

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Monday, 15 July 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 15 July 2019 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Oliver Sells QC (Chairman)
Graeme Doshi-Smith (Deputy Chairman)
Wendy Mead
Barbara Newman
Jeremy Simons
Deputy John Tomlinson
Deputy Philip Woodhouse (Ex-Officio Member)
Karina Dostalova (Ex-Officio Member)
Caroline Haines

In attendance:

Verderer Joanna Thomas

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Carl Locsin	- Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Head of Finance - Citizen Services, Chamberlains
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Alison Bunn	- City Surveyor's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces & Heritage
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Dr Helen Read	- Conservation Officer, The Commons
Gerry Kiefer	- Department of Open Spaces
Jake Tibbetts	- City Gardens Manager, Department of Open Spaces
Patrick Hegarty	- Technical Manager, Department of Open Spaces
Jack Joslin	- City Bridge Trust

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Ian Luder and Catherine Bickmore.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL**

RESOLVED – That the order of the Court of Common Council be received.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 29. The Town Clerk read a list of Members eligible to stand and Oliver Sells being the only Member expressing their willingness to serve was duly elected Chairman for the ensuing year and took the Chair.

RESOLVED – That Oliver Sells be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the outgoing Chairman Graeme Doshi-Smith.

VOTE OF THANKS

Proposed by Barbara Newman.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Members of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee wish to place on record their sincere appreciation to

GRAEME MARTYN DOSHI-SMITH

Their very great and sincere thanks and appreciation for the distinguished manner in which he has served as Chairman since 6th June 2016. Much has been achieved during Graeme's Chairmanship in what has been a challenging financial and political period. He has combined an open minded, forward looking, balanced and calm approach with good humour and enthusiasm.

As the Strategic Committee for all the City's Open Spaces, Graeme oversaw the passage of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 from its October 2016 Third Reading in the House of Commons, to the gaining of Royal Assent on 15 March 2018.

Graeme has provided strategic leadership on matters affecting the whole Department. Graeme recommended final amendments to the overarching Departmental Events Policy which, together with the site-specific plans, has established clear guidelines to event organisers and ensures that events are properly managed from both a conservation and community impact perspective.

Recognising the value that the Learning Programme brings to young people and adults who struggle to experience and connect with nature, he fully backed the request for core funding to embed the Learning Programme within the Department. Similarly, thanks to Graeme's forward-thinking approach, 23 people have been given opportunities across the Open Spaces Department

under our apprenticeship scheme. Graeme is also an adamant supporter of the many volunteers who assist across our open spaces. Over the past three years, grants totalling £250k have been awarded to twenty community, charity and voluntary organisations through the 'Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment' grant aid scheme which Graeme introduced in partnership with the City Corporation's Central Grants Scheme.

A keen supporter of responsible and sustainable business practices, Graeme has promoted the Department's introduction of Photo-voltaic solar panels on some of its buildings, which has seen the Department significantly increase its contribution to electricity generation. Similarly, officers are reducing fleet and machinery costs and converting to cleaner fuels, highlighted within the Square Mile by the City Gardens team's compliance with 2019 Ultra-Low Emissions Zone legislation.

A champion of the opportunities and benefits that 'fit-for-purpose', supported technology can bring to the Open Spaces Department and the wider City, Graeme was delighted to see the City Gardens team awarded Transformation Fund resources to introduce an electronic management system to reduce paper processing and to improve management information leading to more effective resource allocation.

A wide array of City landscape improvements and capital projects have been completed under Graeme's watchful eye, enhancing the open space offer to the City's residents, workers and visitors. These include the strategic new gateway to the City at Aldgate Square; the reinstatement of the historic Pepys Garden at Seething Lane where wildlife-friendly planting now sits atop three storeys of underground infrastructure; the commemorative Queen's Diamond Jubilee Garden, now adorning the space where coaches once parked and Mitre Square, marking the spot where Jack-the-Ripper once plied his grisly trade. Negotiations with Crossrail continue regarding Finsbury Circus Garden, its remaining underground infrastructure and the reinstatement of the site as the Square Mile's largest and oldest public open space.

The retention of 14 Green Flag and 12 Green Heritage Scheme Awards for this Committee for each of his three years of Chairmanship are a testimony to Graeme's interest in the quality of the visitor offer, as are the Gold award at the Britain in Bloom finals in 2018, and the innumerable gold awards and park-of-the-year awards at London in Bloom.

Finally, the Committee wishes to place on record its recognition of Graeme's distinguished contribution to the work of the Committee and in thanking him for his generous hospitality, his colleagues convey to him their good wishes for the future, with happy memories of a substantial body of achievement over the past three years.

5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. The Town Clerk informed the Committee, that in accordance with Standing Order No. 30(3)(a), Graeme Doshi-Smith as the

immediate Past Chairman and having indicated his willingness to serve was accordingly declared to be the Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED – That Graeme Doshi-Smith be elected as Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year.

6. **MINUTES**

Members considered the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee.

Members raised concerns on the role of the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces within the Sports Strategy and requested that the note, following the Members breakfast briefing, be circulated to the Committee for information.

