

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Monday, 7 October 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room -
2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 7 October 2013 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Alderman Ian Luder (Chairman)
Alderman Robert Hall
Wendy Mead
Deputy Alex Deane
Deputy Robert Howard
Barbara Newman
Jeremy Simons
Alderman Gordon Haines (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg (Ex-Officio Member)
Virginia Rounding (Ex-Officio Member)

Observers:

Verderer Peter Adams (Epping Forest and Commons Committee)
Catherine Bickmore (West Ham Park Committee)
Tony Ghilchik (Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee)

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerk's Department
Angela Roach	- Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Louisa Allen	- City Gardens Manager
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Jennifer Allott	- Departmental Business Manager, Open Spaces Department
Alison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Victor Callister	- Department of the Built Environment

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Michael Welbank.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

Wendy Mead declared a non-pecuniary interest due to her membership of the City Bridge Trust Committee.

3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Following the resignation of Alderman Robert Hall as Deputy Chairman of the Committee, an election for the post was held in accordance with Standing Order 30. The Town Clerk read out a list of names of Members eligible to serve and Deputy Alex Deane, being the only Member expressing his willingness to serve, was duly appointed Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

The Chairman welcomed Deputy Deane to the Deputy Chairmanship, and noted that a formal Vote of Thanks to Alderman Hall would be delivered by Mrs Barbara Newman at the meeting of the West Ham Park Committee later that day.

4. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 22 July 2013 were approved as a correct record, subject to 'Castle' being amended to 'Carter' (item 12) correction of word to 'Firefighters' (item 12) and correction of word to 'Stair' (item 12).

Matters Arising

The Value of Green Spaces to London and Londoners

The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that the report would be submitted to the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting on 6 November 2013.

Visits

A Member noted that there had been two recent visits by the Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers to the City Gardens.

Outstanding Actions

The Chairman requested that the Committee be provided with a schedule of outstanding actions as part of its agenda pack for future meetings.

5. **PLANNING COMMITMENTS FOR OPEN SPACES**

The Chairman introduced the tabled report on Planning Commitments in Open Spaces, and updated the Committee on his recent meeting with the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee to discuss the issue. He informed the Committee that the Chairman of Policy and Resources recognised the need for the City of London Corporation to state its case towards emerging strategic documents that would likely impact on property owned and managed by the Corporation, and therefore it was proposed that £25,000 be made available to fund formal expert planning and technical advice.

A Member welcomed the report, noting the impact of emerging Local Plans in local authorities bounding open spaces owned and managed by the Corporation. He noted however that often the Corporation found itself dealing with ad hoc planning applications such as The Water House and the Garden House adjacent to Hampstead Heath, and applications such as these absorbed a significant amount of local budgets. He argued therefore that a further £25,000 would be welcome to deal with such planning applications.

The Chairman did not disagree with the Member's point, but argued that the Committee needed to focus on what was possible, and in this instance it meant securing a guaranteed £25,000.

In response to a further message of support for additional funding on top of the proposed £25,000 the Chairman reminded the Committee that the Open Spaces Department would need to be accountable as to how it spent the additional funds, and that a transparent body of evidence of how the money was spent in the coming financial year would be useful in seeking further funding if it was demonstrably needed. Furthermore he noted the need to influence emerging strategic documents such as Local Plans at this moment in time to guarantee that the Corporation did not face having to make representations against, from its perspective, unsatisfactory planning applications over the next decade and beyond.

A Member agreed, arguing that the report before the Committee was an important document in that it was setting a precedent for securing additional funding from within the Corporation itself, and the initiative matched the emerging strategic ethos of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee. Lastly he noted that the Greater London Authority was developing its own Local Plan and therefore he expressed the hope that officers would demonstrate continuing commitment to influencing the document.

RESOLVED:

- That members endorse the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee recommending that £25,000 is made available during financial year 2013/14 on a strictly ring fenced basis for the purchase of formal expert planning and technical advice.

6. OPEN SPACES POLICY REVIEW

The Chairman introduced the report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Open Spaces Policy Review, noting that the review's purpose was to ensure that appropriate policies were in place and properly communicated to staff across the Open Spaces Department.

