

QUEEN'S PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE** held on **Wednesday 27th May 2015 at 6.30pm** at **Office 1, Beethoven Centre, Third Avenue, London W10 4JL**

PRESENT Cllrs Katie Cowan, Ryan Dalton, Joe Fernandes, Gill Fitzhugh Julius Hogben, Emma Morgan, Eartha Pond and Emma Sweeney

Also in attendance Mike Simpson – Director
1 member of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Philip Andokou – work commitment
Cllr Musa Ahmed

ELECTION OF CHAIRS

Election of Chairman for 2015-2016

EP.221 **RESOLVED** that Cllr Gill Fitzhugh will be Chairman of the Committee for 2015-2016

Election of Vice Chairman for 2015-2016

EP.222 **RESOLVED** that Cllr Katie Cowan will be Vice Chairman of the Committee for 2015-2016

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

To deal with any disclosure by Members of any dis-closable pecuniary interests and interest other than pecuniary interests, as defined under Queen's Park Community Council's Code of Conduct and the Localism Act 2011, in relation to matters on the agenda.

Cllr Gill Emma Sweeney declared a pecuniary in relation to the High Street Fund and plans for workshops

MINUTES

Minutes of the Environment and Open Spaces meeting – 22nd April 2015

EP.223 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Environment and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 22nd April 2015 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

Minutes of the Neighbourhood and Planning meeting – 6th May 2015

EP.224 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Neighbourhood and Planning Committee meeting held on 6th May 2015 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To establish the terms of reference for the Committee

EP.225 **RESOLVED** that the following terms of reference should be adopted for the Environment and Planning Committee:

Responsible for Queen's Park Community Council's role in the management and development of the buildings, public environment and open spaces in Queen's Park.

Responsible for the development of The Neighbourhood Plan for Queen's Park and achieving approval

Responsible for the improvement of the facilities at Queen's Park Gardens and the green and open spaces throughout the ward.

Responsible for the Asset transfer list and for keeping it up to date

Responsible for informing the Full Council of the Moberly/Jubilee development and ensuring that we achieve the best possible outcome for the residents of Queen's Park

To consider all planning applications submitted by Westminster City Council and submit observations to that authority without reference back to Council

To liaise with Westminster Council and developers to consider the appropriate type of housing including low cost housing schemes.

To develop a strategy for street use, transport and safety to benefit the community and to take this forward with Westminster Council and to review and respond to consultations and communications.

To consider the appearance of the ward and to work with Westminster City Council to implement improvements

To work towards making Queen's Park a more environmentally sustainable ward.

To encourage appropriate economic development for the benefit of the community whilst being aware of the immediate environment, impact on residential dwellings and provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan.

To monitor and promote public transport services and encourage sustainable transport within the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan.

To consider crime prevention measures including liaison with the police and the provision of CCTV cameras

FUNDING FOR WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL SHOPPING SURVEY

Following the discussion at the meeting of the Neighbourhood and Planning Committee on May 6th: to agree to pay £2,300 towards a shopping survey of The Harrow Road to which WCC is contributing £10,000.

EP.226 **RESOLVED** that the Committee will pay £2,300 towards a shopping survey of the Harrow Road

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Update on the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Plan including the High Street Fund

Cllr Gill Fitzhugh provided the following update:

The High Street Fund

QPCC were granted £20,000 by The High Street Fund to do the following:

- Make capital improvements to a High Street Shop
- Run themed workshops from the shop
- Further develop our Neighbourhood Plan

Following our meeting on May 6th I followed up the concerns voiced by Councillors about the furniture shop. I talked to the shop owner and to Klaudia Green. The outcome is as follows: The pet shop (548 Harrow Road) and the new shop in First Avenue and the furniture shop are all owned by the same person. Klaudia has never had any problems with the pet shop and the new shop is nothing to do with the furniture shop. There is a new lessee of the furniture shop who signed a new lease in late 2014.

As a result we now have an agreement to develop and re-open 548 Harrow Road and to use it for themed events up till July 3rd and to develop the shop in First Avenue and to open it and to use it for events from July 3rd till July 31st. I have permission from the High Street fund to develop the second shop in First Avenue as well as 548. I will take responsibility for furnishing the shops with trestle tables and stackable chairs, a toaster, a kettle, mugs and glasses and Publica will advise on shop identity, fliers posters and preparation of material for display in the shop

The High Street Shop

In the first case we need to do the following:

