

Committee:	Date:
Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee	12 th October 2015
Subject: Superintendent's update October 2015	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Parks & Gardens	For Information
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>This report provides an update to Members of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee on management and operational activities across the City Gardens section since July 2015.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report. 	

Main Report

Budget

1. The City Gardens budget is in line with agreed budget profiles.

Personnel

2. A full complement of staff is in place.

Operational Activities

3. The landscaping and planting of the pond at Beech gardens is now complete.
4. Over the last 6 months, the City Gardens team and City Procurement have worked in partnership to tender a new contract for horticultural goods and sundries. The scope of supplies will include semi mature trees, plants, soil and turf. The specification has been developed in collaboration with a number of open spaces teams and, by buying together and in bulk, there will be cost savings and evidence of achieving Best Value. The shared specifications also incorporate the required sustainability standards and product quality. Officers have undertaken site visits to validate supplier bids and to ensure the quality of the products offered meets standards.

The type of contract to be awarded is a four year framework agreement and this means there will be a range of suppliers to seek quotes from, ensuring continuous competition and Best Value. The timescales to purchase are also significantly reduced as is the overall administration, saving time and effort for officers. The finance and insurance teams will have cleared all of the suppliers and health and safety policies and procedures have been vetted. The tender has been carried out in accordance with EU and UK procurement regulations in a fair and transparent manner and the contract will be awarded following further scrutiny by the Land Management Category Board chaired by the Director of Open Spaces.

Events and Awards

5. City, London and Britain in Bloom Campaign

On the 15th September, officers attended the London in Bloom finalist award celebrations. The City won an overall Gold for the Town category.

The full list of accolades is set out below:

Town Category

City of London – Gold (assessing the overall impact of managing open spaces including: horticultural achievement, environmental responsibility and community participation)

Small Cemetery

Silver Gilt & Category Winner- Bunhill Fields, City of London

Small Park of the Year

Silver Gilt - Cleary Gardens, City of London

Silver Gilt - Festival Gardens and Queens Diamond Jubilee Garden, City of London

Silver Gilt - Portsoken Street Garden, City of London

Silver Gilt - Christchurch Greyfriars Church Garden, City of London

It's Your Neighbourhood

Friends of City Gardens achieved 'Thriving' in the community based awards (this programme focuses on community participation, environmental responsibility and gardening achievement).

City in Bloom

On Monday 14th September over 100 guests were welcomed to the headquarters of Nomura International plc for the City in Bloom Award Ceremony organised by Friends of City Gardens and supported by City Gardens. City in Bloom is an annual campaign that recognises the work of community groups, businesses and residents in making the Square Mile a greener place to live, work and visit. Over 120 entries were received across

nine different categories from window boxes and hanging baskets to roof gardens, terraces and green roofs. Entries were judged by 20 volunteer judges using criteria including horticultural excellence, site suitability and biodiversity and sustainability with those shortlisted invited to the award ceremony. Both entries and individuals were awarded one of a total of 26 awards recognising the outstanding contribution to areas, including food growing, community engagement and commercial planting with Best in Show awarded to Cannon Bridge House.

Bat Walk

On Tuesday 8th September City Gardens held a 'how to lead a bat walk' training session delivered by the Bat Conservation Trust. Eighteen people attended the training which involved a classroom based learning session followed by practical training after dusk in some of the City's open spaces. Those attending learnt about the basic ecology of bats, use of bat detectors and the practicalities of leading a bat walk. As part of the practical session the group visited Barber Surgeons Garden and the Barbican Estate where common pipistrelles were seen circling over the garden and lakes. It is anticipated Friends of City Gardens will support resident and community groups to lead future bat walks to raise the awareness, understanding and enjoyment of bats in the City. The training was funded by a local area agreement bid to support the update of the City of London's Biodiversity Action Plan for 2015-2020 and ongoing monitoring and understanding of biodiversity in the Square Mile.

The Christmas tree Lighting Event

The Christmas tree lighting ceremony will take place on 8th December at 4pm, the Lord Mayor will be in attendance and the St Paul's Cathedral School Bread Street choir will be singing at the event.

Property Matters

6. None to report

Louisa Allen

City Gardens Manager

T: 020 7374 4140

E: Louisa.allen@cityoflondon.gov.uk