

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Monday, 4 February 2019

Note of the inquorate meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 4 February 2019 at
11.30 am

Present

Members:

Graeme Smith (Chairman)
Jeremy Simons
Deputy John Tomlinson
Caroline Haines

Observers:

Verderer Dr Joanna Thomas
Catherine Bickmore

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Laura Simpson	- Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Nicholas Welland	- City Surveyor's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces & Heritage
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Gerry Kiefer	- Open Spaces Department
Patrick Haggerty	- Open Spaces Department
Jack Tibbetts	- City Gardens Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by the Deputy Chairman Oliver Sells, Alderman Ian Luder, Wendy Mead, Barbara Newman, Karina Dostalova and Deputy Phillip Woodhouse.

The Town Clerk informed Members that a Quorum had not been established within five minutes of the scheduled start of the Committee and as result, in accordance with Standing Order 36 (2), the formal meeting was dissolved. Following this Members present agreed to informally consider the items on the agenda.

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

There were no declarations received.

3. **MINUTES**

The Members received the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting on the 10th of December for accuracy. It was noted that as a quorum had not been established the minutes of the previous meeting would need to be agreed at the committee meeting in April.

Matters arising

Resolution to the Planning and Transportation Committee regarding Finsbury Circus – Closure of Highway to Vehicle Access

Following a Members question on the status of the Finsbury Circus the Chairman confirmed a note of the City Surveyor would be circulated as a item of late business in the non-public session.

4. **ACTIONS**

Members noted the report of the Town Clerk on the public actions of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee on the 10th of December.

A Member noted the Resolution which was submitted to Planning and Transportation Committee regarding the highway between Finsbury Circus and Moorgate and asked an update on discussions with Transport for London (TFL). The Director of Open Spaces informed Members that there had been some issues in establishing a meeting date with TFL which was now scheduled for July however this there was little clarity on this. The Director clarified that works were in place at the Finsbury Circus site which were expected to be completed by the middle of the year adding that the exact parameters of the works would be confirmed to Members. The Chairman noted that the resolution had been met with reasonable support from Members at the Planning and Transportation Committee and that the Department of the Built Environment's priority list had yet to be confirmed. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that the Finsbury Park Working Party was due to begin meeting again and that a note on the issue would be tabled as a late item of non-public business. A Member suggested that a pop-up garden could be easier to fund and could cover the need for an area of open land at the site.

RESOLVED- that the actions be noted.

5. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members noted the report of the Town Clerk on the annual review Committee's Terms of the Reference. The Chairman suggested that the membership of the Committee listed within the Terms of Reference be edited to mention the observers affiliated with the Committee. The Town Clerk informed Members that, as the meeting was inquorate, the proposed changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference report would need to be decided under urgency procedures.

RESOLVED- The report be noted.

6. **BREXIT UPDATE**

Members noted the verbal update from the Director of Open Spaces regarding Brexit and its impact on the Open Spaces within the City of London's care. The Director highlighted the key issues for the City of London including the loss of income from the European Union's Stewardship scheme and need for flexibility in reacting to changing political situation. In addition, the Director explained that the City of London Corporation's Human Resources department was working on establishing a corporate policy on the European Union nationals employed by the City of London Corporation and business partners.

RESOLVED- that the update be noted.

7. **CITY OF LONDON VISITOR STRATEGY 2019/23**

Members noted the report of the Town Clerk on the City of London Visitor Strategy for 2019/23. The Town Clerk informed Members of the central components of the Strategy and invited questions on the Strategy.

Replying to a Member's question the Town Clerk replied that sport and fashion were specifically mentioned within the strategy. A Member added that the Refill Application, which provides details on where members of the public can fill water bottles, is included in the Visitor Strategy.

It was raised by a Member that the City of London owned Open Spaces outside of the square mile were not mentioned within the Visitor Strategy. The Town Clerk explained that not all assets were listed within the Visitor Strategy and that it was centred on activities within the Square Mile. The Member replied that they felt the Open Spaces outside of the Square Mile should be included as key cultural assets of the City of London Corporation. The Chairman added that the redevelopment works which had taken place at certain Open Spaces within the Square Mile and those outside should be highlighted in the Visitor Strategy. Further to this a Verderer of Epping Forest noted that as Epping Forest is only thirty minutes away from the City of London it should be listed in the Visitor Strategy as a nearby destination. The Town Clerk confirmed that a more substantive reply to Members concerns would be provided via email.

RESOLVED- that the report be noted.

8. **CITY GARDENS MANAGER UPDATE**

Members noted the report of the Director of Open Spaces which provided Members with an update on the management and operational activities across the City Gardens section since December 2018.

A Member highlighted to the Director of Open Spaces the issues present at the City of London School garden. The Director of Open Spaces replied that the department was aware of these issues and informed Members that there had been a number of incidents with gardeners at site. In addition, the Director confirmed that the Open Spaces Department had been in contact with the City of London Police and the City of London School to resolve the issues. The Member replied that the City of London School was keen to directly manage the

garden using security guards employed by the School. The Director replied that they would contact the City of London School Bursar regarding this issue.

A Member questioned the effect that on the departmental budget had on the issuing of section 106 agreements. The Director of Open Spaces the confirmed that budgetary concerns would not affect the issuing of 106 agreements.

It was noted by a Member that the report mentioned five vehicles in the City Gardens fleet which were not compliant with the Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) standards and questioned when these were due to be replaced. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that these vehicles would be replaced by the 9th of April.

A Member requested further information on the working at height risks for planters at Shoe Lane. The Director of Open Spaces explained that the safety regulations on working at height were extensive and this, therefore, required bespoke systems at the Shoe Lane. Following this a Member queried if the Planters at Farrington street were also affected by these regulations. The Director clarified that while the Farrington street planters were also affected by these regulations the area was under the jurisdiction of Transport for London.

Members noted the funding request for Bunhill Fields from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had been rejected and questioned if there was any further information regarding the funding of this project. The Director of Open Spaces informed Members that the department had been in contact with the HLF who had clarified the request required additional funding options. The Director confirmed that alternative funding options would be explored to proceed with the project.

RESOLVED- that the report be noted.

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

One question was received during the public session.

A Member highlighted the recourse Open Spaces managed by the City of London provided to communities within London particularly in economically deprived areas and requested the City's communication team do more to highlight this. The Town Clerk confirmed that work had been undertaken to highlight the City of London's Open Spaces in the City's communications which would increase in the May with the National Nature Reserve decision.

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

There were no urgent items considered.

11. 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.

12. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

Members noted the non-public minutes of the meeting of Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee held on 10 December.

13. NON-PUBLIC ACTIONS

Members noted the non-public actions from the previous meeting.

14. NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX 2 CITY GARDENS MANAGER'S UPDATE

Members noted the non-public appendix for the City Gardens Manager's Update.

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

Members received two questions in the non-public session.

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

Members considered one item of urgent business in the non-public session.

The meeting ended at 12.25 pm

Chairman

**Contact Officer: Richard Holt
Richard.Holt@cityoflondon.gov.uk / 020 7332 3113**