- Plan the opening hours of the shop
- Arrange a rota for managing the shops
- Liaise with the full council to agree other Cllrs and other agreed people using the shop
- Plan the themed work shops. These should include:
 - Retail in Queens Park especially in the Harrow Road and Kilburn Lane
 - Environment and Open Spaces in Queens Park especially Queens Park Gardens and the Canal. To cover sustainability and biodiversity

-Community resources especially in relation to young and old people-
Community safety touching on lights, crossings, lighting and access

- Planned events
Report on the Retail Survey and others

It was also suggested that any deep clean required for the shops would be paid for by the Council which was agreed

EP.227 **RESOLVED** that the Council will pay for any necessary cleaning of shops being used as workshops

Formation of a Working Group for the Neighbourhood Plan

EP.228 **RESOLVED** that a working group shall be formed to help deliver the Neighbourhood Plan, consisting of Cllrs Gill Fitzhugh, Ryan Dalton, Joe Fernandes

ASSET TRANSFER

Confirmation on when Westminster City Council received QPCC's list of community assets and any later additions

The Director advised that he had tried to contact WCC a number of times to confirm that they have received QPCC's list of assets but has still not had a response. He will inform Cllrs once he has had a response.

QUEEN'S PARK GARDENS

Update on Queen's Park Gardens

Cllr Katie Cowan provided the below update:

Further to conversations with Mike Simpson in early February 2015 we agreed that I would undertake some preliminary research and fact finding in order that the Queen's Park Community Council could make informed decisions as to our next steps regarding Queen's Park Gardens.

Over these 4 months I have attended various events and had detailed conversations with the people and organisations listed below:-

- Tony Leach, London Parks and Green Spaces Forum (<http://www.lpgsf.org.uk>), and also currently sitting on the Green Spaces Forum Consultation facilitated by Straight Talking Communications
- Dave Morris, London Green Spaces Friends Network and bi-monthly Friends Network Meeting to which Friends Groups from all over London report
- Daniel Raven Ellison, Greater National London Park Campaign – Launch Event
- Cathy Prisk, Outdoor People
- Cathy Maund, Hammersmith Community Gardens Association – Professional Open Day and further trip to Queen's Park Gardens, May 2015
- Mary O'Connell, Bankside Open Spaces Trust and walking visit of Parks in Southwark and Lambeth, May 2015
- Protecting Parks and Green Spaces Conference, GovKnow Policy Knowledge, May 2015
- Rebecca Cloke and Christina Gestra, Public Realm, WCC

Overview – Parks Funding

Our conversation regarding Queen's Park Gardens should be set within the context of this very simplistic potted overview of the current situation facing parks. Some of this is based on a presentation made last week by Julia Thrift, Head of Projects and Events and the Town & Country Planning Association. It is widely agreed that parks funding is facing a national crisis on a par with that seen in the 1980s. The greatest worry expressed is that this has followed a pattern of very gradual cuts over the last ten years and that the subsequent blight on communities often goes unreported. It is generally agreed that bigger and destination parks will be fine and that it is smaller green spaces in less affluent areas that are under the greatest threat. As has been reported to the Environment Committee before it is critical to remember that parks are not subject to statutory funding and it is generally believed a great deal of parks funding will not continue to be paid for from local authority amenity budgets – this is a situation already being played out in most councils and budget cuts have been severe. It is also interesting to note that on a national level green infrastructure guidance has recently been removed from the remit of planning. There is some good news. Organisations such as the Urban Green Spaces Task Force have been galvanised into action over the last 15 years and funding for parks projects has become available from a wide variety of sources such as The Heritage Lottery Fund and landfill charities (SITA and Nesta). The current Government have set up a Natural Capital Committee – interestingly formed by economists – to advise the Chancellor about Green Infrastructure Policy and Public Health benefits (where it is likely a lot of future parks policy will be formed). We have heard on the grapevine with reference to Westminster that Public Realm money is currently available for food growing projects, for example, and that pilot projects in our area are being sought. The regrowth in Friends Groups as a direct reaction to declining parks standards has been interesting and they are thought to make a combined contribution of £30million pounds a year to parks and green spaces.

Nationwide cities, towns and villages are reviewing how their parks will survive and alongside this working with residents, community groups, creative individuals and all sorts of other organisations to create new systems for managing and protecting these vital green spaces.

Queen's Park Gardens – Current Situation

It is true to say that the situation with Queen's Park Gardens follows a fairly typical pattern for small city parks. As previously discussed in meetings it is a residential gardens on the outskirts of Westminster and managed by a parks department with a remit that covers destination parks and green areas within central London. We know their funding priorities are elsewhere. We are also fully aware that WCC Parks Department have had substantial budget cuts over recent years and we know that the existing management contract for all of WCC's parks is currently under review. The existing contract with Continental Management has been extended for 2015-16 while this takes place. We are waiting for the publication of WCC's Green Report based on a borough-wide survey completed earlier this year.

