

Minutes of the Mixed Pond Association AGM on December 4th 2025

Attendance

Felicity Moir – Chair
Clare Hoffmann – Secretary
Geoff Von Sonsbeeck – Treasurer
Stephen Yates – Membership Secretary
Adrian Boylan – Web Content
Kasia Sikora – Social Secretary
Margaret Dickinson – Committee
Mary Horlock – Committee
Jillian Edelstein – Committee
Karen Paul – Committee: newly elected
Alice Hopkinson Woodley – Committee newly elected
Richard Boudreaux
Flora Willis
Judy Taylor
Charlotte Banks
Jonah Ramponi
Cathy Peake
Gabrielle vom Bruck

Apologies

Darian Leader and Spencer Hyman – committee members. Pauline Latcham, Jane Scott, members.

1. **Minutes of the December 2024 AGM were reviewed and approved.**
2. **Chair's Report.**
 - 2.1. Sports Forum – the Chair and Margaret Dickinson, as her deputy, attended the CoL Sports and Wellbeing Forum on a number of occasions. Noting that the Sports and Wellbeing Forum is strategic and is separate from the Swimmers Forum which deals with operational issues.
 - 2.2. Attended regular meetings with Dan Fawkes, the Chief Lifeguard and Paul Jeal, the superintendent of the ponds.
 - 2.3. Annual Party – thanks to Clare for filling out the City of London's (CoL) new long and complex Events Application Form for permission to hold an event. We had a successful tea party on 28th Sept. Have raised with the Sports and Wellbeing Forum that the Events form is really disproportionate for a volunteer community organization like the MPA and waiting to find out if will have to use it in the future.
 - 2.4. Improvement of communications between CoL There will be scheduled meetings between MPA and Paul Jeal and Geoff Fawkes of the CoL in April, July and October. CoL have asked that members correspondence about the ponds be shared with them but because of GDPR issues we will ask members to send their correspondence directly to CoL or we will seek the members consent to share the email with CoL.
 - 2.5. Showers and matting - The plastic white boxes are to be removed and a permanent cold shower installed, To note that the concrete outside the shower is currently loose, so be careful.

- 2.6. Stewards Hut – the CoL made an application to install a green plastic hut just outside the entrance to the ponds. We objected on procedural grounds and design grounds because it should be in keeping with the surroundings and so did the Hampstead and Heath Society. We then met with Paul Jeal, Dan Fawkes and Deb Byatt to discuss. CoL indicated that they will make a new application which is likely to be for a plastic hut but covered in timber cladding. We will consider any objections to planning at that stage. Marc Hutchinson from the Heath and Hampstead Society reported that Paul Jeal said that Guildhall has recognized that ivy clad plastic box is not acceptable and it will be wood or wood clad and look like the rest of the buildings.
- 2.7. CoL Equalities Consultation – The City have listened which is really good. MPA has distributed links to the consultation which has received over 40,000 responses and they are having focus groups. Fiona Willis reported that she attended one of the focus group meetings, attended entirely by ladies pond members, which was very well facilitated. She noted the risk that CoL may decide to make all the ponds into mixed sex facilities which is one of the options under consultation and the easiest option for the City. That may mean they decide that they don't need three ponds. There is unlikely to be a decision until after the High Court challenge to the Equality Commission guidelines.
- 2.8. CoL budget – Changing budget from deficit model to grant funding model where a fixed sum is given to the Heath, which may mean the need to cross subsidize activities on the Heath. CoL are still refusing to share Pond income with the MPA. Marc Hutchinson noted that although the CoL have changed to a deficit funding model the budget is actually the same as the prior year but with an increase to reflect CPI and salary uplifts. So although the budget has been re-labelled it has not been cut. We still don't know how much money comes in from the ponds and if money is being diverted from the ponds rather than applied to reduce swimming charges. The CoL argued they needed the raised fees to cover increased costs of running the ponds but not disclosing if in fact making a profit. If MPA wish to pursue the CoL for disclosure of the Pond budget the best argument is that CoL did agree to share the figures two years ago. The ponds are so popular that likely to be running in profit but Gregory Jones, who chairs Hampstead Heath management committee, had proposed that surplus be applied to other Heath running costs although that has never been formally adopted.
- 2.9. Morning concessionary period – MPA is still pushing for the concession period to be extended to 10am to align with period of free travel on freedom passes. CoL say they will reconsider once the new leisure management system is working. Their rationale is that until they have the new leisure management system they can't work out how many people turn up between 09.30 and 10.00.
- 2.10. New Booking System – under the current system people are booking multiple slots but not cancelling and so many slots unused, which is unfair. The new system will prevent this by limiting the number of bookings an individual can make per day and should also enable people to cancel their slots.
- 2.11. Adrian Boylan commented that the CoL costs of running the ponds are unnecessarily inflated by the decision to have 3 lifeguards throughout the year even when there are hardly any swimmers. Marc Hutchinson reported that CoL is obliged to maintain cover of three lifeguards to comply with requirements set by the Health and Safety Executive following a death in the men's pond.