RECEIVED

7. OPEN SPACES ADVERSE WEATHER CANCELLATION REPORT

The Departmental Business Manager introduced a report on the draft Large Events Adverse Weather Cancellation policy, noting that a recent event cancellation had highlighted the desirability of such a policy. She highlighted that the policy would provide staff with key guidance and minimise the risk faced by the City of London Corporation.

An Observer commented that arguably the policy focused too much on short notice storm events whereas experience showed that cancellation was often the result of cumulative factors over a longer period of time. A Member agreed, noting that the recent event referred to by the Departmental Business Manager is her introduction was the cancellation of the Cross-Country Championships on Hampstead Heath where the ground had been affected by weather over a long period of time prior to the event rather than by a one-off occurrence of adverse weather.

The Deputy Chairman suggested that the proposed flow diagram in the draft policy include reference to Open Spaces Committee members being informed of event cancellations so that they could help assist in the management of the issue in their role as ambassadors for the Corporation.

RESOLVED:

- That subject to comments and suggestions by Members, the policy be adopted.

8. GREEN SPACES: THE BENEFITS FOR LONDONERS

The Chairman introduced a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the benefit of green spaces to London and Londoners. He expressed his opinion that the topic was arguably suitable for further research and invited the Director to approach higher education institutions within London to gauge whether any PhD candidates would

choose to conduct research on the topic, with any necessary support from the Corporation of London. He concluded by recommending that green spaces such as privately-owned/public-access areas such as churchyards and 'green roofs' within the City not be overlooked.

An Observer expressed disappointment with the report, stating that in his opinion it was simply a desk-based exercise. He hoped therefore that the potential PhD study would be more holistic in its approach. He identified the crux of his concern being that any study should establish in particular why green spaces were of such social and economic benefit to people.

A member of the Committee noted that she had attended the Museum of London Cultural Hub that morning and had reminded those present that the City Gardens should not be overlooked, and that for example areas of the City Gardens should feature on Direction Points throughout the City.

RECEIVED

9. GREEN FLAG AWARDS 2013

The Superintendent of City Gardens introduced a report on the Green Flag Awards 2013, noting that the results of London in Bloom Awards would feature as part of the City Gardens Manager's update.

RESOLVED:

- That the great success achieved by the City of London's Open Spaces in the Green Flag and London in Bloom Awards be noted and reported to the Court of Common Council on 24 October 2013.
- That the members of staff and volunteers across all of the Open Spaces be congratulated on their contribution to the Corporation's success in the awards.

10. ALDGATE HIGHWAY CHANGES AND PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT GATEWAY 4 REPORT - SUMMARY FOR OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

The Assistant Director (Environmental Enhancement) introduced the report of the Director of the Department of the Built Environment on the Aldgate Highway Changes and Public Realm Improvement Gateway 4 Report. He noted that Transport for London (TfL) had offered to meet 50% of project costs and that s106 monies from the Eastern Cluster would meet the remaining 50%. This did mean however that there were revenue implications in the upkeep of the area once the project was completed. He outlined the fact that the maintenance shortfall would be in the region of £70,000 and officers were currently reviewing ways in which this could be met. The Assistant Director noted that other local authorities in similar circumstances made use of s106 monies, and many entered agreements for significantly longer periods of time than the current five year agreement that was in place. He added that there was the possibility of making use of the Community Infrastructure Levy from 2015.

In response to a concern from a member that a proposed water feature was forecast to cost £22,400 a year to maintain, the Assistant Director replied that the cost only represented a worst-case scenario estimate, given the water feature in question had yet to be designed.

In response to a query from a member over the nature of the proposed kiosk, and the concern that proposed refuse bins would cost £24,000 a year to maintain, the Assistant Director replied that the Director for Community and Children's Services was keen for the kiosk to be run as a social enterprise that incorporated public lavatories. He added that a specialist operator was already liaising with the Corporation over its operation. Regarding bins, the Assistant Director clarified that the cost reflected the maximum forecast number of bins and was likely to change following consultation with the Corporation's cleansing department.

