

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Monday, 5 December 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 5 December 2016 at 2.15 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Ian Luder (Deputy Chairman)
Graeme Smith (Chairman)
Alderman Robert Howard
Wendy Mead
Barbara Newman
Michael Welbank (Chief Commoner)
Jeremy Simons
Deputy John Barker
Virginia Rounding (Ex-Officio Member)
Philip Woodhouse (Ex-Officio Member)
Catherine Bickmore (Observer)
Verderer Peter Adams (Observer)

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	- Town Clerk's Department
Susannah Lascelles	- Town Clerk's Department
Carl Locsin	- Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent of City Gardens
Louisa Allen	- City Gardens Manager
Patrick Hegarty	- Open Spaces Department
Esther Sumner	- Open Spaces Business Manager
Andy Froud	- Epping Forest Senior Ecologist

1. APOLOGIES

The Committee met on the rising of the West Ham Park Committee at 2.33pm, later than the advertised time of 2.15pm. The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting for Item 5 (Finsbury Circus Bowling Green).

Apologies were received from Karina Dostalova and John Beyer.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2016 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Seething Lane Garden

The Superintendent noted that the works were due to be completed in Summer 2017. A Member expressed the hope that the Pepys bust would remain in St Olave's Churchyard and that a new, larger Pepys sculpture would feature in Seething Lane Garden.

Circus Animals in City Open Spaces

In response to a question, the Director of Open Spaces noted that the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee had expressed the view that circus animals should be restricted to common animals such as dogs, instead of exotic animals.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE DECEMBER 2016

Members considered an update report of the Superintendent of City Gardens and the following points were made.

In response to an observation the Superintendent agreed to raise with the relevant team the fact that soil from flowerbeds in Postman's Park tended to wash onto paths during wet weather.

In response to a further comment, the Superintendent apologised for the fact the City Christmas Tree Lighting clashed with a number of Committee meetings, but that the event was subject to the Lord Mayor's availability.

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5. FINSBURY CIRCUS REINSTATEMENT - BOWLING GREEN ISSUE REPORT

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces concerning the Bowling Green at Finsbury Circus. The Town Clerk noted that an email dated 29 November from a representative of the Bowling Club had been circulated to Members outside of the meeting for information.

The Superintendent noted that the recommendation of the report was based on balancing the needs of all users of Finsbury Circus to best effect. In response to a question, he confirmed that, as far as he was aware, an alternative pay for play bowling facility was available at Finsbury Square.

A Member noted that the Bowling Club has been under threat since at least the 1980s, and that he was not comfortable with the argument that the Bowling Club would preclude the use of the space by other users. He queried whether the City of London Corporation offered such a unique space elsewhere within the Square Mile where sport was promoted.

The Superintendent replied that the key issue concerning sport in the Square Mile was space – for example there were no football facilities but there was a netball facility at St Botolph's.

A Member commented that several major developments in the City over the past few years had led to a significant increase in the number of City workers, leading to an intensification of the City's daytime population. These workers had to be factored into the overall provision of City open spaces.

A vote was held on the recommendation within the report, which was carried 10 votes to nil.

RESOLVED, that Members

- Reaffirm the resolution taken in December 2014 to endorse the reinstatement of Finsbury Circus Garden to be laid out for general public access as a high quality garden space and without the introduction of specialist sporting surfaces exclusively aimed at specific user groups.

6. **OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT, CITY GARDENS AND WEST HAM PARK RISK MANAGEMENT**

Members considered and approved a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding Open Spaces Department, City Gardens and West Ham Park Risk Management.

RESOLVED, that Members approve the Parks and Gardens Risk Register included within Appendix 3e of the report.

7. **OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN - QUARTER 2 UPDATE**

Members considered an update report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding Quarter 2 of the Open Spaces Business Plan.

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8. **REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS - OPEN SPACES & CITY GARDENS 2016/17 & 2017/18**

Members considered a report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Open Spaces regarding Revenue and Capital Budgets for Open Spaces and City Gardens 2016/17 and 2017/18.

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9. **GREATER LONDON NATIONAL PARK CITY INITIATIVE**

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces concerning the Greater London National Park City Initiative. The Director noted that the proposal was underpinned by a lot of potential for wider partnerships across London but that it was too early for officers to make a recommendation to Members.

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10. **BATS IN TREES POLICY**

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces regarding a Bats in Trees policy. In response to questions, the Director advised that the Open Spaces Department had bat handling expertise, and that a bat handler tended to be an ecologist who was licensed by Natural England. The Epping Forest Senior Ecologist mentioned that there are at least 10 of 18 UK species of bat present in Epping Forest alone.

RESOLVED, that Members

- Approve the Bats in Trees policy for adoption;
- Agree that the Bats in Trees policy be communicated to other relevant departments to ensure a consistent approach to management across the City of London Corporation.

11. **OPEN SPACES LEARNING PROGRAMME**

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces concerning short term funding arrangements for the Open Spaces Learning Programme. The Director noted that the report would also be submitted to the January meeting of the City's Education Board for information.

RESOLVED, that Members note the report and the appended minutes from the Policy and Resources Committee.

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

There were no questions.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED**

There was no other business.

14. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED, that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

15. **INTRODUCTION OF A FORMAL OUT-OF-HOURS CALL-OUT ROTA FOR HAMPSTEAD HEATH, HIGHGATE WOOD & QUEEN'S PARK, AND THE RESULTANT REDUCTION IN REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATIONAL RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES**

Members considered a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath concerning the introduction of an out-of-hours rota at Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park.

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

There were no questions.

17. **ANY OTHER NON PUBLIC BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

EcoCycle

The Superintendent of City Gardens was heard regarding a proposal from EcoCycle.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm

Chairman

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