3. Membership Secretary's Report

- 3.1. Continue to use membership mojo which works well.
- 3.2. There are 209 members, which represents a very small decrease against the prior year.
- 3.3. There is a very small variation year on year, which is not statistically significant.
- 3.4. Margaret Dickinson said we should increase the membership for greater influence. People are not aware of the MPA or the history of the role of the pond associations in maintaining access.

4. Draft Accounts for 2025 and the Treasurer's Report

- 4.1. We have fewer members but it is a profitable year. Revenue £1,081 which is on average £5.81 per member which is less than prior years. Admin expenses of £325. Events £680 (down from last year). No donations this year, compared to last year when we donated to Heath Hands and Surfers against Sewage. Current account liquidity is £3,218.
- 4.2. The accounts were approved by the meeting.
- 4.3. Treasurer recommended that the committee consider how to increase membership. We could circulate request for members via winter swim club and KLPA. Marc Hutchinson offered to include information on MPA membership in end of season mail to winter swim club.
- 4.4. The Treasurer recommended changing payment system from bank transfer to Direct Debit, which can easily be arranged through a QR Code sign up.
- 4.5. The meeting considered the ways that funds could be spent, including possible donation to KLPA, charitable donation for swimming lessons for underprivileged children, social events at the mixed pond, a hardship fund for swimming at the mixed pond. HMPA have set up a hardship fund and KLPA decided against it. Margaret Dickinson spoke against a hardship fund because should focus on reducing fees and Fiona Willis agreed. Adrian thought the administration of a hardship fund risked being disproportionate. Marc reported that small numbers of people, about 4, have applied for hardship funding from HMPA and winter swim club and the administration was not burdensome. The committee will write a paper for members' consideration on the hardship fund and other ideas for spending the funds. It was proposed to give a contribution to the KLPA for their 100 year anniversary. This was not supported as KLPA has big membership (Cathy Peake said it was not necessary).

5. Membership Fees

- 5.1. The Treasurer proposed raising the fee from £3.00 to £5.00 per annum, which would bring the fee in line with the fees for the KLPA and the HMPA and enable us to fund the various new ideas for activities this year.
- 5.2. The meeting approved the proposal with one abstention and all other attendees voting in favour.

6. **Capital Projects**

- 6.1. The CoL proposal for the steward's hut was discussed in the Chair's Report.
- 6.2. The MPA has no capital projects to report for the year 2025.

7. **Social Secretary's Report**

- 7.1. We have two events a year, beginning and ending the season. The party was amazing, well attended, the usual band was engaged, the synchronized swimmers swam and fun was had. Was good that people could pay by cash.
- 7.2. Noted that we have to take into account the superintendent's reservations about community events when we arrange social events in the upcoming year, especially in high season. The idea is that they will be similar to the way people have birthday events.
- 7.3. We intend to do the usual coffee and croissant welcome at the beginning of the season and will check whether we need to fill out the CoL Events Application Form for that event.
- 7.4. The film of the synchronized swimming event filmed and edited by Fiona Cunningham-Bruce and Jillian Edelstein was much appreciated and it was agreed to put it on the website.

8. **Election of officers and the MPA Committee members for 2026**

- 8.1. Re-Election of existing Officers - Felicity Moir was elected as chair, Clare Hoffmann as Secretary, Stephen Yates as Membership Secretary, Geoff Von Sonsbeeck as Treasurer, Kasia Sikora as Social Secretary.
- 8.2. Existing committee members, no committee members have resigned and existing members were re-elected: Adrian Boylan (Web Content), Margaret Dickinson, Mary Horlock, Spencer Hyman, Darian Leader, Jillian Edelstein, Nick Phillips.
- 8.3. New Committee Member – Karen Paul was elected as a new committee member having served as a co-opted member during part of 2025.
New Committee Member – Alice Hopkinson-Wooley was elected as a new committee member. It was also proposed that she be elected as joint Social Secretary with Kasia responsible for the Synchronised Swimming Club. She will also work with Adrian on the web and will be running a social media feed relating to the Mixed Pond.

- 9. AOB – there was no AOB.

Clare Hoffmann – Secretary
5 December