

## WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE Tuesday, 9 December 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Rooms  
- Second Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 9 December 2014 at 12.30 pm

### Present

#### Members:

Deputy Alex Deane (Deputy Chairman)  
Deputy Robert Howard  
Wendy Mead  
Jeremy Simons  
Deputy Michael Welbank  
Justin Meath-Baker  
Robert Cazenove  
Catherine Bickmore  
Councillor Bryan Collier MBE  
Alderman Ian Luder (Chairman)  
Graeme Smith

#### Officers:

Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	Director, Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Louisa Allen	Open Spaces Department
Alison Elam	Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Nigel Lefton	Remembrancer's Department
Sam Cook	Remembrancer's Department
Lisa Russell	Department of the Built Environment
Edward Wood	Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Tony Halmos	Director, Public Relations
John Park	Public Relations Office

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Cllr Joy Laguda and Richard Gurney.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. MINUTES

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

#### 4. APPOINTMENT OF PARK CHAMPION

Members noted that the recent Heritage Lottery Fund report 'The State of UK Public Parks 2014 – Renaissance to Risk' provides an important insight into the current state of Parks in the UK. The report summarised the key findings and considered the issues that were particular relevant to the City of London; both in managing green spaces across London and in supporting the wider green space agenda across London.

The Committee considered the five HLF challenges from two perspectives; firstly, as the authority responsible for the green spaces in the Square Mile and secondly, as the provider of strategic green space across London. The five challenges were:

1. Local authority commitment
2. New partnerships
3. Getting communities more involved
4. Collecting and sharing data
5. New finance models and rethinking delivery

Members noted that the number of Friends and user groups had increased by 30% in the last three years and membership by 47%. There were some 5,000 groups across the UK raising a significant £30million each year. Members agreed that partnership working was very important to the directorate, as a number of the City owned parks, gardens, forests and heaths were located outside of the Square Mile and within other local authorities.

In response to a query, Officers agreed that the nominated champion would have a four year term. The exact terms of reference would be confirmed by the Director.

**Resolved: That Members appointed Cllr Bryan Collier as the West Ham Park Committee Park Champion.**

## 5. OPEN SPACES LEGISLATION

Members noted that the report outlined officer discussions which have taken place concerning possible modifications to the legislation governing the Corporation's Open Spaces. The aims of the changes would be to clarify the management powers available to the Corporation, to increase opportunities to receive revenue for the benefit of the Open Spaces, and to strengthen enforcement powers against wrongdoers. If Members agree that such changes should be further considered, it is proposed that the views of local interest groups be canvassed. It is anticipated that more detailed proposals would then be drawn up for evaluation by Members with a view to the promotion of a City of London Bill (if appropriate) in the autumn of 2015.

Members informed Officers that the current document lacked detail and would need to be strengthened before any modifications could be agreed. Members noted that they were being asked to agree a consultation at this stage, and any modifications to legislation would need to be agreed by the Grand Committee.

Resolved: That Officers be instructed to test the views of local interest groups on possible modifications to the legislation, as described in this Report.

## 6. SUPERINTENDENT' UPDATE

The Committee received the following update from the Superintendent:

**Budget** – spending was in line with budget profile at this 2/3 stage of the year. In the nursery, although majority spend is broadly in line with budget profile, an underachievement in floral income looks set to leave a deficit at year end.

**Staff** – the part-time support services officer providing financial support for the team started work on 25 November.

- The response to the recruitment process for the Manager's role was very positive with nearly 30 applications received, many of a very high calibre. Interviews took place yesterday the post had been offered to the successful candidate.

- The Superintendent needed to recruit fixed term maternity cover for one of the office team, starting in January 2015. At the closing date, 45 applications had been received. Interviews will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

- Unfortunately one of the Keepers tendered their resignation this week. They had recently undertaken the RHS certificate in horticulture and have decided that they would like to pursue a career more in line with this.

