

**OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS**  
**Monday, 27 July 2015**

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 27 July 2015 at 2.30 pm

**Present**

**Members:**

Alderman Ian Luder (Chairman)  
Graeme Smith (Deputy Chairman)  
Wendy Mead  
Barbara Newman  
Virginia Rounding (Ex-Officio Member)  
Jeremy Simons  
Michael Welbank  
Verderer Peter Adams (Observer)  
Catherine Bickmore (Observer)

**Officers:**

Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Scott Morgan	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	Superintendent Parks & Gardens
Esther Sumner	Open Spaces Business Manager
Louisa Allen	City Gardens Manager
Lucy Anne Murphy	West Ham Park Manager
Edward Wood	Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
Alison Elam	Group Accountant, Chamberlain's
Patrick Hegarty	Technical Manager, Open Spaces

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Deputy Alex Deane, Alderman Haines, Deputy Robert Howard and John Beyer.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising:

Members agreed that the front sheet of the Open Spaces and City Gardens agendas should list a specified time followed by the wording "*Or, if later, at the rising of the West Ham Park Committee.*"

4. **PROVISIONAL ADDITIONAL WORKS PROGRAMME 2016/17**

The Committee received a report informing Members of a number of works that could be progressed within a reasonable timescale subject to funding being made available from the additional works programme.

Members noted that projects relating to the additional works programme would be reviewed to reflect strategic asset management decisions and the wider corporate objectives to ensure that the City met its overall criteria relative to the management of its property assets.

Resolved – that the report be received.

**5. ST BOTOLPH BISHOPSGATE BALL COURT IMPROVEMENTS**

*This item was considered during the 'City Gardens' section of the meeting.*

The Committee received a report informing Members that the Ball court in the Churchyard had reportedly reached a stage where a full resurfacing was required. Section 106 funding was available to resurface the court and improve the surrounds subject to the provision of times on the court allocated for young people to use the facility. Working in partnership with the Church and the Department of Community & Children's Services, it was proposed to develop a scheme to carry out the improvement works and improve the promotion of the site.

Resolved – that the following be agreed:

- Approval for the proposed works, in principle, to resurface the ball court and improve the court surrounds at the Churchyard of St Botolph without Bishopsgate
- Delegated authority to the Director of Open Spaces in conjunction with the Comptroller & City Solicitor to negotiate a new Churchyard maintenance agreement that includes provision for future maintenance of the ball court and provide for the old agreement to be of no further effect.

**6. REVENUE OUTTURN 2014/15- OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS**

The Committee received a report comparing the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee in 2014/15 with the final agreed budget for the year. In total, there was a £121,000 better than budget position for the services overseen by the Committee compared with the final agreed budget for the year.

The Director of Open Spaces better than budget position of £45,000 had been aggregated with budget variations on services overseen by other committees, which produced an overall better than budget position of £846,000 (Local Risk) across all Open Spaces. It was proposed to carry forward £437,000 of this underspend. These requests would be considered by the Chamberlain in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.

Members noted that the City Surveyors better than budget position of £108,000 was mainly due to one project being deferred at the Superintendent's request

where funding was outstanding from an external source to fund an extended scheme.

Resolved – that the report be received.

**7. CONSOLIDATED REVENUE OUTTURN 2014/15**

The Committee received a report comparing the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Director of Open Spaces in 2014/15 with the final agreed budget for the year. In total, there was a better than budget position of £1.419M for the services overseen by the Committee compared with the final agreed budget for the year.

Members noted that it was proposed to carry forward £437,000 from the Director's better than budget position of £846,000 (Local Risk) across all Open Spaces. These requests will be considered by the Chamberlain in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.

The shortfall of £44,000 at the Nursery was partly offset by underspends elsewhere with £20,000 being transferred from reserve which will be recouped in future years. The £778,000 underspend with the City Surveyor was mainly due to the re-phasing of the additional works programme over the life of the scheme to meet corporate priorities, the needs of the service, and a longer project lead-in over a longer period. There was also a £225,000 project at Capel Road where work was expected to be undertaken during the prescribed three year window of the additional works programme, but uncertainty remained as the future use of this facility.

The Chairman reported that he had raised the need for financial support to manage the recent outbreak of Oak Processionary moth with the Chamberlain. The Committee were informed that unfortunately Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) had recently been discovered in Stratford and New Spitalfields areas. The Director of Open Spaces chairs the OPM advisory group for the Forestry Commission, supporting the London wide challenge in managing this pest. The Forestry Commission had for the last 3 years secured funding from DEFRA, to manage the impact on parts of west and south east London. Officers confirmed that OPM affects oak trees because the caterpillars feed on the leaves and then form nests.; consequently it would not be found on timbers used in construction. Members agreed that the priority now was to determine the effect it had on human health.

At this stage the costs had been limited to nest removal but the costs of spraying next spring and in future years were not yet quantifiable. Members noted that the costs to date had been met from the Director of Open Spaces' local risk budget. If, regrettably, the incidence spreads and becomes of a much larger scale, the Chamberlain had agreed in writing that a request against contingencies could be considered.

Resolved – that the report be received.

8. **BUSINESS PLAN OUTCOME REPORT - QUARTER 1 2015/16**

The Committee received a report informing of the first quarter of the 2015/16-17/18 business plan. Currently the Sports, Learning, and Lodges & Operational Property programmes were reporting as amber. All other programmes were green.

Members noted that there was still further work to be done in developing meaningful baskets of indicators for Finance and Developing Our Staff.

Resolved – that the update be noted.

9. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received an update from the City Gardens Manager and noted that the City's Open Spaces had collectively been awarded 14 Green Flags.

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

There were no questions.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED**

There was no urgent business.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION: 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.

13. **DEBT ARREARS - INVOICED INCOME FOR PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2015**

The Committee received a report regarding the debt arrears for the period ending 31 March 2015.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no urgent business.

**The meeting ended at 3.30 pm**

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Chairman

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