

WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE
Monday, 22 July 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Rooms
- Second Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 22 July 2013 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Robert Hall
Alderman Ian Luder
Deputy Alex Deane
Deputy Robert Howard
Wendy Mead
Barbara Newman
Jeremy Simons
Deputy Michael Welbank
Catherine Bickmore
Councillor Bryan Collier
Councillor Joy Laguda

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerk's Department
Esther Sumner	- Policy Officer, Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Bob Meldrum	- Assistant Property Services Director (Operational Property), City Surveyor's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Justin Meath Baker, Mr Robert Cazenove, Mr Richard Gurney, and the Reverend Stennett Kirby.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Following the resignation of Alderman Robert Hall as Chairman, the Committee proceeded to elect his replacement in accordance with Standing Order 29. Mrs Wendy Mead moved that Mrs Barbara Newman take the Chair whilst the election was conducted, which was agreed. The Town Clerk read out a list of Members eligible to stand and Alderman Ian Luder, being the only Member

expressing his willingness to serve, was declared the duly elected Chairman for the remainder of the year.

The Town Clerk then informed the Committee that Alderman Robert Hall had chosen to exercise his right as immediate past Chairman to become the Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the year in accordance with Standing Order 30 (3) (a).

4. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10 June 2013 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Tessa Sanderson Foundation and Academy

In response to a question from a Member the Superintendent of West Ham Park confirmed that he had met with Ms Sanderson and was planning in conjunction with her a two week programme of activities in the Park in August.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent of West Ham Park updated the Committee on current issues affecting the Park:

Finance

The West Ham Park budget remains in line with expected expenditure for this time of year.

Staff

West Ham Park and Nursery remain two senior members of staff below complement, and existing staff were working hard to ensure core services remain uninterrupted. The two young people on work experience from horticultural charity *Roots and Shoots* continue to do well and will be completing their placement on 31 August. Over the next few weeks officers from West Ham Park and City Gardens will be meeting with colleagues from *Roots and Shoots* and The Royal Parks to choose which three candidates, of the current six, will be taken on as full-time apprentices to train towards Royal Horticultural Society Level 2 over the next two years.

Works

Normal operational activity in the Park had been challenging recently due to the hot weather. Summer bedding had been planted around the ornamental gardens and office, whilst in the Nursery spring bedding plants have been ordered for all of the Park's main clients, and are due to be delivered over the next two weeks.

Visits

The scheduled Green Flag inspection on 13 June did not take place, with the organisers *Keep Britain Tidy* instead committing to 'mystery shop' the Park at some point over the summer to assess its Green Flag status. The *London In Bloom* judge visited the Park on 11 July and results will be announced at an awards ceremony in Richmond on 18 September.

The Committee then addressed some questions and remarks to the Superintendent:

- In response to a question from a Member, the Superintendent confirmed that native perennials were being sown in the Wildflower Area.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Superintendent confirmed that staff were taking necessary precautions in the heat, with hats, long sleeve shirts, kepis, suncream and water being provided for them.
- In response to feedback from a Member, the Superintendent stated that the floor in the Ladies toilets would be upgraded and repaired either during the winter or at the start of the next financial year. The City Surveyor confirmed that such repairs would come under the Additional Works Programme.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Superintendent confirmed that the contractor that carried out works on the changing rooms was one of the Corporation's framework contractors.

6. **REVENUE OUTTURN 2012/13 - WEST HAM PARK**

The Chairman introduced the Outturn report to the Committee, noting that Members of the Committee had been sent a copy of Alderman Hall's e-mail of 14 July 2013 (raising concerns with respect to an apparent significant underspend in the Additional Works Programme in 2012/13) and of the reply of the City Surveyor dated 17 July 2013 (which explained, inter alia, that over half the apparent underspend was at the reporting date committed spend which will feature in the 2013/14 report to the Committee).

The City Surveyor assured the Committee, further to his note with additional details on the AWP, that internal controls existed to ensure the appropriate use of funds, and that regular meetings took place between the City Surveyor's Department and the Open Spaces Directorate to ensure that projects were timely and appropriate. The Deputy Chairman thanked the City Surveyor for providing the additional information requested by him on the AWP and welcomed the fact that the format of subsequent reports on the AWP will include more detail.

In response to a remark from the Chairman, the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that some areas of the Open Spaces Directorate had effectively subsidised the overspend at Epping Forest to its current level of £39,000.

In response to questions from a Member, the Chamberlain confirmed that the Nursery was not operating at a loss and that its surplus had been allocated to the West Ham Park reserve, which would be used to fund repairs and enhancement works within the Park. The Director of Open Spaces noted that the current year was the first in which the current arrangement was in place for surplus from the Nursery to be allocated to the reserve.

NOTED

7. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no other business.

9. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as follows:-

Item No.

Paragraphs in Schedule 12A

10

1 and 3

10. **DIRECTOR OF OPEN SPACES UPDATE**

The Director of Open Spaces provided a verbal update to the Committee.

11. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 2.16 pm

Chairman

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