

## **OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS**

### **Monday, 15 April 2013**

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 15 April 2013 at 11.30 am

#### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Alderman Robert Hall (Chairman)  
Deputy Alex Deane  
Alderman Ian Luder  
Wendy Mead  
Deputy Michael Welbank  
Richard Gurney  
Justin Meath-Baker  
The Rev. Stennett Kirby  
Councillor Joy Laguda  
Councillor Bryan Collier  
Alderman Gordon Haines (Ex-Officio Member)  
Barbara Newman (Ex-Officio Member)  
Jeremy Simons (Ex-Officio Member)

#### **Officers:**

Esther Sumner	- Policy Officer, Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Louisa Allen	- City Gardens Manager
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Bob Meldrum	- Assistant Property Services Director (Operational Property), City Surveyor's Department
Peter Shadbolt	-

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Catherine Bickmore and Robert Cazenove.

#### **2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS IN THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

Deputy Wendy Mead declared an interest as a Member of the City Bridge Trust Committee.

#### **3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. The Town Clerk read a list of Members eligible to stand and Alderman Ian Luder, being the only Member expressing his willingness to serve, was declared to be duly elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

The Chairman took the opportunity to welcome Councillor Bryan Collier MBE to the Committee, and went on to thank former members of the Committee Stella Currie, Janet Owen and Dr Peter Hardwick for their contributions to the work of the committee during their tenures.

The Chairman then thanked Dennis Whelton for his many years of services to the Corporation, latterly as Support Services Manager in the Open Spaces Directorate. On behalf of the committee, he wished Mr Whelton a happy, fruitful and healthy retirement.

#### 4. **MINUTES**

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 4 February 2013 were approved as a correct record.

##### **Matters Arising**

**Members Declarations** (page 2) – Jeremy Simons declaration to read “...a Trustee of 2 Charities based at St Andrew’s Holborn” and Alex Deane’s declaration to read “...a Trustee of St Andrew’s Fundraising Board.”

**National Planning Policy Framework** (page 2) – The Director of Open Spaces advised that with the support of Paul Becket from the Department of Built Environment, they had met with the Mayor of London’s London Plan team on 14<sup>th</sup> March and had a very positive consideration of the need to protect areas and strategic spaces from in-appropriate development.

**Schedule of Visits** (page 2) – The Town Clerk advised that the July visit, in consultation with the Chairman, would now take place on 12 July.

**LB of Newham Representative** (page 2) – The new representative was in attendance and was welcomed by the Chairman.

The Chairman recorded the Committees thanks to three past Members who were no re-elected; past Deputy Chairman Dr Peter Hardwick, Janet Owen and Stella Currie. They had all provided significant support to Open Spaces over many years and the Chairman had written to each personally.

The Chairman also recorded thanks to Denis Whelton, the Open Spaces Support Manager who was retiring after 43 years, including 11 years with the City of London.

##### **West Ham Park**

#### 5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Superintendent of West Ham Park. The following points were made –

**Finance** – in advance of the final out-turn, the end of the 2012/13 FY looks healthy - West Ham Park £11k planned underspend which we would seek to carry forward for planned projects in 2013/14, subject to the appropriate approvals. The Nursery shows an over-achievement of income in the sum of £13k.

**Staff** – at the end of last month we appointed a temporary nursery gardener post – fixed term to the end of November.

**Works update** – the team has replaced approximately one third of the hedge around the tennis courts with *Pinus spp.* Refurbishment of three of the tennis courts has begun; this is funded by a grant from the London Marathon Trust secured by Tessa Sanderson Foundation and Academy. In the Nursery we are busy growing summer bedding for The Royal Parks. Including bedding for the City and other OS, we are growing over 350 species with many more varieties, totalling over 200,000 plants. Following a Members question, the Superintendent confirmed he would contact Newham to identify any plant selling opportunity.

**Visits** - The Committee lunch will be separated from the visit this year. Lunch is scheduled on 17 May at Barber Surgeon's Hall – invitations have been sent electronically. Members were reminded to check that they had received an invitation. The visit will take place Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September and the Lady Mayoress will attend, further details will be provided nearer the time.

**Events** – Yesterday saw the Newham 10K run and half marathon start and finish in the park. Over 3000 runners took part in total. A number of well-known international runners took part as this is seen as a 'warm-up' and timing event for full marathons during the summer. Although those attending would not particularly have experienced any problems, a number of issues occurred on the day. Although our staff undertook their duties professionally and efficiently, this did not appear to be the case with the event organisers. The Superintendent I will be discussing this at a wash-up meeting soon and will seek to tighten arrangements next year, through a formal event license.

On 27<sup>th</sup> April a "heroes and heroines" day has been organised by the Friends of West Ham Park, including a hired story teller for children and craft time (instrument making from recycled materials).

This week 3 primary schools will be sowing wild flower meadows around Park Cottage and in the jubilee food garden, as part of our CBT – (City Bridge Trust) funded improvements to biodiversity.

## 6. WEST HAM PARK NURSERY BUSINESS PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces updating Members on the progress made over the past year in delivering projects set out in year 3 (2012-13) of the West Ham Park Nursery Business Plan.

Following comments about the benefits of the ground water bore hole, the Superintendent was asked to confirm whether water butts are used to store rain water at the Nursery.

## **RECEIVED.**

### **7. PROVISIONAL ADDITIONAL WORKS PROGRAMME 2014/15**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor setting out a provisional list of cyclical projects being considered for properties under the management of Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's views be sought on the provisional list of works.

## **Open Spaces**

### **8. CURRENT TOPICAL ISSUES FOR OPEN SPACES**

The Director of Open Spaces advised that as this was the last meeting of the Committee in its current format, she stated that she thought it would be helpful to update Members on progress, following on from the various topical issues presented to or considered by Members in the last year.

