

# Environment and Planning Report

## Summer 2024

By Michael Hammerson

We are really grateful to our two new co-chairs of the Planning Committee for volunteering to take up the reins from David Richmond: Liz Morris, former Society Vice-Chair and Haringey Councillor, who will take charge of the administrative and organisational side, and Elspeth Clements, past Chair of the Committee and of the Society, who is taking responsibility for planning issues. With their combined experience and expertise - together, of course, with that of the other members of the Committee - we will continue to take our work forward, though new members of the Committee are still earnestly invited to join us.

We are also appreciative of a member (who will remain anonymous here) who kindly commented on our last Environment Committee Report: "What a wonderfully informative report; thank-you."

The fight continues to achieve a better solution for **Townsend Yard** and to protect the historic Shepherd's Cottage, the future of which and its inhabitants still hangs precariously in the balance, overshadowed by the spectre of inadequate fire safety measures.

Liz Morris writes:- "The Highgate Society has strongly objected to a Fire Strategy report submitted by the developer for a planning amendment to the permission granted to develop seven mews houses in Townsend Yard in 2020. The Fire Safety report put forward three options for fire access to Shepherd's Cottage - all of them in our opinion flawed. One, to access the Cottage via a narrow wooden undercroft from the High Street was previously dismissed by the London Fire Brigade (LFB). The others require access from Townsend Yard; however, a lack of turning circles for the fire engine from the High Street and in the yard itself, plus the constrained space in the yard, means a fire engine cannot get close enough to the Cottage. Furthermore, fire personnel can only reach it by scaling a high wall and a 1.6m drop to the Cottage rear garden, and the occupants of the Cottage would have to do this in reverse to escape. We have sent Haringey a detailed objection analysing the dangerous current situation."

"The Society is also dismayed at the lack of clarity on responsibility for fire safety - and a lack of transparency. The LFB, a statutory consultee, have provided fire safety comments which we believe have not been addressed; have not responded to Haringey's repeated requests to clarify their position; and have stated that the Council and the Approved Inspector (a Building Control company appointed by the developer) are responsible for approving the fire safety strategy. In the meantime, the Council has approved the planning application to provide this inadequate access - against our strong objections - but not the Fire Strategy, which they say is outside their remit. The external Approved Inspector has confirmed to the Council that the Fire Safety Strategy has been approved, but we have no information on how this decision was reached. Sadly, our repeated appeals for a sensible and safe solution have fallen on deaf ears. We will continue to press the developer and relevant bodies for improved fire safety measures to ensure that the Cottage is not left in a perilous situation."

Last September the developer submitted what they called a "non-material amendment" to build an alleyway between two of the new mews houses to provide LFB access to Shepherd's Cottage. We considered treating this critical issue as a non-material amendment as completely unacceptable; but the developer simply built it anyway, before receiving consent. Our objection to Haringey set out in great detail why the revised Fire Strategy was completely unacceptable:

- The drawing submitted was misleading because, extraordinarily, it entirely omits Shepherd's Cottage;
- The developer is required to conduct a fire risk assessment focussing on safety *for all relevant persons*, and specifically "those in the immediate vicinity", which clearly includes the occupants of Shepherd's Cottage;
- Unhindered access to the rear of Shepherd's Cottage is critical. Yet the application indicates that the alleyway would be kept locked, the LFB to be provided with keys. This does not help the occupants of the Cottage unless they too are given keys, and once through the alleyway, the LFB would be required to climb over two walls and then make a drop into the rear garden of the Cottage.
- We urged that before any approval is given, an acceptable strategy must be presented but were ignored. One option was that a fire engine will drive down the Yard and turn on Omved's private land. However fire engines (a) do not have enough turning space in Highgate High Street, often obstructed by parked cars, to enter Townsend Yard either backwards or forwards, and (b) cannot to reverse into Townsend Yard, because it is too narrow - though the application drawings suggest they can, despite not

being accurately measured; this also seems to apply to the end four new houses. A fire engine would have to park on Highgate High Street, exceeding the 45m hose length required to reach the furthest point in the Cottage. A further option "assumed" access to the cottage from the High Street; but this is through a timber framed (and therefore inflammable) passageway which the LFB has rejected as being too narrow and long.

Worst, since the developer has now been allowed to build the narrow access alleyway, despite its clear inadequacy, we are likely to be left with an unsafe fait accompli unless Haringey and LFB can be pressed to rule that the development as currently built does not meet fire regulations. Appallingly, after nearly 18 months of arguing these points with Haringey and the LFB, we are no nearer to a resolution.

