

WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE
Thursday, 17 October 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Room -
2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 17 October 2024 at 9.30 am

Present

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chair)
Eamonn Mullally (Deputy Chairman)
James St John Davis
Wendy Mead OBE
Catherine Bickmore
Councillor John Whitworth
Tim Hodgson

In Attendance:

Councillor Joy Laguda MBE
Andrew McMurtrie JP

Officers:

Clem Harcourt	- Chamberlain's Department
Pauline Mouskis	- Chamberlain's Department
Jack Joslin	- City Bridge Foundation
Anna Cowperthwaite	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's
Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Helen Evans	- Environment Department
Simon Glynn	- Environment Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
Jo Hurst	- Environment Department
Bill LoSasso	- Environment Department
Paul Maskell	- Environment Department
Katie Stewart	- Executive Director of Environment
Charlotte Williams	- Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by Anne Corbett and Rafe Courage.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor John Whitworth declared an interest in relation to Item 9, as a Councillor of the London Borough of Newham and Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning and Development, Air Quality and Climate Emergency. Councillor Joy Laguda OBE also declared an interest, in relation to Item 9, as a Councillor of the London Borough of Newham.

It was noted that the Members could be present for the item and engage in the discussion, but they would not be able to participate in the decision-making.

3. **MINUTES**

The Committee agreed to amend the attendee list to add Tim Hodgson who attended the last meeting and amend the apologies to ensure 'Wendy Mead MBE' was changed to 'Wendy Mead OBE'

RESOLVED – That, the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 11 July 2024 be approved as a correct record, subject to the agreed amendments.

4. **INTRODUCTION TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

The Executive Director of Environment provided a short introduction to the Committee following her appointment.

5. **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Director (Superintendent) of North London Open Spaces which reported on key accomplishments against the four strategies of the Natural Environment Division.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- a) Officers informed the Committee that the hiring of the supplementary security service was due to a rise in anti-social behaviour (ASB) at West Ham Park and across the Open Spaces when staff were locking up.
- b) Officers provided an update on the play feature which had previously tested positive for e. Coli and had now been decommissioned and winterised. It would be re-opened in the Spring following it being disinfected and retested.
- c) Officers noted the Away Day would instead be an informal session to focus on the Management Plan for the Park.
- d) In response to Committee questions, Officers reported that the consultant retained for developing the Management Plan was Land Management Services.
- e) The Committee considered how much research had been done in relation to the padel installation and the tennis courts. Officers explained licenses were being finalised for tennis coaches and padel provisions would be explored after that.
- f) Officers noted that the disused basketball court was a potential area to develop padel, but planning permission would be needed due to change

of use, the need for Perspex walls and recommendations from partners for the need for floodlights. Consideration also needed to be given to current use by families.

RECEIVED.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Committee received a report which sought to provide assurance that risk management procedures in place within the Environment Department and its Natural Environment Division, which included West Ham Park, were satisfactory and met the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- a) Representatives from the London Borough of Newham indicated that most reports they received were related to anti-social behaviour, but the Park seemed to be relatively protected compared to the rest of the Borough.
- b) The Committee queried how many staff were brought in from supplementary security service. Officers confirmed that they worked in pairs from an organisation named Parkguard.
- c) Members reminded the Committee of the need to consider the welfare of staff travelling to and from the park.
- d) Officers noted there was an increase in the park being used for criminal activity in the Summer; there were 18 reported instances from May to September involving members of the public and staff ranging from physical to verbal abuse. Parkguard were assisting to alleviate that pressure and conflict management training had been arranged with staff in November.
- e) The Committee expressed concerns about the soil compaction leading to tree health issues and considered whether pre-emptive action could be taken on the issue. Officers indicated they were fortunate to have a team dedicated to trees and were thinking proactively about how to address the problem.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Confirmed, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the Risk Register appended to the report satisfactorily set out the key risks to the charity and that appropriate systems were in place to identify and mitigate risk.

7. PROJECT PRIORITISATION PROCESS

The Committee received a report which sought to propose a project prioritisation process for the West Ham Park charity which would inform the development and implementation of the five-year business plan for the charity.

