



FOR HIGHGATE
HIGHGATE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

HNF CHAIR'S REPORT FOR AGM 2022

Alicia Pivaro, Chair

May 2023

It has been a busy year for the Forum with major projects including redesignation, Highgate School redevelopment plans, a campaign for Shepherd's Cottage and a focus on biodiversity. In this time the Forum has continued to work in an inclusive, collaborative and supportive way with councils and other local organisations.

The need for our redesignation provided us with an opportunity to consider the future of the Forum and its contribution to life in the Highgate Area. Whilst we had no appetite for a formal updating of the plan we hope that the community agrees that we have been a positive and constructive force. We consider the forum's strengths are as;

- a cross-border organisation (Camden and Haringey) working to ensure that policies in the two boroughs are consistent and encourage good practice to be shared between the two. Where one borough is ahead the other can be encouraged to catch up
- Working to ensure the area receives CIL funding and is recognised in various policies and programmes
- an official and statutory body representing Highgate with both councils using the Plan for planning considerations
- a valuable co-ordinating and communicating focus for local groups

Everyone in N6 is automatically a member of the Forum so we are always keen to work with people and groups in the area delivering community projects that meet the ambitions of the Neighbourhood Plan through working groups that address action on key issues so get in touch.

The Neighbourhood Plan contains a community action plan and policies in five key areas;

- Social and Community
- Economic Activity
- Traffic and Transport
- Open Spaces and Public Realm
- Development and Heritage

Planning and Policy

After meetings with both councils it became clear that any real changes to the Neighbourhood Plan would involve a rewriting and consultation process that we didn't feel we had the resources to take on. Instead we are working with both councils commenting on new local plans and policies as they are developed to ensure Highgate is represented.

In Highgate we are fortunate that the Highgate Society and the Highgate and Holly Lodge Conservation Area Action Committees who scrutinize all planning applications. Once again a huge thanks to them for this important work.



Our activities;

- Working with other local groups on the Highgate School Estate Development campaign now the schemes are in for consultation. We have been engaging with the school for over 5 years regarding their over-ambitious redevelopment plans with some limited success but acknowledge that the scale, quality and impact of the proposals are still of great concern. We are formulating our formal objection in collaboration with other groups and want to tell everyone about a Public Meeting about the scheme that is taking place on Thursday 8th June at St Michaels School.
- We have had meetings with the Councils as they develop their Local Plans and have commented on Haringey's Strategies and Action Plans as they are issued eg. Parks and Greenspaces Strategy.
- Our engagement with the Boundary Commission we believe was instrumental in getting the Haringey Highgate Ward boundaries aligned with ours + the whole of Highgate being for the first time included as one entity in the new Hampstead and Highgate Parliamentary Constituency.
- Commented on key planning policy documents and shared consultation information on national, London and local planning consultations via our newsletter and website
- Continued pressure on both councils to protect against 'basement accommodation' which lack any basic amenities including daylight/ventilation and poor housing developments including that proposed on the Wellington roundabout that we are continuing to object to. Whilst we support the need for more housing, in particular social housing, sites such as this are not fit for purpose
- Working to ensure the view to St Paul's Cathedral is maintain from Waterlow Park.

Updates on Community Infrastructure Levy Projects

After receiving new council officer resources and momentum for our CIL projects we have seen real progress this year;

- Parkland Walk Play Project has progressed over the year with important developments working with Haringey Council and the Friends of the Parkland Walk. Instead of one location the natural play equipment and seating is located now at a number of agreed sites along the Walk. These elements will begin to be implemented over the summer.
- Street Trees have now been planted at various locations by Haringey Council after working with the HNF to identify sites. Others have been planted locally as part of the Trees for Streets project.
- Our pedestrian signs were finally completed this year!
- 271 now-empty bus stand. Temporary public realm improvements have been developed by the HNF and Highgate Society with support from AHMM Architects. Camden councillors have ring-fenced CIL funds for an initial phase. We are working with local charities including Wood That Works and the Harington Scheme to implement the project and hope to see something happening this summer! So watch that space!
- The BMX track still have funding allocated and hopefully when planning issues are resolved we can get this important play space for children and teens up and running again this year.