In addition, it is a car free development and a condition of the consent was approval of a Car Club proposal, to which we have objected. Firstly, there is sufficient public transport that one is not necessary. Secondly, a large parking area has been lost due to the development, and the car club cars will have to park on the public highway, competing with Highgate Village street parking and making parking pressure worse. A car-free development is not one where each resident has the use of a club car with reserved parking on the public highway.

The **Highgate School Development programme** is currently on hold pending arrangement of a series of workshops, to be facilitated by the King's Foundation, to look in detail at the proposals in the light of concerns raised. These will be held during the summer and autumn and representatives of all interested local organisation and residents' groups will be invited to attend.

The aims of the programme were discussed at a pre-Workshop Planning Meeting, the overriding aim being to find common ground and, where necessary, amending the proposals. The current schedule is:

- Workshop 1: General principles, estate wide issues and overarching strategies, including the School's needs, development strategy and programming, and its relationship with the community; issues around the environment and green travel; communications between the School and the community; and the overlap of themes, with a general workshop to agree broad-brush objectives and individual workshops to look at site specific issues.
- Workshop 2: Sustainability issues including biodiversity and net zero carbon;
- Workshop 3; Dyne House and the Science Block;
- Workshop 4; the Mallinson and Richards centres.

These will be followed by a final review meeting. The School kindly agreed to provide facilities for each workshop and provide outstanding information still required, in advance of the workshops.

There are new proposals for the 70-bed care home proposed for the **Mary Feilding Guild** site, controversially permitted by Haringey against a raft of their own policies and our detailed objections. The developers have distributed flyers locally, advising that they are "making some small changes to deliver a new rehabilitation clinic", though they have not informed the Society nor asked to meet us, despite having had pre-application discussions with us previously. We have contacted them and Haringey asking for a meeting to discuss the new proposals. The flyers and linked website mention "a smaller revised proposal... for a 50 bed rehabilitation unit" - it also mentions "a residential block fronting North Hill consisting of 9 homes". Have there again been pre-application discussions between Haringey and the developers with no commitment to consult the Society in advance?

Haringey have made four welcome refusals. The first is at **22 Kingsley Place**, part of the award-winning 1967 Architect's Co-partnership development and featured in our 2016 Highgate Modern Homes exhibition. It proposed a rear extension occupying over 50% of the rear garden. The site slopes steeply, with the garden of no 21 some 1.5m below it; with fencing, the impact on 21 would have the impact of a 4.5m high building almost to the boundary line. Haringey noted 9 objections and no local support; unusually, they cited our objection in full, and listed the main planning considerations as design, character and appearance of the conservation area, and impact on neighbouring amenity. They considered that it would appear overly bulky and incongruous, out of keeping with the pattern of development of the area and detrimental to local visual amenity; would harm the significance of the Conservation Area with no public benefit outweighing the harm; and citing the relative intactness and design quality of Kingsley Place as important components of the Conservation Area.

The second was at **30a Shepherds Hill**, where we objected to replacing a garage with a 3 storey 4-bed basemented house. While in principle we support additions to the housing stock, provided they comply with conservation area policies, its bulk, dominant appearance, and impact on the wider street scene by removing the gaps between buildings, would be against Haringey's policy that "the gaps between buildings, often providing views of mature rear gardens, are an important feature of many residential streets of Highgate and contribute positively to the conservation area."

The third was for a new house on the vacant site known as **28 Shepherds Close, Shepherds Hill**, which brought extensive objections from other residents. Following a previous refusal on Appeal, the new application endeavoured to address some of the inspector's comments on design; but it failed to address some of his other comments, including that fundamentally the site is unsuitable to address the issues he raised, including that the development would remove a small piece of open space and an attractive green vista making a positive contribution to the street scene. While the applicant maintained that it was a brownfield site, it was not before he removed 19 mature trees (albeit with permission). The inspector also considered that the design and footprint would appear cramped, contrived and too large for the site and would remove the buffer separating the Close from the development fronting Shepherd's Hill. Finally, though none of the buildings are listed, the estate is an element of the Conservation Area and the Inspector did not see how it would improve its character or appearance. He concluded that, although it would cause less than substantial harm, national policy states that such harm should be weighed against any public benefits, which in this case would be small. The development would fail to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area and be against local and national policy requiring sensitive handling of such sites and particularly the loss of green spaces. Its minor contribution to local housing supply would not outweigh the conflict with policy. Haringey's refusal reflected virtually all of our comments.