Everyone that I've consulted to date has stated that the primary concern of an organisation such as the Community Council should be that we ensure we

build on and enhance the existing management arrangements for the gardens and they have stressed that we absolutely must not fail to do this. They have also emphasised what a huge amount of potential the gardens have and that with some very simple improvements and changes – and possibly not even a great deal of spend – we can deliver a beautiful community space that would be of huge benefit to all our residents.

Those who have also visited the gardens while agreeing with most of our concerns over the ‘uninspired horticultural’ management of the gardens – particularly where this is demonstrably poor in areas such as the rose garden or non-existent in the case of the wildlife area (managed entirely by volunteers) – have expressed the view that the basic management contract currently supplied by Continental Management is actually serviceable (litter clearing, grass cutting, opening and closing etc.). This is in comparison with similar park services in other boroughs and it has been put quite bluntly in some cases that should we want to consider removing ourselves from the WCC Parks contract that what we can now take pretty much for granted would be difficult to deliver cost-effectively when managing a single park.

The contacts we’ve established while undertaking this research have revealed a broad range of professional people with years of experience in this area.

Several of these contacts will be very happy to help us move into this next stage of work on our plans for Queen’s Park Gardens.

Cllr Katie Cowan suggested a working group and a timeline to deal with Queen’s Park Gardens, as well as adopting outside help if necessary, and asked the Committee to formally agree to it.

EP.229 **RESOLVED** that a working group is formed to help develop a management plan for Queen’s Park Gardens consisting of Cllrs Emma Morgan, Emma Sweeney, Gill Fitzhugh, Katie Cowan and Susanna Rustin

EP.230 **RESOLVED** that the Committee adopt the following timeline to deal with the management of Queen’s Park Gardens and to contract external organisations to help if required.

MAY

- Working Party to be agreed to work on a plan for Queen’s Park Gardens in the next 3 months.
- Agreement as to whether or not professional help can be used in preparing material for a community consultation.

JUNE

- Meetings with Cathy Maund (HCGA) and also WCC Parks.
- Trip for interested councillors, residents and WCC Parks to Hammersmith Community Gardens Association sites as working examples of what can be achieved in similar areas.
- Green spaces survey of all sites in Queen’s Park Ward.
- Investigation into funding opportunities open to QPCC.

JULY

- Initial proposals and ideas for Queen's Park Gardens to be presented to Environment & Planning meeting by Working Party at meeting on Wed 15 July 2015.
- Proposal and decision on which professional bodies/organisations we want to work as part of our planning and consultation process.

AUGUST

- Community Consultation to be launched at Summer Festival on 1 August 2015. Potentially needs to include two open sessions with visual ideas and options and one letterbox drop to all households in the area, plus e-newsletter and website support.
- Consultation to take place over the summer and through to the second week of September.

SEPTEMBER

- Initial feedback to Community Council meeting on Wed 2 September
- Analysis of results and subsequent meetings with WCC Parks and any other professional bodies/organisations that we are opting to work with at this stage.

OCTOBER

- Full plan and proposal for Queen's Park Gardens to be presented to Environment and Planning Meeting on Wednesday 21 October.

Report on Wildlife Area Garden Party

Cllr Katie Cowan reported that due to the weather, turnout was not as high as it could have been. Cllr Cowan was confident that the Committee will be a stronger position to deliver a better event next year.

QUEEN'S PARK IN BLOOM

Update on Queen's Park In Bloom

Cllr Cowan explained that the deadline for nominations is 7th June and the Director advised that the Council has had approximately 5 entries.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- EP.231** **RESOLVED** that the Council has no objections to application 15/03368/Full for 29 Beethoven Street
- EP.232** **RESOLVED** that the Council has no objections to application 15/03637/FULL on the first floor flat on 27 Fifth Avenue and the installation of timber sash windows. QPCC knows that there is no fixed policy at WCC on dormer windows. QPCC Cllrs have mixed views but if WCC and residents living opposite support the application then the Council would have no objections.
- EP.233** **RESOLVED** that the Council has no objections to application 15/03376/FULL. The Council has no objection to a 2nd floor car hire operation if there are no objections from other residents about noise and parking

EP.234 **RESOLVED** that the Council has no objections to applications
15/03700/FULL and 15/03688/FULL for a roof extension and infill at 188 Third
Avenue

Please note that application 15/03415/FULL for 410 Harrow Road is not in the
Queen's Park ward.

The meeting ended at 8pm