

## **CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE**

**Friday, 9 May 2025**

Minutes of the meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee held at Committee Room 2 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 9 May 2025 at 2.00 pm

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Brendan Barns (Chairman)	Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP
Suzanne Ornsby KC (Deputy Chair)	Leyla Boulton
Munsur Ali	Sophia Mooney
John Foley	Melissa Collett
James St John Davis	Elizabeth Corrin
Alderman Bronek Masojada	Karina Dostalova
Wendy Mead OBE	Adam Hogg
Anett Rideg	Vasiliki Manta
Alethea Silk	Tessa Marchington
Mark Wheatley	Robertshaw
Deputy Dawn Wright	Stephanie Steeden
Irem Yerdelen	

### **In Attendance**

#### **Officers:**

Elizabeth Scott	- Head of Guildhall Art Gallery, Town Clerks
Rob Shakespeare	- Keats House, Open Spaces Department
Jayne Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Emma Markiewicz	- London Metropolitan Archives
Omkar Chana	- Innovation and Growth
Andrew Buckingham	- Town Clerk's
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Laurie Miller-Zutshi	- Town Clerk's Department
Joanna Parker	- Department of the Built Environment

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Alderman Edhem, David Sales, Matthew Waters and Jamel Banda.

These two Members observed the meeting online: Deputy Caroline Haines, and Jason Groves.

These Common Councillors observed the meeting online: Chief Commoner Henry Pollard, and Deputy Oliver Sells KC.

From Things Made Public: Sarah Walters and Chris Murphy

also  
Tim Cutter

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

There were no declarations.

3. **ORDER OF THE COURT**

The Committee noted the Order of the Court setting out the membership and Terms of Reference of the Committee for the 2025-26 period.

Members made the following points on the Terms of Reference:

- Paragraph (B) should be “oversight/scrutiny of” (or similar) rather than “management”;
- Paragraph (J) (City of London Police Museum) – there is a lack of clarity around its oversight particularly given that the contents are not currently available for viewing;
- Paragraph (L) “following consultation” should be replaced by “in consultation” with Policy & Resources Committee; and
- Paragraph (M) the pocket book – Members commented that an updated electronic version should be more readily available internally and that a print copy can be ordered.

Members heard that a report on the CoLP Museum is expected to be brought to the CoL Police Authority Board to consider further options, and that changes can be proposed on the wording to the Court of Common Council (noting that the Terms of Reference are reviewed in autumn ahead of their approval by the Court of Common Council in April each year).

Members commented on the limitations around advertising Square Mile cultural events and assets in public spaces.

4. **ELECTION OF THE CHAIR**

Two expressions of interest having been received (Munsur Ali and Brendan Barns) a ballot was held, and Brendan Barns was duly elected Chairman.

The votes were as follows:

Munsur Ali – 4  
Brendan Barns – 19

Spoilt ballot – 1

The Committee congratulated Brendan Barns on his election.

The newly-elected Chair thanked the Committee for their vote, and thanked former chairman Munsur Ali as well as past Deputy Chairs John Foley and John Griffiths. New Members were welcomed, and the newly-elected Chair articulated his interest in raising the status of the Committee, boosting partnerships and further publicising the City's cultural assets, and set out three priority areas:

1. Progress on the cultural strategy;
2. An effective working relationship with Destination City; and
3. Close monitoring of the Committee finances.

5. **ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY CHAIR**

A single expression of interest being received, Suzanne Ornsby KC was confirmed as the Deputy Chair for the ensuing year.

The newly-elected Deputy Chair thanked the Committee for their vote.

6. **APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Committee considered the report of the Clerk.

**RESOLVED**, That these two representatives of the Committee be appointed to the Keats House Consultative Committee (in addition to the Chair and Deputy Chair):

John Foley  
Wendy Mead

**RESOLVED**, That the following four Members be appointed to the City Arts Initiative (in addition to the Chair and Deputy Chair):

John Foley  
Tessa Marchington  
Gaby Robertshaw  
Deputy Dawn Wright

7. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**, That the minutes of the meeting of 10 February 2025 be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings, subject to an amendment to the website links given to ensure the integrity of the minutes.

8. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee noted the forward plan noting that a full-year rolling plan is expected to be developed.

9. **ACHIEVEMENTS AT KEATS HOUSE 2024/25, INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Committee viewed a presentation on Keats House on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its opening as a Museum.

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director, Environment updating Members on the achievements at Keats House for the period April 2024 – March 2025 together with assurance that risk management procedures in place for Keats House are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.

Noting the connections between Keats House/Monument and the Environment Department, a Member commented on the importance of water fountains in the City as cultural assets, noting also the discussions in other CoLC committees (including Port Health and Environmental Services) about their placement.

