

**OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS**  
**Monday, 17 February 2014**

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 17 February 2014 at 11.30 am

**Present**

**Members:**

Alderman Ian Luder (Chairman)  
Deputy Alex Deane (Deputy Chairman)  
Deputy Robert Howard  
Wendy Mead  
Barbara Newman  
Jeremy Simons  
Graeme Smith  
Deputy Michael Welbank  
Alderman Gordon Haines (Ex-Officio Member)

**Observers:**

Verderer Peter Adams – Epping Forest & Commons Committee  
Tony Ghilchik – Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee

**Officers:**

Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Edward Wood	- Principal Legal Assistant, Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
Roger Adams	- Senior Principal Surveyor, City Surveyor's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent of Parks & Gardens
Louisa Allen	- City Gardens Manager
Patrick Hegarty	- Technical Manager, Open Spaces

**In attendance:**

George Gillon - Chief Commoner

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Deputy Stanley Ginsburg and Virginia Rounding.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on Monday 25 November 2013 be approved as a correct record, subject to ‘October 2013’ being amended to ‘October 2012’ on page 5, item 7.

**Matters Arising**

**The Value of Green Spaces to London and Londoners**

The Director of Open Spaces noted that she had been in discussions with the Director of the Royal Geographical Society, who had agreed to assist in helping identify suitable candidate universities in London who could host a PhD candidate interested in exploring the value of green spaces to London and Londoners. Moreover the Director of Open Spaces noted that the City of London’s report had been referenced as being of considerable benefit to a research student based at Kew Gardens.

**Planning Commitments for Open Spaces**

In response to a question from a member, the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that a report on how the £25,000 allocated to the Open Spaces Department to pay for formal planning advice had been spent would be submitted to the Committee in June 2015.

**St Andrew’s Holborn**

In response to a question from a member, it was confirmed that planning permission had been granted for the proposed redesign and landscaping works and that works were now expected to commence in March 2014.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received a list of outstanding actions.

Further to the query over whether observers to the Committee could be included within the Committee’s terms of reference, the Chairman noted that there were no plans to incorporate the Committee Observers into the Terms of Reference given that this was not standard practice.

**RECEIVED**

5. **SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk on the City of London Corporation’s Scheme of Delegations.

**RESOLVED** –

- That the delegations relating to the Director of Open Spaces set out in the Scheme of Delegations be approved, subject to the approval of the Policy and Resources Committee;

- That the proposed amendment to Standing Orders relating to the declaration of operational property assets which are surplus to requirements be noted.

6. **CONSOLIDATED REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2013/14 AND 2014/15**

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces regarding the Consolidated Revenue and Capital budgets for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The Group Accountant noted that the provisional figures regarding the Additional Works Programme had since been approved by the Resource Allocation Sub (Policy and Resources) Committee.

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7. **BUSINESS PLAN QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE UPDATE - QUARTER 3**

The Committee considered a quarterly update report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding the Open Spaces Department's Business Plan.

In response to a question from a member, the Director of Open Spaces noted that a reservoir related Emergency Plan had been completed and rehearsed for Hampstead Heath, and that a similar Plan had been prepared for Epping Forest and would be completed shortly. She went on to confirm that the plans would be rehearsed to ensure they were effective and fit for purpose.

In response to a question from a member, the Director confirmed that it was anticipated that under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill, the City of London would retain the power to make orders relating to dog control and would have a new and wider remit to make orders relating to other types of anti-social behaviour across its Open Spaces. The Director confirmed that a report would be coming to the Committee on this matter once the details were finalised.

In response to a question from a member, the Director confirmed that it remained a departmental objective to include a presentation on a strategic issue at each meeting of the Committee, but that their inclusion at each meeting was subject to wider priorities. The Chairman reminded the Committee that three strategic reports had been considered at the last meeting.

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8. **OPEN SPACES HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT 2013**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the department's Health & Safety Audit 2013.

The Technical Manager noted that whilst there had been a reduction in the number of accidents resulting in injuries during the year – from 55 to 46 – the nature of the work carried out by Open Spaces staff meant that it was difficult to

eliminate the risk of accidents entirely. He added that effort had been put into improving reporting processes to ensure the data collected for audit purposes was as accurate as possible. He concluded by noting that a new Technical officer, appointed at Epping Forest, was supporting improvements in Health and Safety.

In response to a comment from a member, the Chairman requested that officers provide a short report at a subsequent Committee meeting, detailing across an annual quarter, the nature of reported accidents. The report would provide more detail than was available in the current report and outline any lessons arising. He commented that he was pleased to hear that the reporting process was considered robust.

In response to comments from members querying the reason for some issues marked as completed following the 2011 Audit reverting to 'work in progress' following the 2013 Audit, the Technical Manager responded that each Audit inevitably revealed new areas for improvement. Items such as Fire Assessments required renewal when they reached their term of expiry – thus explaining incidences such Fire Safety reverting to work in progress.

