

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS Monday, 20 April 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 20 April 2015 at 2.30 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Ian Luder (Chairman)
Wendy Mead
Jeremy Simons
Michael Welbank
Alderman Gordon Haines (Ex-Officio Member)
Verderer Peter Adams (Observer)
Graeme Smith

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	Director of Open Spaces
Louisa Allen	City Gardens Manager
Martin Rodman	Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Esther Sumner	Open Spaces Business Manager
Alison Elam	Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Edward Wood	Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
John Park	Press Officer, Public Relations Office

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Catherine Bickmore, Deputy Alex Deane, Deputy Robert Howard, Barbara Newman and Virginia Rounding.

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

Deputy Michael Welbank declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 St Mary-At-Hill Churchyard as he was a member of the Parochial Church Council.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes be agreed as an accurate record.

4. UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee received an update from the Director of Open Spaces and noted that the Green Infrastructure Task Force had recently met to review ways in which organisations valued green infrastructure and the benefits it provided. A governance report would be available shortly. Members noted that the Rural Payments Agency applications had been delayed due to national IT problems requiring paper based applications. The Various Powers Bill consultation was

nearing completion but due to IT software problems affecting Epping's work, their consultation period had been extended. A report would be submitted to the Committee for their consideration in due course. The Director informed Members that all of the respective Park Champions had been elected now, and their terms of reference would be circulated soon.

5. **ST MARY-AT-HILL CHURCHYARD ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT SCHEME**

The Committee received a report of the Director of the Built Environment informing the Committee that the scope of the project would be focussed principally on re-landscaping the churchyard to create a more attractive, useable, publicly accessible space. Improving the drainage of the space, increasing the way-finding into the space and developing a Maintenance Agreement were also key aspirations of the project. Members noted that as part of the next stage of design work, and before the next Gateway report, adjacent landowners, residents, Ward Members and other stakeholders would be consulted on the emerging proposals.

Members said that the stakeholders from St Mary-At-Hill Church were very enthusiastic about the development and would be embarking on an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund regarding a major project for the Church itself. Officers clarified that this sum would not be sufficient enough to cover the development of the churchyard.

In response to a query regarding the maintenance conditions and timescale included within the S106 agreement, Officers agreed to circulate this information to Committee Members after the meeting.

RESOLVED – that the following be approved:

- The Scheme Objectives; and
- The progression of the project and the release of funds.

6. **OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN 2015/16 - 17/18**

The Committee were presented with the Open Spaces Business Plan report and noted that the four departmental objectives were to:

- Protect and conserve the ecology, biodiversity and heritage of our sites.
- Embed financial sustainability across our activities by delivering identified programmes and projects.
- Enrich the lives of Londoners by providing a high quality and engaging learning and volunteering offer.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities through access to green space and recreation.

Members noted that the delivery of these objectives was supported by a number of corporate, departmental and divisional projects and programmes. These were illustrated on a roadmap. Members also noted the list of charitable objectives and agreed that these were an important priority for the years ahead.

In response to a query regarding the format of the report, Officers informed Members that the use of roadmaps was being implemented by departments

across the organisation as they served as a useful tool for examining the status of projects at a glance. Officers were able to compare projects taking place across the City's open spaces and could therefore allocate staff and other resources in a more beneficial manner. Members agreed that a 'navigation aid' to explain the roadmaps would be helpful, along with the inclusion of a full key on each roadmap.

Members noted that in future they would only receive the roadmap relevant to their open space, with the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee receiving the full report. Members also noted that the 'Projects in Progress' included Hampstead Heath Ponds Projects as this was a major area of work taking place.

Members queried why apprenticeship schemes were not included within the business plan. The Director said this had been overlooked and Officers would seek to include apprenticeships in future business plan reports. In response to a query regarding the 'rabbit triangle', Officers explained that this was an area of land close to National Rail's entrance to the track near the Cemetery which was currently unkempt and required maintenance.

Finally, Officers said that the dates included on the roadmaps were not set in stone but acted as guidelines to ensure that projects progressed efficiently.

RESOLVED – that the Open Spaces Business Plan 2015/16 – 17/18 be agreed.

7. APPROVAL OF EQUIPMENT FUNDING OFFERS

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces which informed Members that the City of London Corporation's local authority's responsibilities included education, learning, health, social care and leisure; including play and well-being. Members noted that current resource restrictions were resulting in new opportunities for partnership working.

