



Waterlow Park Trust

An introductory briefing.

In 1889 Sir Sydney Waterlow gave the grounds of his house in Highgate to the people of London as a 'garden for the gardenless', with the purpose of it being a Public Park for the People in perpetuity. Camden Council registered the Waterlow Park Trust as a charity in 1995.

The Waterlow Park Trust can set its own policy and strategic direction so long as these are in keeping with the charitable aims. The aims are governed by an indenture (the deed of gift for the park). The park and the properties which are on its grounds are for public benefit, and clearly this should be maximised whilst ensuring a sustainable future which balances the interests of a wide spectrum of park users. With changing demands and budgetary pressures, how best to achieve this is a challenge.

Camden's Role

Camden has two distinct roles in relation to Waterlow Park. The first is as Corporate Trustee. The second is in providing management of the Park at an operational level via the Green Spaces Team and its subcontractors.

Public consultation and the formation of the Trust Advisory Group

Public engagement is key to both the appropriate governance and management of the park. The Friends of Waterlow Park are the 'voice of park users', and Camden have worked with them over the years on many issues.

In the spring of 2017, following a long consultation with the Friends, the Lauderdale House Trust and other stakeholders, the Waterlow Park Trust Advisory Group was formed (TAG). This new group includes individuals representing the Friends along with Lauderdale House and LUX (both key stakeholders as having a physical presence in buildings in Waterlow Park). Further organisations represented include the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum, Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Forum and the Highgate Society. Local residents associations, Community Area Committees and other local groups with a particular concern for green spaces also qualify for participation. TAG has two principal governing documents; a constitution, and a partnership agreement with Camden, the latter signed by TAG, the Camden Trustee and the London Borough of Camden. Both are available on the Trust website.

The role of the Trust Advisory Group

TAG's primary role is strategic, concerned with longer term planning, and ensuring that there is good communication between all parties involved in the life of the park and with the public. TAG advice on strategic and more practical matters closely informs Trust decisions.

Further TAG roles are in formulating and reviewing policies and procedures, and in oversight of the operational running of the Park. Where there are more complex practical issues to consider, or where policy needs extensive review or formulation, the work is generally delegated to Volunteer Groups who report back as required. Such Groups might for example look at fundraising, sports, horticulture, dogs, barbecues, signage etc. Each Group has a brief agreed by TAG and reports back to TAG. Members should normally include at least one person from TAG but can otherwise include members of the public along with Council employees.

The Trust has a website at www.waterlowparktrust.org.uk This carries the governing documents along with minutes of TAG meetings and further information and links.