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### **9. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Superintendent of Parks & Gardens updated the Committee on the effect of the inclement weather during the night of 14/15 February on the City of London's Open Spaces:

#### **Open Spaces - Initial Assessment of Damage – 14/15 February Storm**

- Coulsdon Common – 3 trees down and 7 trees damaged.
- City of London Cemetery – 3 trees down.
- North London Open Spaces – 10 trees down on Hampstead Heath, and a 28m section of the Hampstead Heath Lido perimeter wall blown over by high winds.
- West Ham Park – a eucalyptus tree down and damage to tennis court perimeter fencing.
- Burnham Beeches – the site's worst storm event of the winter thus far, with many public highways and paths blocked. Highways had been cleared and reopened over the weekend.
- City Gardens – a fallen tree had blocked Cloth Fair to traffic at around 0100 on Saturday morning but the road had been reopened by 0220 thanks to the efforts of the City of London's new contractor.
- Epping Forest – the size of the site had made a detailed inspection difficult, but it was clear there had been damage to the Hunting Lodge and flooding at Jubilee Ponds.

The City Gardens Manager then provided the Committee with current issues affecting the City Gardens.

## **Finance**

- The City Gardens' budget was in line with agreed budget profiles.

## **Gardens**

- A replacement project support officer had been recruited and would be in-post by the end of March 2014.
- The annual RSPB bird watch had taken place at the end of January, with around 25 residents and volunteers taking part.
- 16,000 naturalised bulbs had been planted by volunteers throughout autumn 2013.
- Buckingham Palace had once again gifted the City of London 80 tonnes of free mulch.

## **Projects**

- Officers had met with representatives from Crossrail to begin planning garden reinstatement works in Finsbury Circus.
- A poppy dominated wildflower mix was due to be sown in St Paul's Cathedral Garden in March 2014 by the Choir School ahead of the WW1 centenary.

## **City in Bloom**

- The 2014 campaign had now been launched and was being coordinated by the Friends of City Gardens.

## **Friends of City Gardens and Volunteer Activities**

- The Friends of City Gardens and City Gardens staff had delivered three educational sessions to children from the Lyceum School in Bunhill Fields during January and February 2014.
- A final lifting and dividing herbaceous planting session – in conjunction with volunteers – was scheduled in Greyfriars during March and April 2014.
- A rooftop survey had been organised by urban ecologist Dusty Gedge in liaison with the Friends of City Gardens. The survey had been last conducted ten years ago and was scheduled to take place once more in April and May 2014.

In response to a question from a member the City Gardens Manager confirmed that the Greyfriars project was in its third year.

In response to questions from members, the City Gardens Manager confirmed that the rooftop survey was being carried out at no cost to the City of London Corporation. Furthermore, at the time of the last survey there had been a total

of 7 green roofs across the City and therefore, a decade later, there was likely to be more.

10. **SCHEDULE OF VISITS 2014**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk on the Annual Schedule of Visits for 2014.

A member noted that Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee members were incorrectly listed as being eligible to attend the Lord Mayor's Visit to Dorneywood on Monday 9 June 2014.

**RESOLVED –**

- That members agree the current position and proposals set out within the report;
- That members agree the Schedule of Visits 2014 subject to the eligibility for attendance at the Lord Mayor's Visit to Dorneywood being amended.

11. **PROCUREMENT OF TREE MAINTENANCE WORKS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Procurement of Tree Maintenance Works.

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12. **PROJECT PRESENTATION - SENATOR HOUSE GARDEN**

*Due to time pressure the Committee agreed, at the suggestion of the Chairman, to defer this item until the conclusion of non-public business, so that members of the West Ham Park Committee could be admitted to take part in the presentation.*

The Technical Manager gave a presentation to the Committee on outline proposals to reconfigure the Senator House Garden. Members had the following comments on the proposals:

- The Deputy Chairman expressed his congratulations to officers for having the developer commit to reconfiguring the gardens. He added that it would be worth opening up the site more and to make a clear reference between the Senator House Garden and the adjoining Cleary Garden.
- A member suggested that a discreet plaque – perhaps at floor level – be installed to make clear that the Garden was owned and managed by the City of London.
- A member expressed concern over the amount of hard landscaping in the proposals for the new garden.

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

There were no questions.

14. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

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.

<b>Item(s)</b>	<b>Paragraph(s) in Schedule 12A</b>
16-19	3

16. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the non-public minutes of the meeting held on Monday 25 November 2013 be approved as a correct record.

17. **RENNIE GARDEN, SE1 - DELEGATED AUTHORITY REQUEST**

The Chairman introduced a report of the City Surveyor regarding the request for delegated authority to proceed with transaction terms relating to the City's Rennie Garden.

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

There were no questions.

19. **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 12.22 pm**

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Chairman

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