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

7. **BREXIT UPDATE**

The Director of Open Spaces provided Members with a summary of the impact of the Brexit process on the City of London Corporation's Open Spaces Department. The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs funding had been secured post Brexit and that the City of London Corporation had been preparing for the various effect's different outcomes from the Brexit negotiations.

RESOLVED- That the update be noted.

8. **APPOINTMENT OF A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE STREETS AND WALKWAYS SUB COMMITTEE**

The Committee were invited to appoint a representative to the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee for the ensuing year. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that Barbara Newman expressed an interest in serving and invited any other expressions of interest in the position.

RESOLVED- That Barbara Newman being the only Member willing to serve was appointed for the ensuing year.

9. **CITY GARDENS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which provided an update on the City Gardens' activities since April 2019.

Replying to a query from the Chairman the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that '*Top Ten Trees in the City of London*' had been chosen by the Friends of the City Gardens.

It was explained by the Director of Open Spaces that Goldman Sachs were aware of the risks relating to planting outside of the recommended window at the development at Stonecutter street and that the decision to begin the planting at this time had been taken by the company at its own risk.

Members suggested that Committee visits to the City Gardens be arranged to allow Members to experience the gardens first-hand.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

10. **FINSBURY CIRCUS REINSTATEMENT**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Finsbury Circus Reinstatement.

The Chairman noted that he felt the reinstatement of Finsbury Circus was a priority for the Committee and explained that he and the Deputy Chairman had agreed an Interim Compensation Payment under urgency procedures in the week preceding the meeting. The Director of Open Spaces explained to the Committee that they expected to take occupation of Finsbury Circus in October 2019.

Responding to a question from a Member the Director of Open Spaces explained that the Human health layer, listed within the report, was a requirement of contamination regulations and that they were satisfied the depth was adequate to protect staff working on the site.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. Authority be delegated to the Superintendent of Parks and Gardens for approval of the reinstatement proposals attached at Appendix 1, as the temporary landscape condition to be installed by Crossrail prior to its vacation of Finsbury Circus Garden, in accordance with the Crossrail Act 2008, Schedule 5; and
- II. That it was noted that by agreeing this temporary landscape, the City's right to reasonable compensation in respect of the costs of reinstatement of the final landscape, will not be compromised.

11. **CYCLICAL WORKS PROGRAMME BID - 2020/21**

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor on the Cyclical Works Programme 2020/21. The report set out a provisional list of cyclical projects being considered for properties under the management of Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

12. **OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 - YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee received a report of Director of Open Spaces on the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan 2018/19 Year End performance. The report provided Members with a review of the Open Spaces Department's delivery of its 2018/19 Business Plan.

A Member commented that it was key that the Sports Strategy be received by all the relevant committees before it was finalised.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

13. **REVENUE OUTTURN 2018/19 - OPEN SPACES & CITY GARDENS**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain on the Revenue Outturn 2018/19 Open Spaces & City Gardens.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

14. **HEALTH & SAFETY IN THE OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on Health & Safety matters pertinent to the Open Spaces Department.

RESOLVED- The report be noted.

15. **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION OF A PARTNERSHIP FUNDING BID TO HEATHROW AIRPORT LIMITED**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Proposed development and submission of a partnership funding bid to Heathrow Airport Limited. The report outlined a partnership proposal to develop a funding submission to the Secretary of State of Transport to create and restore Habitats of Principle Importance (HPI) in and around the Burnham Beeches SAC. The Chairman commented that he felt the project was useful and important to the work of the department.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

16. **CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME (CGP) - ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Chief Grants Officer (CGO) and Director of City Bridge Trust on the Central Grants Programme (CGP) Annual Report. The report included the outcomes of the four CGP grant programmes delivered in 2018/19; an update on the monitoring and evaluation of the CGP and an outline of the next deadlines for 2019/20.

The Chairman noted that going forward attracting new applicants to the CGP was key to its success.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

17. **GENDER IDENTITY POLICY**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the Gender Identity Policy. The report presented the City Corporation policy on gender identity, and the findings from independent analysis of an online survey conducted in 2018.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

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

A Member of the Committee raised the issue of Open Spaces online services listed on the City of London Corporation Website. Members discussed the need

to improve the City of London Open Spaces online features both in terms of accessibility and quality of information. It was also suggested that the Committee's local risk could be used to finance this development. The Director of Open Spaces explained that the Open Spaces department had made the requirements of the website clear and that these had been considered by Digital Services Sub-Committee. In addition, the Committee were informed that the Director of Open Spaces would be meeting with the Deputy Chairman of the Digital Services Sub-Committee to discuss these issues.

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

A Member commented that the Committee had not yet received an acceptable reply from the Chamberlain to the letter sent by the Committee.

20. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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

21. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED- That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2019 be approved as a correct record.

22. **CROSSRAIL REINSTATEMENT: FINSBURY CIRCUS BRIEFING NOTE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Crossrail Reinstatement Finsbury Circus briefing note.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

23. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION OF A PARTNERSHIP FUNDING BID TO HEATHROW AIRPORT LIMITED**

The Committee received a non-public appendix to be viewed in conjunction with item 18.

RESOLVED- That the appendix to be noted.

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

There were no questions considered in the non-public session.

25. **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 of non-public business considered

The meeting ended at 12.27 pm

Chairman

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