Finally, an application for a new outbuilding in the very narrow and constrained back garden at **84 Highgate High Street** has been refused.

As we write, we learn of an application to demolish the old station building at **Highgate Station**. While in terrible condition, having been allowed to fall into disrepair, it is a part of the original 1871 station, and we will press for it to be restored and incorporated into wider proposals to bring the whole overground station area into Community use.

Another poor proposal is for **62 North Hill**, an early 18<sup>th</sup> Century house and half of a semi-detached pair with no. 64; with no. 60, all three are listed Grade II. Therefore, any proposals must ensure no harm to the group. Our concern was over the proposal to infill the side extension to within approximately 600mm of the face of no 60. Haringey refused an earlier proposal for this reason, although a small rear extension was permitted. The new application, a considerable increase in size, would result in the detached no. 60 being joined to no 62, destroying the group value by effectively turning them into a terrace. The proposed use of the extension was also insufficiently clear; it is variously described as a garden room, accommodation, and "a much needed ground floor bedroom suite... that will futureproof the house for the owner." While garden rooms fall under Permitted Development, overnight sleeping in them is legally prohibited. Demolition of the existing rear extension on the grounds that it "provides a house bathroom and garden room that is too narrow for conversion to a bedroom" was incorrect; the proposed garden room would not be much wider. Further, the glazed link between house and extension would cause considerable light pollution affecting immediate neighbours, and we also doubt that a single-glazed extension would meet Buildings Regulations requirements for energy efficiency. We await Haringey's decision.

At **24 Cholmeley Crescent**, revised proposals to demolish and rebuild the existing house were of great concern to neighbours and would be breach a range of Haringey's policies for development in the Conservation Area.

While Haringey will consider sensitive redevelopment of sites and buildings which detract from the character and appearance of a Conservation Area and its setting, the house has not been identified as making a negative contribution to the Conservation Area; Cholmeley Crescent is identified as having "considerable townscape importance" and "most of the existing buildings contribute to the rich and varied Highgate urban townscape." We believe the existing building meets these criteria and that compelling reasons for its demolition are required.

Local policy also recognises that, "Despite its conservation area status, Highgate has recently suffered from insensitive development that has undermined the integrity and coherence of the conservation area", citing demolition of good quality buildings, often replaced with poor quality ones (for which Haringey gave permission, ironically...). No evidence is provided that the existing building is low-quality, and the replacement is similar in scale and footprint.

Policy also requires that "New development should not make less of a contribution to the conservation area than that which it replaces." In our view the new building is pastiche and out-of-character; the current house's part if that character is the key part of its value.

Sustainable Design and Construction is also now a major consideration, policy specifying that "Existing buildings are an important resource and should be conserved rather than demolished where feasible" and that justifications are required for demolition to in conservation areas.

Yet, to our disbelief, Haringey have granted it, despite a detailed report from their own Conservation Officer strongly recommending refusal. We are querying this unacceptable decision which sets a disastrous precedent for the whole area.

We responded to an application at **112 Southwood Lane**. An integral element of the noted 1962 Southwood House Estate by Andrews, Emerson, Sherlock & Keable – one of its rooms is even replicated in the Geffreye Museum – we objected strongly to a proposal to relocate the front entry door as it would undermine the original design concept and set a highly damaging precedent. The Twentieth Century Society also sent a strong objection; as a result, the front door proposals were dropped and other works permitted.

We supported many local residents in objecting to a house proposed for the back garden of **40 Bancroft Avenue**, outside the Conservation Area but within the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum area. It would create a dangerous precedent for backland and infill development, contrary to policy. When approval was previously given for a studio/garden room, it was conditional on use only as ancillary to the main house and not as a separate dwelling, to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents and prevent overdevelopment. These reasons remain valid but, perversely, Haringey concluded that this time it was “considered acceptable here in the context of this very large site” and “will not have a discernible impact on the broader character and appearance of this area or the amenity of adjoining occupiers.”

We also objected to an application at **93 Swains Lane** for a ground floor room and basement extension in this house which is part of a 1970s terrace (91-103 Swains Lane) by Haworth and Kasabov, also featured in our Modern Homes exhibition. We worry that the new basement, which will extend beyond those of adjoining properties, could divert ground water to neighbouring properties on this steep hillside in an area noted for hydrology problems, yet investigations appear to have only been carried out in a period of extended dry weather. Camden have, however, permitted it.