<http://www.highgateneighbourhoodforum.org.uk/plan/cil-list/>



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Social and Community

Key policy - to help Highgate develop/maintain a strong and sustainable community.

Our activities;

- Highgate Festival – 10 – 18th June 2023 returns – once again organised by a small team of local volunteers, many of them members of the HNF committee. The Festival delivers a number of the policies and community ambitions set out in the Neighbourhood Plan including helping to create community cohesion and form links between the many different communities and interests that make up Highgate life. Once again we are amazed by the amount of culture and creativity we have locally – with over 50 events, exhibitions, walks and talks
- Our Guide to Volunteering was launched and continues to be distributed. A huge thanks to Richard Webber for all his work putting it together.
- Coffee and computers continues to support intergenerational links
- Working with local schools to encourage community activities and outreach

Economic Activity

Key policy - maintain vitality/viability of commercial cores for community

Our activities;

- HNF committee members maintain regular contact with business owners, reporting empty units and possible new business arrivals in our main shopping areas
- Working on projects to improve the High Street and public realm including the 271 space and greening the High Street to encourage more visitors, shoppers and locals to use Highgate shops, pubs and venues
- Pushing for greater liaison between our councils regarding issues and shared best practice eg. informing neighbours about licensing applications.
- Pushing for continued liaison between Highgate police officers from different boroughs

Traffic and Transport

Key policy – to enhance accessibility to local services and support community

What we are doing

- Continuing to campaign for speed and safety measures on the High Street in particular around Channing School and on West Hill. Other traffic issues including removal of redundant signage and responses to traffic changes by councils such as the Swain's Lane no right turn sign.
- Recent complaint to councils regarding the uncoordinated council response to road works in the area often leading to large traffic jams on our major routes and the problem of redundant signage left after the work.

I just want to acknowledge the great work of Richard Webber on all things traffic related so thank you Richard.



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Open Space and Public Realm and Biodiversity

Key policy – to help to protect and enhance open spaces.

Our activities;

- Staged a major event in September to explore Biodiversity in Highgate across key spaces and land owners where projects and expertise were shared and important networking occurred. From this we have developed an email groups of landowners and other organisations sharing updates and encouraging collaborations
- Staged recent event promoting Biodiversity with local groups held at LUX in Waterlow Park. A number of groups presented their projects and networked
- Developing a mapping project of our Green and Biodiversity corridors with other local organisations and a Guide on Improving Biodiversity in your Garden
- Continue to support campaigns such as in Queens Wood and Parkland Walk to protect existing trees
- Working with our councils to deliver their Climate Action Plans

Development and Heritage

Key policy – to preserve and enhance Highgate's unique character

Our activities;

- Monitoring and commenting on strategic planning applications including the community response to Highgate School's Supplementary Planning Document and new proposals for housing on the Wellington Gyratory
- Liaising with Highgate Society and local CAAC groups on key planning issues including the redevelopment of Townsend Yard and the impact on Shepherd's Cottage
- Promoting our local heritage and local history archives via the Highgate Festival. This year we have a wonderful film about 800 years of Highgate history from the Hornsey Historical Society being screened at the Holly Lodge Community Centre as well as our usual walks, open gardens and talks.
- Still trying to get the Tourist information boards but we have the opportunity in the new 271 space for some tourist information including a map

Communication

What we are doing

- Regular e-newsletters
- HNF committee members are all active in other roles in the community so keep an high level of communication through these roles and informal relationships
- Highgate Festival to promote the role of the HNF across many issues



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Moving Forward

And, most important, can we urge everyone to write in to support our redesignation application with whatever council they live in. The links were in our last newsletter and signs have gone up around the area.

We are always keen to support and work with anyone in the neighbourhood who is interested in delivering a project or initiative that supports our community. If you have an idea or want to be part of the HNF working groups please email info@forhighgate.org

www.highgateneighbourhoodforum.org.uk