

EPPING FOREST & COMMONS COMMITTEE
Monday, 9 November 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest & Commons Committee held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 9 November 2015 at
11.30 am

Present

Members:

Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)
Deputy John Barker
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg
Alderman Sir Paul Judge
Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Sylvia Moys
Barbara Newman
Virginia Rounding
Philip Woodhouse
Verderer Peter Adams
Verderer Michael Chapman DL
Verderer Richard Morris
Verderer Dr. Joanna Thomas
Alderman Ian Luder (Ex-Officio Member)
Graeme Smith (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, City Commons
Jo Hurst	- Open Spaces Department
Sam Cook	- Remembrancer's Department
Alison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Peter Young	- City Surveyor's Department
Paul Nagle	- City Surveyor's Department
Roger Adams	- City Surveyor's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from the Deputy Chairman, George Abrahams.

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

There were no declarations made.

3. MINUTES

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

Matters Arising:

Epping Forest District Council Green Belt Review Stage 1 update

The Superintendent of Epping Forest informed Members that he had met with Epping Forest District Council Planning Officers on 15th September to discuss the review and that stage 1 of the process had now been completed. He would continue to work closely with Officers during the next stage.

The Warren Conservatory

The Director of Open Spaces informed Members that improvements works on The Warren Conservatory would be funded through the Additional Works Programme and tenders were due to be received this week.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of The Commons updating them on recent operational activity. In response to a question, Members were informed that Transport for London had concluded its public consultation process for the A232 pedestrian crossing. The result was 97% of respondents supported the Committee's approved option and a detailed report was anticipated in January 2016.

Members congratulated Officers on successfully securing the Kenley Revival Heritage Lottery Fund bid and noted that the HLF had commended the quality of submission. Consent to proceed was received on 18th September 2015 and mobilisation had commenced.

The Superintendent informed Members that he would soon be submitting a report for Members to consider the frequency of meetings and site visits of the Division's four local consultative committees. Members were in agreement that site visits were very useful in helping to understand the situation at various open spaces.

In response to a query, the Superintendent agreed to investigate the possibility of charging cancellation fees to companies who cancelled their filming booking.

Motorcycle riders had been a persistent problem at Ashted Common in recent weeks and the Superintendent informed Members that whilst motorcycles in the Commons might be considered detrimental to public safety they did not currently cause much physical damage; rangers and police continued to monitor and provide an increased presence in the area.

Received.

5. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS - 'THE COMMONS' 2015/16 & 2016/17

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain regarding the latest approved revenue budget for 2015/16, noting that overall the provisional original budget for 2016/17 totalled £2,284M, a decrease of £103,000 compared with the latest approved budget for 2015/16. The main reasons for this decrease were a reduction in the City Surveyor's additional works programme off-set by an increase in employees. Members were in agreement

that any contribution from City's Cash to open spaces should be well publicised.

Resolved – that:

- the 2016/17 revenue budget be approved for submission to the Finance Committee; and
- the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Director of Open Spaces, be authorised 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, with any changes over £50,000 to be reported back to the Committee.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest for August and September 2015 advising of recent operational activity. In response to a question regarding the increased charges for wayleaves, the Superintendent said that a number of queries had been received and were being responded to appropriately.

The Superintendent drew Members attention to changes to the Manor Flats area of the Forest proposed by the London Borough of Newham and Transport for London as part of the Crossrail sponsored redevelopment of the Manor Park Station street scene. Within the area of Forest dedicated to public highway, a slip road would be replaced with improved paving, a new bus shelter and an enhanced pedestrian access to Manor Flats.

In response to a query regarding planning objections, Officers agreed that the City must ensure a balanced approach was taken in respect of supporting and opposing planning applications. Discussion ensued regarding requesting a sum of money from the Policy and Resources Committee to invest in external planning consultant guidance to ensure a balanced view was taken towards planning matters.

Members requested that Committee reports and updates be accompanied by a map highlighting the site which was the subject of discussion and the Superintendent agreed to make a map available to Members at future Committee meetings.

In response to a query regarding provisions for playing rugby at Wanstead Flats, Officers informed Members that both the League and local rugby clubs had been approached and none had requested additional facilities in the Wanstead area.

Discussion ensued regarding fly tipping taking place in the forest. Members agreed that deterrents were essential elements when trying to decrease the amount of fly tipping taking place. The Director agreed to take forward the matter of fly tipping and litter as a strategic report. The Superintendent advised that he could provide total costs incurred for rubbish removal and disposal; however, it was difficult to attribute the specific disposal costs of fly tipping as a discrete amount, as general litter and fly tipped material were co-mingled prior to disposal.

In response to a query regarding the maintenance of Gifford Wood, the Superintendent informed Members that a planting grant had been received from the

Forestry Commission which would cover the maintenance of the area for the first five years.

At the Member's request, Officers agreed to utilise a range of social media outlets to promote new City of London Corporation initiative regarding funding for underprivileged schools to visit and make use of open spaces.

Received.

7. PERMISSION TO PERFORM CIVIL MARRIAGES AND PARTNERSHIPS AT THE TEMPLE AND THE TEMPLE ENCLOSURE

The Committee considered a report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest regarding permission to perform Civil Marriages and Partnerships at The Temple and The Temple Enclosure.

Members observed that a working party had been created to discuss all aspects of management of Wanstead Park and they had hoped that the working party would have had sight of the report prior to the Committee being consulted. Members also noted that the proposal was to hold wedding ceremonies at Wanstead Park only and not wedding receptions. Members further noted that open air ceremonies were currently not legal and therefore did not form part of the proposal.

Resolved – that permission be granted to perform civil marriages and partnerships at The Temple and The Temple enclosure.

8. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS - EPPING FOREST 2015/16 & 2016/17

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain regarding the latest approved revenue budget for 2015/16 and the provisional revenue budget for 2016/17.

The Chamberlain informed Members of the following amendments due to be made to the total recharges across funds for Woodredon and Warlies as follows:

Actual 2014-15: £28,000

Latest Approved Budget 2015-16: £14,000

Original Budget 2016-17: £11,000

Movement 2015-16 to 2016-17: £3,000

Members noted that £5,389,000 of City's Cash was spent to maintain Epping Forest during 2014/15.

Resolved – that:

- the 2016/17 revenue budget be approved for submission to the Finance Committee;
- the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Director of Open Spaces, be authorised 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, with any changes over £50,000 to be reported back to Committee.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no urgent business.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION: 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.

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

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

13. **DEED OF EASEMENT UPDATED TERMS**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor in relation to the updated Terms of the Deed of Easement.

14. **OPERATIONAL PROPERTY**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor in relation to the Operational Property review.

15. **ACCESS AT KNOLL HOUSE, BURY ROAD, E4**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces in relation to access at Knoll House.

16. **NON PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Town Clerk had received notice of one non-public question from Verderer Morris.

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

There was no urgent business.

18. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

Resolved – that the confidential minutes be agreed as an accurate record.

The meeting ended at 1.10 pm

Chairman

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