

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Friday, 12 February 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Virtual Public Meeting (Accessible Remotely) on Friday, 12 February 2021 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Oliver Sells QC (Chairman)
Caroline Haines (Deputy Chairman)
Alderman Ian Luder
Barbara Newman
Deputy John Tomlinson
Anne Fairweather (Ex-Officio Member)
Benjamin Murphy (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Joseph Anstee	- Town Clerk's Department
Kristina Drake	- Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Head of Finance, Chamberlain's Department
Ola Obadara	- City Surveyor's Department
Joanne Hunneybell	- City Surveyor's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Gerry Kiefer	- Open Spaces Business Manager
Jake Tibbetts	- City Gardens Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Wendy Mead and Deputy Phillip Woodhouse.

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

No declarations were received.

3. MINUTES

The Committee considered the public minutes and non-public summary of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee meeting held on the 12th of December 2020.

RESOLVED- That the public minutes of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee meeting held on the 12th of December 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk on the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee's Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The terms of reference of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee be approved for submission to the Court of Common Council in April, and that any further changes required in the lead up to the Court's appointment of Committees be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman; and
- II. That Members considered that no change be required to the frequency of the Committee's meetings.

5. **DEPARTMENTAL AND SERVICE COMMITTEE BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021/22**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Open Spaces and Chamberlain on the Departmental and Service Committee budget Estimates 2021/22.

The Committee discussed opportunities for holding appropriate events in the City Gardens to provide valuable income opportunities. The Director of Open Spaces explained that, while the sites in the City Gardens are not as large as the open spaces outside of the City of London, events in the City Gardens had been marketed. It was added that the Open Spaces Act 2018 requirement to keep open spaces accessible to the public and the COVID restrictions could potentially cause difficulties for holding events.

Following a Member's query, the Director of Open Spaces confirmed that the maintenance of the Barbican Gardens would not be impacted by the efficiency savings of 12% as these are funded by Barbican Residents through the service charge account.

It was raised by a Member that the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park Committee Budget for 2021/22, appended to the report, was not the updated version as agreed by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park Committee. Further to this the Committee agreed that the recommendations of the report would be approved with the caveat that the updated Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park Committee Budget for 2021/22 be included when presented to the Finance Committee.

A West Ham Park Committee local observer appointed to the Committee confirmed that as the West Ham Park Committee had not yet received the report so the approval would need to be given subsequently from the West Ham Park Committee its 2021/22 Budget.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The Directorate, Bunhill Fields and City Gardens proposed revenue budget for 2021/22 be approved for submission to Finance Committee; and

- II. That the City Gardens and Bunhill Fields capital and supplementary revenue budgets for 2021/22 be approved for submission to Finance Committee; and
- III. That the provisional 2021/22 revenue budget for the services overseen by the other Open Space Service Committees (appendices 6 - 8) be noted;
- IV. That the Chamberlain be authorised, in consultation with the Director of Open Spaces, to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, the City's new Target Operating Model, and changes to the Cyclical Works Programme.

6. **2021/22 EVENTS FEES AND CHARGES - CITY GARDENS**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the 2021/22 Events Fees and Charges for the City Gardens. The report proposed that the fees and charges for events that are held in City Gardens sites throughout the 2021/22 financial year be increased by 1.3% in line with the November Retail Price index figure and explained the rationale behind this suggestion.

The Committee discussed the need for a greater increase in the Fees and Charges for the City Gardens noting the need for the Department to be more commercially minded. The Committee agreed the recommended increase but also instructed Officers to provide a further report later in the year with an update on the position and more information on possible increased charges.

RESOLVED- That the proposed 2021/22 fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

7. **CITY GARDENS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the update for the City Gardens section since December 2020. The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee that the report on the Finsbury Circus Reinstatement was now included in the non-public section of the agenda. In addition, the Director invited Members to provide any further comments on the Draft Biodiversity Action Plan in the proceeding two weeks.

The Director of Open Spaces informed the Committee of the vandalism experienced at the City Christmas Tree noting that key lessons learnt on this had been taken on board by Officers. The Committee commented on their disappointment that this had taken place and encouraged Officers to take all necessary action to resolve this.

A Member questioned the use of mixed hedging at Moor Lane and whether the proposed design provided an increased or decreased amount of garden compared with what was there previously. The Director of Open Spaces replied that an answer to this point would be provided to the Member in question. Further to a query regarding a cycle lane in Moor Lane's usage for lorries it was noted by the Chairman of the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee that he would investigate this issue.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

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

A Member requested further information on the business engagement with the Draft Biodiversity Action Plan within the City of London. The Director of Open Spaces confirmed that there had been significant engagement with City Businesses within the Draft Biodiversity Action Plan and that the aim was to widen this engagement. The Chairman added that recent planning approval within the City of London had included the provision of green space in new development.

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

No urgent business was considered in the non-public session.

10. **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.

11. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the previous meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee held on the 12th of December.

RESOLVED- That the non-public minutes of the previous meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee held on the 12th of December be approved as an accurate record.

12. **FINSBURY CIRCUS REINSTATEMENT**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor on the Finsbury Circus Reinstatement.

RESOLVED- That the report be approved.

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

There were no questions received in the non-public session.

14. **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 received in the non-public session.

The meeting ended at 12.25 pm

Chairman

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