

WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 8 April 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Rooms
- Second Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 8 April 2014 at 12.15 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Ian Luder (Chairman)
Deputy Alex Deane (Deputy Chairman)
Wendy Mead
Barbara Newman CBE
Jeremy Simons
Graeme Smith
Justin Meath-Baker
Robert Cazenove
Catherine Bickmore
Councillor Joy Laguda MBE

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerk's Department
Lucy Frazer	- Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent of Parks & Gardens
Jennifer Allott	- Open Spaces Departmental Business Manager
Patrick Hegarty	- Open Spaces Technical Manager
Bob Meldrum	- Assistant Director, City Surveyor's Department
Roger Adams	- Senior Principal Surveyor, City Surveyor's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Robert Howard, Richard Gurney and Councillor Bryan Collier.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – that the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 17 February 2014 be approved as a correct record, subject to Justin Meath-Baker's apologies being accurately recorded.

4. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent of Parks & Gardens updated the Committee on issues arising from the management of the Park:

- He noted the apologies of the new West Ham Park Manager, who was unwell.
- The local risk budget for the park was due to have a £15,000 underspend, which was planned in order to partially off-set an underachievement of income in the Nursery budget.
- Park tree-stock had been surveyed and tree works were due to begin shortly. Some Massaria had been detected.
- Trees and shrubs with coloured stems were being planted in the ornamental garden near the bridge to provide some contrast during the winter months.
- The Park had provided floral arrangements for Guildhall for International Women's Day on 8 March 2014 and would be providing the same for the State Banquet for the President of Ireland on 9 April 2014.
- The nursery had received an enquiry about tendering for the supply of bedding to a local authority in Surrey
- The Friends of West Ham Park had recently held a stargazing event in the Park that had been well attended and had featured in the Newham Recorder.
- The All Party Parliamentary Group for Gardening and Horticulture was scheduled to visit the Park on 13 May 2014.
- The Lord Mayor was scheduled to visit the Park on 6 June 2014.

In response to concerns expressed by a Member of the potential for the West Ham Park Playground to get busy and difficult to monitor during summer weather, the Superintendent replied that it was a difficult issue to manage appropriately. Whilst numbers were controlled for those using the paddling pool for safety reasons, this was not the case for the playground as this would detract from the desire to ensure the facility was as widely available as possible for the visiting public. Nevertheless he pointed out that the playground was to some extent 'self-monitoring' given that parents were able to alert park staff to issues of concern – for example two predatory adults had been arrested during 2013/14.

In response to an observation from a member, the Superintendent replied that the playground would likely attract more children if the play facilities were increased, but that it would be worth investigating whether the overall fenced area could be increased to cater for the playground's popularity. A further member cautioned that the size of the play area should be proportionate with the Park as a whole.

5. **OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN 2014-2017**

The Open Spaces Departmental Business Manager introduced a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2014-17, noting that it was the business plan for the entire department and was designed to provide a broad yet deep overview of the strategic objectives of the department. She added that there were two West Ham Park-specific objectives in the plan, namely the West Ham Park Nursery Feasibility Study and the West Ham Park Café Redevelopment. Lastly, she noted that the impact of anti-social behaviour such as drug dealing had been included in the departmental risk register at the request of West Ham Park staff.

The Chairman noted that the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee had agreed to refer to the West Ham Park Café Redevelopment objective as a Feasibility Study.

A member commented that she had attended the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee as an observer when this item had featured, and she had taken the opportunity to comment that she had concerns it represented a 'top down' rather than 'bottom up' approach. She expressed particular concern over the strategic objective concerning the West Ham Park Café Feasibility Study, querying what would happen to existing office space if it was utilised instead for café facilities, and furthermore what implications there were for the covenant binding the management of the Park in the event of café-related trading activity taking place.

In response the Superintendent of Parks & Gardens replied that the business plan objectives and those relating to West Ham Park in particular were headline in nature and subject to further investigation, consideration and development. For example the proposed West Ham Park Café Feasibility Study was part of an overall review by the City of London's City Surveyor's Department of over 800 operational properties to ensure each were being utilised to best effect. He stressed that a report of the proposed café redevelopment would come to the West Ham Park Committee for its consideration, and that such a report would include advice from the Comptroller and City Solicitor on the effect café trading would have on the park covenant.

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6. **PROVISIONAL ADDITIONAL WORKS PROGRAMME 2015-16**

The Chairman introduced a report of the City Surveyor on the proposed bids for Additional Works Programme funding for 2015/16, noting that the bids for West Ham Park totalled £221,500.

In response to a question from a member over the level of funding likely to be secured, the City Surveyor noted that the bids had been achieved in full for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

In response to the Chairman noting that most bids involved routine maintenance works, a member agreed and commented that to not spend monies on maintenance represented false economy. The Director of Open Spaces added that the Open Spaces Department – in keeping with departments across the wider City of London Corporation – was being challenged to consider the efficient use of assets and therefore routine maintenance helped to achieve this.

The Chamberlain commented that the Additional Works Programme was a relatively recent stream of funds and represented ‘new’ money for West Ham Park, and its allocation did not detract from funds already allocated within the operations of the Park.

In response to a question from a member the Superintendent replied that the resurfacing works referred to within the report did not apply to the block paving in the ornamental gardens, as those works fell in the current financial year. In response to a further question he replied that the term ‘garden structures’ referred to items such as rose arbours and the pergola.

In response to a question from a member the Superintendent confirmed that the works to the park toilets had been completed.

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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, 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 Act:

Item(s) 10-12

Paragraph(s) 3

10. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the non-public minutes of the meeting on 17 February 2014 be approved as a correct record, subject to the agreed amendments.

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

There were no questions

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT THAT THE COMMITTEE AGREES BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 1.11 pm

Chairman

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