There was a disappointing Appeal Decision at **Woodberry View, 471 Archway Road**, where we urged Haringey to take action against what we considered was an extension to the top story of this unprepossessing post-war block of flats which exceeded the planning consent. Haringey agreed and took enforcement action, but the developers appealed successfully, the Inspector concluding – wrongly, in our view – that the extra build was not significant and would have little impact; but while it is hardly visible from the Archway Road, the rear, clearly visible from neighbouring gardens and from Church Road, is a masterpiece of execrable design.

Finally, we should note the welcome return of piece of local history in the form of the reopening of the Duke of St. Albans pub, named for one of Charles II's – ahem – extended family, at the Parliament Hill roundabout.

**Archway Road regeneration:** The Society recently convened a meeting with local Archway businesses, officers and Councillors from Haringey and community groups including the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum and the Highgate CAAC. The aim was to encourage key stakeholders to work collaboratively together and agree initiatives to improve and revitalise Archway Road.

While the Archway Road provides a wide range of services and destination shops, a vibrant arts centre, many pubs and eateries, and good transport links, it was agreed that much needs to be done to improve the vitality and physical environment of the road, as well as tackling issues such as security, antisocial behaviour, and traffic speeds.

Measures discussed included reducing fly-tipping, removing pavement clutter, restoring historic shopfronts and improving the green spaces and planters along the street, including new tree planting. The Society's guerrilla gardening group has already planted the “Peace Park” on the corner of Archway Road and Muswell Hill Road, and a similar session will take place on the grassed area between Gonnermans and The Boogaloo. Haringey will also plant several trees in the autumn at the top of Wembury Road, which is a fly-tipping hot spot and there will be an Archway Road Action Week on May 20-26 when Haringey officers will visit Archway Road to deal with fly-tipping, waste enforcement and other issues.

A significant concern is the conversion of commercial units into residential and we are urging Haringey to tighten their planning policies as losing businesses to residential threatens the Road's commercial viability. There was also concern over the delay in installing CCTV cameras. These, scheduled for early 2020, are key in combating shoplifting, antisocial behaviour and speeding, and Haringey will be pressed to get them installed as quickly as possible.

We submitted a lengthy response to **Camden's Draft Local Plan consultation**, which we can only briefly and selectively summarise here.

Firstly, we were dismayed at the treatment of Highgate as “half a village”; the ignoring of its existence as a community which happens, through historical accident, to lie astride two local authorities, the boundary

passing through the middle of the High Street; the historical failure of both local authorities to liaise on issues such as traffic, streetscape design, parking, town centre management; Conservation Area protection and enhancement.

We urgently need a policy emphasising the importance of requiring developers to undertake pre-application consultation with the community, in accordance with para. 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that "Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot."

We support their policies on Development Strategy and Responding to Climate Change, including thermal performance for renovations, all new buildings to be built to Passive House standard, and requirements for net zero and low-carbon construction to be integral in determining applications.

But the proposals for North Camden almost entirely fails to mention Highgate or recognise Highgate High Street as a historic and lively neighbourhood and cultural centre, or to recognise the problems arising from it being split between two boroughs. Camden residents are served by Archway (Islington) and Highgate (Haringey) underground stations and Highgate also has a high concentration of schools, with schools just over the border in Haringey raising significant school run issues, with 4000 pupils and 500 staff coming in daily.

It recognises that the area has "lowest level of public transport", but not its particular problems of east-west links. The demographic (many older residents) and topography of the area need to be taken into consideration too. Camden must recognise the need for car use in the absence of any alternative means of transport and policies for Healthy Streets and increased cycling provision must ensure they do not result in displacement onto neighbouring streets, increased congestion and air pollution.

Highgate High Street, though described as a Neighbourhood Centre, is not marked on the map.

Given the strength of public feeling on the protection of open space and the expertise on ecological issues among the public, we sought a commitment to public consultation on issues relating to Public Open Space.

The policy on the Natural Environment is generally good and quite comprehensive. We felt that "Secure improvements to green corridors, particularly when a development scheme is adjacent to an existing corridor" needs strengthening - all green corridors should be regarded as equally crucial to maintaining and reinforcing biodiversity between designated sites in Camden, since without them, the biodiversity of even the most important designated sites will become isolated and will in time deteriorate. In addition, Highgate has many large gardens especially on the fringes of Hampstead Heath (which the draft plan commits elsewhere to protecting in cooperation with the City of London) which could be a critical element of the green corridors but are subject to national Permitted Development rules allowing up to 50% of the area to be developed. We therefore urge Camden to consider introducing Article 4 Directions withdrawing permitted development rights for gardens adjacent to designated open spaces, or within green corridors, and to include a policy encouraging owners to manage their gardens to promote biodiversity and recognising the importance of gardens for biodiversity. While a commitment to safeguarding priority habitats is welcome, their long-term viability depends on the protection of green corridors.

