialist contractor in July.
 - Removal of Massaria diseased branches on London Plane trees (July & August).
 - Reduction of two dead horse chestnut trees along Milman Road and Harvist Road (August).
 - Removal of the ash monolith along Kingswood Avenue, which was deemed to be unstable (September).
 - Tree Safety audit inspection of all trees within the Park (September).
 - Reduction of the lime tree south of bandstand, due to stability (October).
12. The Director of Open Spaces has formed a Biosecurity Working Group made up of Tree Managers from The Royal Parks and the City of London's Open Spaces. The group will meet annually but will also provide an opportunity to collaborate more effectively.
13. As part of the Annual Work Programme, staff have completed a project to re-seed the amenity turfed areas, the ornamental grass area in the Quiet Garden and the Pitch & Putt course. The process has required the Team to seed, fertilise, weed and aerate the turf. It is estimated that £2,000 has been saved by utilising the skills of the Queen's Park Team in place of an external contractor.

14. The entrance gate notice boards have been refreshed with an updated map, which can also be found on the Queen's Park web page.
15. Queen's Park has retained its Green Flag and Green Heritage status; it has also achieved a Gold Award in the London in Bloom Awards. These awards demonstrate the dedication of the Team in delivery a green spaces which is recognised as being of a high quality.
16. Following the closure of the West Ham Park Nursery, bedding and baskets were procured through an external supplier. The hanging baskets in particular looked spectacular throughout the summer and attracted attention from visitors.
17. The Park Team Leader and the Senior Hampstead Heath Ecologist are in the process of developing a Draft Management Plan for the Woodland Walk. Further engagement with the local community and this Group will be carried out to help inform this draft plan. An update on this plan will be provided to this Group at their meeting in April 2018.

Visitor and Community

18. In excess of 350 children from local schools have attended the Park recently to assist with Daffodil bulb planting. 3,500 bulbs have been planted in the Field of Hope, adjacent to the Play Area.
19. The Transition Town vegetable garden at the rear of the café continues to be maintained with new volunteers recruited by the Transition Town group to support this initiative. The raised planting beds in the playground area have flourished and a new water butt, purchased by the group, has been installed in this area to allow the herbs and vegetables to be watered on a daily basis.
20. The Hampstead Heath Constabulary continues to visit the Park and support the staff in educating our visitors to use the space responsibly and the enforcement of the byelaws.
21. Queen's Park has obtained a licence to hold Marriages and Civil Partnerships on the Bandstand. There is interest already in this location as a venue. Further marketing of the location will take place over the winter and spring.
22. The RSPB held their "Wild Park" sessions throughout the summer, teaching children about nature and the environment. They engaged with over 1,600 children and adults, and the feedback received from the public has been positive. It is hoped that this project will continue in 2018.
23. Playing Wild, delivered by a member of staff from the Divisional Learning Team, has been going really well at Queen's Park. The project engaged with 129 people at Queen's Park Day. Six participants on 28 September 2017 (three adults and three children) taking part in autumn art based activities and a scavenger hunt. Eight participants on 26 October 2017 (three adults and five children) taking part in Halloween and autumn themed activities.

Events

24. Following the success of Shakespeare in the Squares in 2017, a request has been received to hold the event in Queen's Park Quiet Garden again on 23 June 2018. This popular event has been held in the Park for the last two years.
25. *Where is the Nomad* held four cinema screenings in 2017. The City of London will discuss with them any proposed dates for 2018, encouraging a more diverse and increased audience numbers to attend screenings over the summer.
26. Queen's Park Area Residents Association (QPARA) held another very successful Queen's Park Day on the 17 September 2017. In excess of 11,000 people attended the event. The event was attended by the Mayor of Brent, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee and local MP, Tulip Sadiq. The Mayor of Brent, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman were complimentary of the event.
27. In 2018, it is proposed to hold a book festival in the Queen's Park Ward. A provisional request has been made to hold this event in the Park.
28. QPARA are also planning their bi-annual Open Gardens and Studios event in 2018. It is usual for Queen's Park to feature in this event as the hub of the local community.
29. The Queen's Park Manager is seeking feedback from the Group in relation to the proposed 2018 events outlined within this report.

Sports and Recreation

30. Tennis bookings are now managed through a system called ClubSpark. Bookers can access the courts via a keypad. A review of the tennis coaching model will be carried out over the winter with support from the Lawn Tennis Association. An update on the coaching model will be provided to this Group at the meeting in April 2018.
31. The introduction of Junior ParkRun in the Park has been well received. The ParkRun is almost a year old and receives an average 65 of junior runners each Sunday morning.
32. Regent Brass performed nine concerts on the Bandstand and ten magic shows for children were performed by the Play Area. An estimated 300 children and adults people attended these performance at any one time. These events are provided at no cost to our visitors.
33. The main field in the Park was used for school sports days by seven schools in the summer.

Fees & Charges 2018/19

34. The proposed fees and charges for 2018/19 were circulated to Members via email on 20 October. No adverse feedback was received from Members of the Group.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

35. This report will help fulfil the City of London Corporation's Corporate Plan 2015-19; to provide valued services, such as education, employment, culture and leisure, to London and the nation. The report also meets the Department's Strategic Goals and Objectives; To protect and conserve the ecology, biodiversity and heritage of our sites, Embed financial sustainability across our activities by delivering identified programmes and projects, Enrich the lives of Londoners by providing high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities, Improve the health and wellbeing of community through access to green space and recreation. The report also contributes to the Departmental values of quality, inclusion, environment, promotion and people.
36. The City of London is statutorily obliged by virtue of various Acts of Parliament, and more specifically the Highgate and Kilburn Open Spaces Act 1886, to manage Queen's Park, protect it and make it available as open space for exercise and recreation. Queen's Park is also a registered charity. The City of London is allowed to make by-laws for the regulation of the Park and for appointing and regulating the duties and conduct of the Keepers employed in the Park. The City is not permitted to use the Park for any other purpose other than as a public park for the perpetual use of the public.

Implications

37. The operational requirements highlighted in the report will be met from the Superintendent's Local Risk Budget. Additional financial information will be provided at the meeting on the 29 November 2017.

Conclusion

38. The City of London continue to provide a much loved and respected Open Space for the benefit of the local community and wider London, meeting the charitable obligations for the use by the public for exercise and recreation. A number of projects are scheduled to be delivered in the next four years in the Park; the delivery of these projects will enhance the value of the green space to the local community and wider London.

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