

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Monday, 16 April 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 16 April 2018 at 10.15 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Smith (Chairman)
Alderman Ian Luder
Barbara Newman
Jeremy Simons
Deputy John Tomlinson
Anne Fairweather (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Jake Tibbets	-	Open Spaces Department
Greg Moore	-	Town Clerk's Department
Colin Buttery	-	Director of Open Spaces & Heritage
Gerry Kiefer	-	Open Spaces Department

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Karina Dostalova, Oliver Sells, and Deputy Phillip Woodhouse.

Opening the meeting, the Chairman took the opportunity to relay the sad news of the passing of Peter Adams, a long-standing Verderer at Epping Forest. On behalf of the Committee, he expressed his sincere condolences to Mr Adams' family and friends.

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

There were none.

1. **MINUTES**

The Committee approved the public minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2018, subject to the apologies of Deputy John Tomlinson and Catherine Bickmore being noted.

Matters Arising

One London Wall Place – A Member spoke to commend the public space that had been created at this location, suggesting that the Director of Open Spaces should write to the developer to commend them. The Chairman endorsed this suggestion, observing that it was a positive example which other developers should be encouraged to emulate.

1. **SCHEDULE OF VISITS 2018**

Members considered the schedule of Open Spaces visits for 2018, noting that an updated and more comprehensive version to that which was presented in the papers had been tabled.

The Chairman advised that the intention was to consolidate relevant dates and calendar items into a single document, to facilitate a great awareness of what was going on across the totality of the various open spaces managed by the City.

Members suggested that thought should be given to the placement of relevant dates on a website, with it noted that the establishment of a single website to publicise all of the City's open spaces and various events would be very helpful. It was noted, however, that careful thought would need to be given to the publication of various dates, as there were a significant number and it would be wise to avoid to be seen to promote some events and not others. A Member noted that the Policy and Resources Committee was soon to consider funding a significantly improved City Corporation website and noted that, once data was in place on that forum, there may well be an opportunity to alter the lay-out and way in which information was accessed in different ways, so as to greater publicise the activities of the various open spaces.

A Member also noted that some individual open spaces currently produced their own publications, suggesting that these should be distributed more widely to all Members, so as to raise awareness.

RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces visits schedule 2018 be noted.

1. **FINAL DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 - OPEN SPACES**

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the 2018/19 business plan for the Open Spaces Department. The report summarised the key objectives and outcomes for the Department and how Business Plan assisted with the successful delivery of the outcomes referenced in the Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023.

Members queried some of the figures associated with Tower Bridge in Appendix 1, noting that the stated income seemed to be incorrect. Officers undertook to clarify this outside of the meeting and amend the figure accordingly.

Members sought further detail as to how ecological conditions at the various open spaces would be measured. The Director of Open Spaces agreed that a uniform system of measurement would be neither appropriate nor practical, observing that individual metrics would need to be developed for each site which paid due regard to the context of each space. Members noted that further detail would come back to the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces Department's Business Plan for 2018 – 19 be approved.

1. **OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT EVENTS POLICY**

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces which presented an Open Spaces Department Events Policy for approval. The report detailed how the policy planned to minimise the impact on areas under statutory

protection and the adjoining communities. In addition, the report stressed that the Open Spaces Department Events Policy was intended to be reviewed after 12 months.

Members queried the reference to Golders Hill Park, questioning whether this should be presented independently of Hampstead Heath. The Director of Open Spaces agreed that the opening hours and nature of events at Golders Hill would be different and agreed to take this back to consider.

Members discussed the possibility of damage to certain sites and the nature of various events, noting that care would need to be taken to ensure an appropriate balance was struck to prevent over-use or the types of events which might harm the site. It was urged that suitably strong wording be included in the policy to make this clear. The Director of Open Spaces agreed, noting that site-specific policies would be developed for each location which would come to the Committee in due course. It was also noted that the Officer Events Group considered such matters in relation to each application.

In response to queries concerning feedback from events, the Director advised that feedback was important to obtain sense of public engagement with events, but accepted that monitoring was also important – particularly when considering applications for repeat bookings. Members suggested that this should explicitly be taken into account as part of the policy, noting that the Officer Events Group did take this into account as part of its consideration.

Responding to queries concerning damage caused by events and reinstatement of the open spaces, the Director confirmed that a deposit to cover reinstatement was generally obtained up-front as part of the hire agreement. However, there were some occasions where this requirement was waived for bodies such as community organisations holding local events.

Subject to the minor amendments suggested and the items for the Director of Open Spaces to resolve, the policy was approved, with authority to approve the final version delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

RESOLVED: That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to approve the final version of the Open Spaces Department Events Policy.

1. **CITY GARDENS UPDATE**

Members received a report of the City Gardens Manager providing an update on the management and operational activities across the City Gardens since February 2018.

The City Gardens Manager advised that the opening of the Seething Lane site had now been confirmed for 26 June at 5.30pm. Responding to Members' queries, the City Gardens Manager undertook to take into account local Ward Members and businesses when drawing up the guest list for the event.

With regard to the survey of private trees, Members urged that more proactive communication take place with the owners of those identified as in poor condition. Rather than simply alert owners to the poor condition of the tree, it was suggested that the location of the trees be mapped and owners provided with a link to the Arboricultural Association's list of Tree Surgeons.

RECEIVED.

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

Mitcham Common Conservators

A Member took the opportunity to highlight the City Corporation's appointment rights in respect of a Conservator of Mitcham Common, suggesting that increased engagement and potential support from the City Corporation might be welcome.

Table Tennis

A Member queried the possibility of installing fixed table tennis tables at some of the City's open spaces and gardens, to afford office workers the opportunity to engage in recreational activity in a pleasant surrounding during lunch-breaks. The City Gardens Manager advised that he would shortly be undertaking an audit of all sites and would include the identification of potential sites as part of his review of the various locations.

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

Committee Meetings

The Committee were informed that there were no items on the agenda plan for the June Committee meeting; the Committee would next meet on 16 July 2018.

1. **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.

1. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee approved the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2018.

1. **MEMBERS WORKING GROUP - FINSBURY CIRCUS GARDEN REINSTATEMENT**

Members considered a report of the City Surveyor concerning the reinstatement of Finsbury Circus Garden and the creation of a Working Group.

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

There were no questions.

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

There were no urgent items.

The meeting ended at 11:00am

Chairman

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