We were also concerned that focussing on Enhancing Biodiversity on "major" schemes could imply that smaller schemes and sites are less important, when development on them could cumulatively have an adverse long-term impact. Policies must have regard to the long-term impact of a multiplicity of smaller developments. While we welcome the commitment to "resist the excessive loss of garden space, recognising its value as a biodiversity resource", this will be difficult under current Permitted Development rules; hence the importance of introducing Article 4 Directions.

In regard to Design and Heritage, failures in the pre-application consultation process require a specific reference to para. 137 of the NPPF which states that "Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot."

We also responded to Haringey's **Local Validation List Consultation** on the requirements for what should be included in planning applications. Among our wide range of comments were the following:

- While comprehensive, the number of specialist reports required can be costly and could discourage smaller applications and should be proportionate to the project. It is also the case, in our experience, reports commissioned by developers may not always be entirely objective so planning officers must have, or have access to, the necessary expertise to assess these specialist reports. Drawings must be comprehensive and correctly show affected neighbouring properties, and Basement Impact Assessments must be provided at this stage.

- It should require minor developments to be accompanied by an energy statement where a building is being extended by more than 50% of its existing floor area and air quality and noise impact assessments should cover new residential developments in areas of high air pollution such as busy roads. Embodied energy issues should also be addressed to justify the development.

The Highgate Area has high **Archaeological potential**, but until recently, our local authorities have been unacceptably weak on requiring archaeological conditions. Our success in getting the Highgate Archaeological Priority Area (APA) extended has helped, but a more co-ordinated research programme is needed and we recently met Historic England's Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS) to explore this.

We have sufficient evidence of this: a recent survey showed that on 50% of sites where no archaeology was known but a condition was imposed, finds were made; it also showed that costs of archaeology to developers are 0.13% of total construction costs. Coverage of the area has been patchy and half-hearted and Haringey is invariably the Borough with least coverage, with Camden little better in our area. In addition, Barnet includes much of the great Mediaeval Park, but correspondence with them showed they did not even realise it was in their area. We put forward a strong case for a strong archaeological policy in the Neighbourhood Plan which was severely cut by the Examiner at public examination.

A major problem is that, since there is little excavation evidence, desk-top studies by developers' consultants make unjustified assumptions, dismiss the area as of no potential and, as a result, do not ask the right questions and, importantly, do not consult with us. There have been several sites where important information was lost through inadequate research and excavation. On one site in the APA Haringey wrongly refused an archaeological condition as it would cost the developers too much and Camden rejected our request for a condition, also in the APA because it could not be predicted what would be there. By contrast, the City of London and Highgate School have taken archaeological issues seriously in their own works.

It is clear that a comprehensive research strategy for the entire area is urgently needed, but given that Historic England do not have the resources to produce one, the Society must do what it can to work with landowners like the City of London and collate a database of the necessary information to enable us to demonstrate that archaeology must, where necessary, be taken into account in a development.

We continue to carefully monitor all **applications for tree work** and have sent in a number of comments on, or objections to, proposals which we think are excessive.

At the April **Highgate Wood Consultative Group** meeting, a number of issues were discussed, following a walk around the Wood to look at and discuss management issues on the ground. The Wood currently has four permanent staff members, plus a small pool of casual staff who provide cover as needed; it is proposed to recruit three new staff members. Between November and March, Heath Hands (do you participate in their work?) have held thirteen sessions, repairing dead hedging around conservation areas and the bluebell areas (where there was a splendid display this spring). The 2022/23 conservation area is already showing noticeably more fungi and wildflower species, benefiting ground-nesting birds. Notable sightings include a woodcock, a pair of buzzards, and a hedgehog. Hedgehog habitats are being improved, and the annual bat hibernation survey of the disused railway tunnels adjacent to the wood revealed 39 bats. I am now in the 37<sup>th</sup> year of my moth survey of the wood, with some 450 species being recorded.