Planning – with the support of Paul Beckett (Director of Policy and Performance in the Department of Built Environment) met with the Mayor of London's London Plan team on 14<sup>th</sup> March and had a very positive consideration of the need to protect areas and strategic spaces from inappropriate development. Work to provide supporting evidence is progressing.

Litter Management – The trial commenced earlier this year of installing recycling bins in the City Gardens Open Spaces. Each bin cost £800 and to date 15 have been installed and within the new financial year we hope to install a similar number. A report will be submitted on the outcome of the trial at the end of the year ie early 2014.

Dog Control Orders – The Superintendent of Burnham Beeches has been progressing this project, both in terms of identifying the means to administrative orders in a cool effective way and also, preparing for public consultation on the proposals. A Member expressed concern about the potential cost of enforcement arrangements and the possible use of covert surveying. The Director advised that these were matters that would be addressed during the consultation stage and would be reported to the Committee later in the year.

Tree Disease – Following the tree conference just before Christmas with the Forestry Commission (FC), a meeting has been arranged with Sir Harry Studholme and Mathew Pencharz to press for further support in managing tree

diseases across London. The FC has been asked to provide £5m over 3 years, to reduce the impact of Oak Processionary Moth and the Director was expecting a positive response. A Member asked about the impact of spraying on other invertebrates and was assured by the Director that most would not be affected, as the chemical has to be ingested by caterpillars at the time of spraying.

9. **OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN 2013/2016**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces outlining the overall departmental aims and objectives, the key projects for the next three years and the key indicators that have been set to measure performance.

Officers were asked to include in section 10 Human Resources, the number of temporary seasonal staff posts. Whilst considering the Risk register, the Superintendent was asked to confirm whether Bunhill Fields was still on the English Heritage "At Risk register".

Members are also asked to consider the key projects for the City Gardens and West Ham Park.

RESOLVED: That Members –

1. approve the Open Spaces Department Business Plan for 2013-2016, including the key projects for City Gardens and West Ham Park, and agree the targets for service delivery as quantified by the performance indicators; and
2. determine whether any projects and performance indicators represent high risk and priority sectors of service which you would expect to be featured in the quarterly progress reports which will be submitted to the Committee during 2013/14.

10. **OPEN SPACES AUDIT REPORT 2012**

The Committee received a report of the Director of the Built Environment summarising the key findings of the City of London Open Spaces Audit Report 2012.

**RECEIVED.**

**City Gardens**

11. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from the City Gardens Manager. The following points were made –

**Finance** – The City Garden's budget is in line with agreed profile. The current budget at year end shows a small underspend which, subject to approvals, would be spent on a repeat Massaria survey, associated tree works and the purchase of more recycling bins.

**Staff** – Currently there is a full complement of staff. A newly appointed Project Support Officer and a new Assistant Gardener have been recruited recently.

### **St Botolph Bishopsgate – Dashwood House S106 Improvements –**

Conservation and levelling issues in relation to the fountain have now been resolved enabling City Gardens and contractors to instigate drainage improvements during May. Other improvements to the garden have included: the installation of metal edging between the lawns and newly planted border, the planting of a replacement tree and the installation of three new watering points. One of the traditional bedding displays is to be converted temporarily into a decorative vegetable planting as part of the City's in Bloom campaign. In designing out previous anti-social behaviour, the area behind the tennis/netball courts is now accessed via a locked gate. The installation of lamps and lighting bollards is complete. Remaining planting will be carried out in the autumn.

**Green Corridors Update** – This three year Transport for London funded project worth £415k. The City's Tree Strategy aims to increase the existing stock of trees, especially through the planting of large-canopied species, and to increase the number of City owned trees by 5% by 2019. The Green Corridors project significantly contributes to this target through the planting of some 50 street trees which will ensure this target is exceeded.

### **Friends of City Gardens and volunteer activities**

- 22 March – Friends of City Gardens and 10 volunteers from a regeneration charity based in Bromley by Bow have planted 450 native whips to create a native hedge in Bunhill Fields. This project supports the City of London's vision to work with and involve wider communities;
- 17 April – volunteers from Lloyds Bank are planting a woodland meadow, converting a patchy area of grass in Bunhill Fields in partnership with the Friends;
- 11 May – Barbican in Bloom event, organised by City Gardens in partnership with the Barbican Estate, the library and the Barbican Horticultural Society. The event will include: 'how to care for plants in container demonstrations and workshops, storytelling for children (gardening themed) and a treasure hunt;
- 8-9 June – Open Squares Weekend. A number of City gardens are promoted through this scheme. The Barbican Wildlife Group will be opening Fann Street garden to the general public. An edible walk has been organised by the City Gardens and a historical treasure hunt for families will be organised by the Friends of City Gardens and volunteers in Bunhill Fields.

## **12. RESULTS OF A FACE-TO-FACE SURVEY OF USERS AND NON-USERS OF THE CITY'S OPEN SPACE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces relative to the results of a face-to-face survey of users and non-users of the City's Open Space.

The Superintendent stated that the findings from the user survey were very positive, with 79.4% of users rating the City Gardens service as good or very good. A Member sought clarification that the City of London does not encourage the feeding of pigeons. Another Member asked about opportunities

to improve open space provision in the north east part of the City and City fringe. The Superintendent advised that a report to the Committee in the autumn regarding Aldgate, would address this matter.

**RECEIVED.**

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

There were none.

**14. URGENT ITEMS**

There were none.

**15. 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 as follows:-

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraphs in Schedule 12A</u>
16	3
17-18	-

**16. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2013 were approved.

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

There were none.

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

There were none.

**The meeting ended at 1.15 pm**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: Committee & Member Services, Town Clerk's Department**

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