Officers said that at the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting on 12th January 2015, consideration was given to a request from the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) to install natural play equipment on Forest Land at Hollow Ponds, Leyton Flats and thus remedy a local play deficiency. Members noted that the many benefits of natural play, including positive impacts on the mental, physical and social wellbeing of children and their relationship with nature. Installing natural play structures was in line with corporate strategy and had no major legal or property implications.

In response to a query from Members, it was noted that the funding would apply solely to equipment and not services. Members clarified that although the proposal would encourage play and well-being, it would also encourage members of the public to take part in sport activities.

RESOLVED – that option 2 "Decision on sport and play equipment funding offers should be made by the respective Management Committee based on the

principle that any offer should be self-funding for the lifetime of the equipment and its removal” be approved.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received an update from the Superintendent and noted that the 2015 City in Bloom Campaign launches on the 1st May for applications in June and would be run for the second year by the Friends of City Gardens. The friends had secured £6K from Nomura Bank which would fund the campaign in its entirety including the celebration event to be held on 14th September. Nomura Bank had volunteered their roof garden as the venue for the celebration event this year and at no cost to the City. Officers informed Members that a document setting out guidelines for developers of roof gardens would be made available on the City's Web page soon.

Members noted that the Barbican Balconies Event took place on Saturday 11th April, a joint initiative between the Barbican Estate, residents and City Gardens to encourage residents to plant up their containers for year-round displays. Hundreds of plants and three crates of compost were made available to residents as well as planter demonstrations. A wildflower meadow was planted by children in Speed Garden. Approximately 150 attended the event with positive feedback via an on line survey.

The Friends of City Gardens have secured funding and partnership support from Gensler, Hamptons and TfL to install a temporary 'pop up' garden on a derelict platform within the station. The installation and planting to take place in the forthcoming week by the friends, TfL staff and volunteers. The garden would be in completed by 27th April.

As part the Local Area Agreement Grant, awarded to City Gardens last year for the planning and implementation of the City's Biodiversity action plan the *City of London Biodiversity Partnership Group* and the *Green Roof Enhancement Breakfast Workshop* had taken place. The documentary guidance on green roofs will be made available on the website.

The Superintendent informed Members that a formal dinner would take place at Guildhall on 2nd July 2015 for Members of the West Ham Park and Open Spaces & City Gardens Committees. This change would grant the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Director the flexibility to invite key partners and organisations to future events they may wish to host throughout the year.

9. BUNHILL FIELDS BURIAL GROUND DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN (2015 - 2020)

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces and noted the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Management Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Management Plan be approved for adoption and publication.

10. CITY GARDENS DRAFT EVENTS POLICY

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces and noted the draft City Gardens Events Policy. Members noted the vision, aims and objectives for the management of small events to be trialled in selected City Gardens.

Discussions ensued regarding the use of the City Gardens for private events. Officers confirmed that at no point during its open hours would the park be closed to members of the public. Events would be suitably located to ensure minimal disruption to the public. Occasions which were scheduled to take place after the park had closed would be open only for the use of the event.

Members noted that the City Gardens could be used for wedding photography and asked the Superintendent to ask these couples whether they would have considered holding their ceremony in the park, had they been permitted to do so. Members noted that wedding ceremonies were permitted at Golders Hill Park in Hampstead; an initiative which was instigated by the local Registrar. The Superintendent agreed to consult the local Registrar to ascertain whether there was an interest in holding wedding ceremonies in the City Gardens.

RESOLVED – That the following be approved:

- the City Gardens Draft Events Policy;
- the use of the City Gardens Draft Events Policy to manage events as a pilot for one year from May 2015 to June 2016;
- the proposed fees and charging structure; and
- delegated authority to the Superintendent of Parks and Gardens to decide whether to approve or refuse applications for events in City Gardens for the pilot period

11. ANNUAL COMMITTEE VISIT TO CITY GARDENS

The Committee noted the change to the annual committee visit to City Gardens' sites, moving to a model where informal visits would take place by exception, where a major issue or improvement had occurred that Members may not have encountered through another committee or event.

RESOLVED – that approval be given to the annual visit to sites within the City Gardens Section being discontinued in its current form, and that future visits were arranged by exception.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no urgent business.

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was agreed 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.

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

There were no questions.

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

There were two urgent items.

The meeting ended at 3.45 pm

Chairman

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