In response to a question from a member over the level of segregated cycling provision in the proposed scheme the Assistant Director replied that alternative schemes were being investigated.

The Chairman concluded discussion by noting the Committee approved of the report in general but had real concerns over the source of funding for the ongoing maintenance of the scheme. He recommended that officers seek an s106 agreement on a term longer than five years and that furthermore the Committee hoped that their colleagues on the Finance Committee would allow any monies arising from the kiosk to be invested in maintenance of the site.

RESOLVED:

- That the Committee note the project may lead to increased revenue costs and that these additional costs and funding proposals would be determined as part of the detailed design and fully reported upon in a Gateway 5 report.
- That the Committee approve that the project proceed to Gateway 5 subject to the Gateway 5 report being submitted to the Committee for decision.
- That officers note the concerns and recommendations of the Committee over the source of funding for ongoing maintenance of the site.

11. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The City Gardens Manager provided the Committee with an update on recent activities and issues.

Finance

The City Gardens finances are in line with agreed budget profiles.

Staff

Recruitment was underway for the position of Assistant Gardener following the position becoming vacant at the beginning of September 2013.

Projects

The City Gardens Manager noted that the majority of the landscaping work at St Botolph's Bishopgate had now been completed with a small area of paving due to be finished by the end of October 2013. A native holly hedge would be planted by December 2013.

London and Britain in Bloom

The City Gardens Manager noted that officers attended the London in Bloom finalist award celebrations on 18 September 2013, at which the City won an overall Gold for the *Town* category.

The full list of accolades included:

Town Category

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

Small Park of the Year

Silver - Tower Hill Garden, City of London

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

Gold - Christchurch Greyfriars Church Garden, City of London

Small Cemetery

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

The London in Bloom Business Premises of the Year (judged against all other business premises in London) was awarded to Middle Temple.

The City Gardens Manager reminded the Committee that the Britain in Bloom final awards presentations, attended by both officers and the Chairman, would be taking place on 12 October 2013.

In conclusion the City Gardens Manager reported that City Gardens won Gold for Cleary Gardens, Silver Gilt for Christchurch Greyfriars and Bronze for St Dunstan's in the East in the London Garden's Society awards ceremony which took place on 3 October.

Friends of City Gardens and Volunteer Activities

The City Gardens Manager reported that a group of 11 volunteers from Friends of City Gardens and City of London Guides would be lifting and dividing plants in Christ Church Greyfriars. The whole garden would be mulched with manure from Buckingham Palace.

Furthermore the Friends had arranged an Apple Day event on 19 October to take place in Golden Lane Community Hall between 1100-1600hrs, with activities including a competition to peel the longest apple peel, cooking demonstrations, stalls, music and activities for children. The first AGM of the Friends would be held at the end of the day. There would be a further event organised by the Friends and the City Gardens team labelled *Wild about your garden* on 31 October that will include bulb planting and a history-themed treasure hunt. The City Gardens Manager also reported that the Friends had secured £200 of funding from the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association that would be spent on underplanting the mini-orchard on Fann Street.

Growing Localities Apprenticeship Scheme

The City Gardens Manager reported that three apprentices had now been recruited and were in position at West Ham Park, City Gardens and Hyde Park.

Lastly, the Manager noted that the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony was on schedule for 5 December.

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

The City Gardens Manager introduced a report on results of a face-to-face survey of users of the City Gardens. The Chairman thanked her for the report and expressed his satisfaction over the positive feedback regarding litter and safety within the City Gardens.

RECEIVED

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

There were no questions.

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT
Committee Meeting – June 2014**

The Chairman noted that due to diary pressures it was necessary to amend the date of the June 2014 meeting from 9 June to 2 June at 1415hrs.

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:

Item Number(s)
16-18

Paragraph in Schedule 12A
3

16. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the non-public minutes of the meeting dated 22 July 2013 be approved as a correct record.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 12.23 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Alistair MacLellan
alistair.maclellan@cityoflondon.gov.uk