**Works update** – whilst leaf clearance in difficult conditions has remained the focus for the park team, LB Islington are currently back in the park undertaking their 2<sup>nd</sup> Massaria survey of the Plane trees this financial year.

### Community & Events

**The Dogs Trust** held their popular dog agility and free dog chipping event in November. The advice and free services are always very well received by both our regular dog-walkers and those who come along specifically for the event.

**Friends of West Ham Park** held a Stargazing Walk on 27<sup>th</sup> November along with the ever-popular Leaf Pile Event on Sat 15<sup>th</sup> November. Approximately 50 adults and children, including the local scout group, helped create the biggest leaf pile in Newham. A craft event and a nature walk also takes place at this event for those who wish to participate. The annual Park in the Dark event was held on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December – a torch lit procession through the Park to the bandstand where hot chocolate and mince pies were served whilst there was carol singing around the Christmas tree.

**Education** - In addition to the usual educational sessions, in early November the Support Officer carried out sessions with nursery age children from Kier Hardy Primary school as part of Newham Work Week. A large proportion of families in Newham are not in active employment and this worthwhile scheme brings the idea of future employment choices to children of Nursery age and upwards. Three more sessions are planned in different primary schools throughout the academic year as part of this scheme. In October one of the Team Leaders carried out 3 sessions with Park Primary school on being a Park Keeper, tying in Park Keeping roles with books that the children were reading

in school. The Gardening Team Leader and apprentice visited nearby St. Anthony's primary school to help build new raised beds in their playground in order for them to grow vegetables next year, as well as providing advice on growing.

**Awards and visits** - APPGHG visit took place on 28th October. MPs from both houses visited the park where we were able to convey not only interesting facts about the history of the site, but also some important messages about the current issues facing our industry. They then went onto the Cemetery & Crematorium. Next year's annual visit by the Lord Mayor will take place on Friday 29 May 2015

**Property** – at October's meeting the Superintendent reported that the City Surveyor was about to seek prices for the refurbishment of a further 6 tennis courts this winter as part of the AWP. Shortly after the meeting I met with the LTA who advised that, as part of a nationwide grants programme, funding will be available in 2015/16 to assist with enhanced surfacing for the courts. This could potentially be up to £60k. following discussions with the CS, it was agreed that it was sensible to postpone this year's proposed spend to next year, now that AWP funding has been agreed for next year, in order to recognise economies of scale, cause minimum disruption to park users and to take advantage of the funding from LTA. We will notify our users through notices, our on-line news items and tweeting.

## 7. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS - 2014/15 AND 2015/16**

Members noted that overall the provisional Original budget for 2015/16 totalled £1.220M, an increase of £191,000 compared with the latest approved budget for 2014/15. This was due to an increase in expenditure of £154,000 which was mainly due to an increase of £182,000 in Surveyor's Repairs & Maintenance, and a reduction in income of £40,000 which is mainly due to the reduction of CBT funding in Local Risk.

Resolved: That Membered:

- Reviewed the provisional 2015/16 revenue budget to ensure that it reflects the Committee's objectives and, if so, approve the budget for submission to the Finance Committee;
- Reviewed and approve the draft Capital Budget;
- Authorised the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Director of Open Spaces, to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, departmental reorganisations and other reviews, and changes to the Additional Works Programme. Members agreed that any works over £50,000 would need to be considered by the Committee;
- Agreed that if specific service based review proposals included with this budget report are rejected by the Committee, or other Committees request that further proposals are pursued, that the substitution of other suitable proposals for a corresponding amount is delegated to the Town Clerk in discussion with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the relevant Committee. If the substituted saving is not considered to be

straight forward in nature, then the Town Clerk shall also consult the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee prior to approving an alternative proposal(s).

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

There were no questions.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT.**

There was no urgent business.

**10. 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.

**11. MINUTES**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

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

There were no questions.

**13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no urgent business.

**The meeting ended at 1.05 pm**

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Chairman

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