Officers presented the report to the Committee and expressed the need for the prioritisation process due to limited resources to ensure high priority projects were delivered.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- a) A Member considered whether there was a criteria that defined what different scores indicated and if the process had been tested. Officers explained that Assistant Directors had been working through criteria to test whether they worked.
- b) The Chair noted that the Natural Environment strategies were designed to reflect and support the charity objectives for each of the nine charities that the City Corporation acted as trustee for. Officers confirmed that was the case.
- c) The Committee noted that a weighting process could produce unusual results and suggested having it set to a timed basis of every six or twelve months.
- d) The Committee also warned against organisational imperative and the inability to adapt to events and advised not to rigidly follow the scores and adapt to situations as and when they arise.
- e) The Committee expressed concern at omission of health and safety considerations. Officers indicated they sat outside of the process as health and safety and statutory considerations were compulsory.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Approved the proposed project prioritisation criteria and process for the West Ham Park charity.
- Authorised the Executive Director Environment to make minor amendments to the matrix to take on board comments/feedback arising from its consideration by the different Natural Environment charity management committees.

8. REPORT ON THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

The Committee received a report and presentation from Officers which provided Members with an update on the 150th anniversary celebrations of West Ham Park.

RECEIVED.

9. WEST HAM PARK FORMER NURSERY SITE

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the West Ham Park charity's stakeholder engagement activities in relation to the former nursery site between March and July 2024.

Officers informed the Committee in the report presentation that Historic England had been consulted with to ascertain the heritage value of the site.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- a) The Chair highlighted that 85% of those who gave their postcode in the consultation lived within a one-mile radius of the site, and 95% of those surveyed lived in the London Borough of Newham (LB Newham).
- b) Officers indicated they had reached out to LB Newham to begin conversations over an acceptable use of the site and were working with City Surveyors to understand what would be viable.
- c) A Member noted that the local area was a very diverse community and suggested that the questions were not very specific and were potentially difficult to answer. Officers indicated there was a catch-all question and were trying to strike a balance between providing potential options without leading the public in one direction.
- d) Members queried what range of engagement activities were carried out. Officers noted there was an online survey, pop-up events in person with individuals who could speak multiple languages were also used.
- e) Officers explained, in response to questions about the area of the site consulted on, that the 50% of the site consulted on was what had been agreed previously.
- f) Officers also consulted with different schools who used the park for their own activities.
- g) A Member suggested the summary of the report should make it clear that it was 50% of the site that was consulted on.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the community engagement report provided in Appendix 1.
- Noted the on-going engagement with Historic England with an outcome of that engagement to be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.
- Noted the on-going engagement with LB Newham and submission of written representations as part of Newham's Local Plan review.
- Noted the instruction of a commercial agent to review the site's current market viability for a future disposal and development.
- Authorised officers to share with Newham the results of WHP charity's community engagement activities.

10. **DRAFT WEST HAM PARK TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

The Committee received a draft version of the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 for West Ham Park (charity registration number 206948).

Officers indicated some changes had been made to the reporting style to ensure it was more in line with the charity reporting model.

RECEIVED.

11. **OPERATIONAL FINANCE PROGRESS REPORT 2024/25 (PERIOD 5 APRIL - AUGUST)**

The Committee received an update on the operational finance position as at Period 5 (April – August) 2024/25 for the West Ham Park charity (charity registration number 206948) and set out the charity's revenue operating budget position to date and projected year-end outturn, current live capital projects and outstanding debt position. It also provided information on various reserve funds held and other relevant finance information to the charity.

RECEIVED.

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

No questions were received on matters relating to the work of the Committee.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT.**

No other business was raised by the Chair for consideration.

14. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That, the following matters relate to business under the remit of the Court of Common Council acting for the City Corporation as charity Trustee, to which Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 public access to meetings provisions do not apply. The following items contain sensitive information which it is not in the best interests of the charity to consider in a public meeting (engaging similar considerations as under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act) and will be considered in non-public session.

15. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

16. **WEST HAM PARK FORMER NURSERY SITE - NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX**

The Committee received an appendix relating to a report of the Executive Director of Environment.

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

No non-public questions were received on matters relating to the work of the Committee.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

No other business was raised by the Chair for consideration in non-public session.

The meeting ended at 10.51 am

Chairman

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