Guided Walks are given on trees, fungi and Bird Song, and as some of you will know, I give Historical Walks for the City round the wood twice a year. Forest school activities are rotated to minimise impact. A lower limited of 37mph wind speed has been adopted for closing the Wood during high wind events. The wet weather caused severe waterlogging of the playing field; hopefully, things will improve for the start of the cricket season on 27 April. Repairs are also being carried out to the ever-popular playground.

The Roman Pottery Kiln project makes good progress since receipt of its National Lottery funded grant. The kiln, excavated back in 1968 and since kept stored in pieces in the basement of Bruce Castle Museum, is currently being restored in Wales, and will be installed, hopefully later this year, in a refurbished Information Hut with a full interpretation display. Already 714 school students have been engaged with the project, and a formal programme of work for Key Stage 4/5 is being piloted with a local school.

As always, much goes on in the everyday management of **Hampstead Heath** via the Consultative Committee of which, you are reminded, we are long-standing members. Please let me know if you would like to see the committee papers issued before its quarterly meetings. We are impressed with the new Superintendent, Bill LoSasso, formerly of New York, who has communicated well with the Committee.

The presence of the Constabulary is of importance to visitors, but numbers have been low and it is hoped that new members will be recruited soon to bring them up to the full quota. In the meantime, ParkGuard have been contracted to supplement their work. A study is being published on the high levels of toxins identified in the ponds from dog flea treatments and the aim is to advise dog owners on how to minimise pollution. On the West Heath, the problem of drugs and sexual detritus has increased, including activity in daylight; a working group will be set up with the Terence Higgins Trust involved. Sheep will return to the Heath from 6-16 September.

The City of London are concerned about the impact on views to and from the Heath of the proposed 32-storey Archway Tower - part of the Holborn Infirmary redevelopment project and have engaged planning consultants to monitor and, if necessary, comment on the proposals.

On May 1, I attended the dedication of a memorial bench to Declan Gallagher, Senior Manager of the Heath who tragically died last year after a sporting accident. The large attendance, including the current and three former Superintendents, showed the high regard in which he was held.

April 17 saw the opening of the Parliament Hill athletics track, refurbished to Olympic Standards at a cost of £2.4m.

Structural repair work has taken place on the Pergola but the columns are still considered unstable and the eastern part of the colonnade is fenced off for safety reasons. Timberwork on top of the columns is being replaced to stabilise the structure and will hopefully enable the pergola to reopen.

The vacant Golders Hill Zookeeper position has been filled. Six new fallow deer from ZSL Whipsnade Zoo joined the existing herd of red and fallow deer.

There has been a focus on the ponds: The Conservation Team has carried out reinstatement work on the Heath Extension following the de-silting of Number Seven pond. At the Mixed Pond, they have planted wildflowers and carry out regular mowing and scrub management on the dams. Pond levels are unusually high, but this will help if we have a dry spring and hot summer. The Heath's Ecologist has done an amphibian survey on all thirty Heath ponds across the Heath. Remarkably, eggs of the rare Brown Hairstreak butterfly have been found for the first time on the Heath - indeed, in inner London.

The 'Night of the 10K Personal Bests' on Saturday 18 May 2024 is a qualifying event for athletes ahead of the Paris Olympics, with national and international stars competing. Hampstead Heath hosted the London International Cross Country on 20 January, a qualifying event for the World Cross Country Championships in Belgrade.

Finally, a small working group will be formed to participate in the 5-year review of the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy. Members of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee have expressed interest, including myself.

Several of us attended the half-yearly **Kenwood Events Consultation meeting** on March 25<sup>th</sup>, when English Heritage presented its schedule of events for the year. Although Camden has licenced Kenwood to hold an unlimited number of events for up to 10,000 people each year, the season will see few events approaching this, and many will be in a limited part of the estate, such as the Kitchen Garden - for example, private events such as weddings and parties with a maximum of 300 people. There will be no "Christmas Lights" this year, the 2023 event being insufficiently profitable.

Unexpectedly, we learned that Kenwood is not self-supporting. Income in 2023-4 was £2,583,400 whereas expenditure was £2,993,500, meaning a deficit of £410,100, excluding maintenance costs. It was previously assumed that Kenwood brought in enough to subsidize English Heritage's other London properties, but it appears that it is itself subsidized by Stonehenge, English Heritage's biggest income producer. Kenwood is barred by the terms of the Iveagh bequest from charging for admission, and donations amount to only 22p per visitor. There was some discussion about possible money-making events; suggestions included classical concerts, makers' markets, artists' workshops and a limited opera season. We felt that a more imaginative and proactive approach to fundraising was needed.