

WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE
Monday, 27 July 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Rooms
- Second Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 27 July 2015 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Robert Howard
Alderman Ian Luder
Wendy Mead
Barbara Newman
Jeremy Simons
Graeme Smith
Michael Welbank
Justin Meath-Baker (Ex-Officio Member)
Robert Cazenove (Ex-Officio Member)
Catherine Bickmore (Ex-Officio Member)
Richard Gurney (Ex-Officio Member)
Councillor Joy Laguda MBE (Ex-Officio Member)

Others Present:

Virginia Rounding
Verderer Peter Adams

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Scott Morgan	Town Clerk's Department
Paul Double	Remembrancer
Sue Ireland	Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	Superintendent Parks & Gardens
Esther Sumner	Open Spaces Business Manager
Louisa Allen	City Gardens Manager
Lucy Anne Murphy	West Ham Park Manager
Edward Wood	Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
Alison Elam	Group Accountant, Chamberlain's
Patrick Hegarty	Technical Manager, Open Spaces

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Deputy Alex Deane, Councillor Bryan Collier and Reverend Stennett Kirby.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Deputy Robert Howard declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 16 as he was a School Governor at Capel Manor College.

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 29. The Town Clerk read out a list of Member's eligible to stand and Alderman Ian Luder, being the only Member to express his willingness to serve, was declared the duly elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 30. The Town Clerk read out a list of Member's eligible to stand and Graeme Smith, being the only Member to express his willingness to serve, was declared the duly elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

6. **MINUTES**

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

Matters Arising:

- The Chairman queried whether Members preferred the new format of the Committee dinner, and Members agreed that the arrangements had been suitable and that it was an enjoyable evening.
- Officers confirmed that the West Ham Park charitable objective wording was correctly recorded in the business plan.

7. **VARIOUS POWERS ACT UPDATE**

The Committee received an update from the Remembrancer informing Members that the City was seeking agreement to the promotion of a private Bill in Parliament to make changes to the legislative framework governing the City Corporation's Open Spaces. The principal aims of the changes would be to clarify and expand the management powers available to the Corporation, to increase opportunities to generate revenue for the benefit of the Open Spaces (consistently with their status as public places of recreation and enjoyment), and to strengthen enforcement powers.

Members were informed that the Bill was no longer intended to apply to West Ham Park as, owing to the particular legal position of that land, parliamentary powers were not considered necessary in order to achieve the relevant management objectives.

Resolved – that the update be received,

8. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received an update from the West Ham Park Manager and noted that the park had been awarded a Green Flag and Green Heritage Award this year. Members congratulated Officers on this achievement.

Members were informed that a public consultation had been taking place during June and July in regards to three benches situated adjacent to Aileen Walk. Antisocial behaviour had been taking place near the benches. Officers were

sifting through the responses now, and the current opinion seemed to be split. Members suggested that as the days got shorter and the park closed earlier perhaps the problem would solve itself.

The Committee were informed that unfortunately Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) had recently been discovered in Stratford and New Spitalfields areas. The Director of Open Spaces chaired the OPM advisory group for the Forestry Commission, and was supporting the London wide challenge in managing this pest. The Forestry Commission secured funding from DEFRA, which had been affecting parts of west and south east London.

At this stage the costs had been limited to nest removal but the costs of spraying were not yet quantifiable. Members noted that these costs to date had been met from the Director of Open Spaces' local risk budget. If, regrettably, the incidence spreads and becomes of a much larger scale, the Chamberlain had agreed in writing that a request against contingencies could be considered.

Resolved – that the update be received.

9. **GRANTS REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the outcome of the cross-cutting review of the City Corporation's grant giving activities.

It was noted that the proposals had been considered by the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee and Policy and Resources Committee, and were recommended for approval subject to responsibility for strategic oversight and performance management of the City Corporation's grant giving activities being given to the Finance Committee rather than to the Finance Grants Sub-Committee.

The Committee acknowledged that a de minimis limit would need to be established as part of the governance process.

The Committee noted the resolution from the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee that a Working Party should be formed to discuss the matter. The group would consist of up to three Members from the Open Spaces & City Gardens, Epping Forest & City Commons and Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queens Park Committees, 1 Member of the West Ham Park Committee and 1 representative of the Finance Grants Sub Committee. Members nominated Councillor Bryan Collier as their representative and suggested that the Town Clerk seek his availability.

The Working Party would meet on 16 September at 9:30am and 25 November at 3:30pm and each meeting would last 1 hour.

RESOLVED – That approval be given for a more structured approach to grant giving which was jointly governed by all Open Spaces and which was publicised and managed as part of the City Corporation's suite of grants programmes.

10. BUSINESS PLAN OUTCOME REPORT - QUARTER 1 2015/16

The Committee were presented with the outcome of the first quarter of the 2015/16-17/18 business plan. It included the divisional roadmap. Currently the Sports, Learning, and Lodges & Operational Property programmes were reporting as amber. All other programmes were green.

Members also reported on the Key Performance Indicators to date. There was still further work to be done in developing meaningful baskets of indicators for Finance and Developing Our Staff.

Resolved – that the update be received.

11. REVENUE OUTTURN 2014-15

The Committee received a report comparing the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee in 2014/15 with the final agreed budget for the year. In total, there was a better than budget position of £54,000 for the services overseen by your Committee compared with the final agreed budget for the year as set out below.

Resolved – that the update be received.

12. REVIEW OF LODGE ALLOCATION AT WEST HAM PARK

The Committee received a report informing Members that the Open Spaces Department required employees in certain roles to reside in residential accommodation on site for the better performance of their duties and to provide an out-of-hours callout service. West Ham Park had 10 such properties.

Members were informed that due to historic reasons, not all lodges were allocated in accordance with the best fit for the service and it was desirable to rectify this situation for the future. The simplest way to achieve this was through natural turnover, as staff retired or left the organisation. The allocation model identified that only 8 lodges were required to fulfil a fair but fit-for purpose callout rota.

In response to a query, Members noted that by relocating some staff, it was possible to free up 2 neighbouring lodges that are self-contained, in that they can be easily separated from the Park and nursery complex, and have direct access to the main road.

Discussions ensued regarding the Right to Buy scheme and Officers informed Members that the City Corporation could robustly challenge any attempt from tenants to purchase the property. The Chairman suggested that the gardens of each property be let under a separate short term lease agreement which could help mitigate the risk of any Right to Buy claims.

Resolved – That the following be agreed:

- the revised model for lodge residency, recognising that this will be implemented over time through natural turnover of staff;
- that 240 and 242 Upton Lane, identified as surplus to service need, be

let to the open market as residential accommodation on the best terms that can reasonably be obtained;

- delegate authority to the Director of Open Spaces, Comptroller & City Solicitor and the City Surveyor to undertake the necessary works to render the properties suitable for letting, to agree appropriate terms and management arrangements, and to complete the necessary documentation;
- that officers report back to a future meeting of this Committee to advise Members of the letting arrangements agreed under Recommendation 3 above.

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

There were no questions.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT.

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor which set out the provisional list of cyclical projects being considered for West Ham Park in 2016/17. The list totalled £5,500 and would continue the ongoing maintenance of the property and infrastructure assets.

Resolved – that the report be received.

16. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

MOTION - 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.

17. NURSERY SERVICE REVIEW

Members of the Committee considered a confidential report regarding the Nursery Service Review.

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm

Chairman

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