In response to a question on why Keats House does not open on Saturdays, and noting the discussion on that set out in the draft minutes of the meeting of 02 May 2025, the meeting heard that staffing costs and other weekday events precluded the House from being open on Saturdays though the issue is under review.

**RESOLVED**, That Members of the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee confirm, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the register appended to the report satisfactorily sets out the key risks to the Keats House charity and that appropriate systems are in place to identify and mitigate risks.

10. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE KEATS HOUSE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

The Committee noted the draft minutes of the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held on 02 May 2025.

11. **CITY ARTS INITIATIVE – RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk presenting the recommendations of the City Arts Initiative (CAI) which met on 3 April 2025, where the following three proposals were considered: 1. Sculpture in the City

14th Edition Shortlist 2. Fleet Street Heritage Wall Proposal 3. Salisbury Square Court Building – poetry and lighting updates.

Members noted the Fleet Street Heritage Wall proposal noting that the CAI panel does not support the current proposal, recommending that the applicant reapply taking on board feedback around inclusion, accessibility and content.

Members noted the Salisbury Square Court Building Designs, noting that the City of London Corporation's Capital Buildings Board (CBB) expressed support for the lighting and poetry at its meeting of 05 February 2025. Members also noted that the applicant has indicated amendments to the poetry selection (to be referred back to the CBB).

Members noted that the final list of sculptures will be available by 01 June 2025 and will be circulated to the Committee.

A Member asked when the current artworks will be fully decommissioned. The meeting noted that the artworks will be deinstalled during June 2025, with new artworks from July 2025 (noting the public communication initiatives to that effect).

In response to comments and queries related to publicity, Members noted that a PR agency for Sculpture in the City was recently appointed which would lead to the development of further communications relationships, including with publications such as Time Out.

**RESOLVED**, That the Committee approve the Sculpture in the City 14<sup>th</sup> edition shortlist for the onward delivery of that edition to be delivered by the Culture Team.

**12. DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2025/26 – THE LONDON ARCHIVES (INCLUDING THE CULTURE TEAM)**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk presenting the high-level Business Plan for The London Archives, including the Culture Team, for 2025/26.

Members noted the factors taken into consideration in compiling the Business Plan.

On the London Archives future relocation, a Member asked for further information on the timeline. The meeting noted that an operating model is expected to be presented by December 2025 on the accommodation plans with a view to entering the Gateway 3 process in early 2026. In response to a question on new premises, the Committee noted that new premises have not been identified.

A Member asked whether a full-time Head of Profession for Culture appointment would be made. The meeting heard that no commitment has been

made to a full-time Head of Profession for Culture appointment, and that the role is now a 0.5FTE role.

A Member asked where public programmes (historical/cultural information) were considered. The meeting heard that public realm and wayfinding initiatives sat within the Destination City hub, its implementation being supported by the Culture team subject to the definition of the Culture Strategy.

Members noted that the London Archives sits within the orbit of the CoLC's cultural realm and commented that the plan did not appear to take into account the City's other cultural assets and wider responsibilities around Culture and the Cultural Strategy in any meaningful way, and noted that a separate plan for the entire cultural realm would be developed alongside one for the London Archives. Members also noted that the current draft plan acts as a bridge to a more overarching plan that would cover the City's wider cultural realm (noting that Keats House, as a separate charity and with a reporting line to the Environment Department, has a separate business plan expected to be submitted to the Committee in autumn 2025).

Noting the transition phase in the City's culture framework, Members agreed that a revised Business Plan be presented to the Committee at its July meeting taking into account the points made by Members.

Members commented that a map or organigram of the City's cultural assets and their accountability lines would be welcome.

### **13. DEVELOPING THE CULTURAL STRATEGY – PROGRESS UPDATE: FEBRUARY TO APRIL 2025**

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk that provided an update on activity between February and April 2025 on the development of the Cultural Strategy together with a forward look for the delivery plan to January 2026, and viewed a presentation by Things Made Public on the cultural strategy's vision, definition, processes, and KPIs.

Referencing section 1 of the report (Culture Strategy Consultation Plan), Members commented on the international nature of the City of London and asked why there appeared to be so few international stakeholders (such as embassy contacts). The meeting heard that a focus group dedicated to global exchange had included embassies within the City alongside international touring and cultural organisations and that the international strand is expected to be developed.

A Member sought further clarification on the extent of resident engagement, noting in particular the importance of engaging with residents' associations. The meeting heard that a local residents focus group had taken place that included under-represented resident representatives and that work is ongoing to involve hard-to-reach residents to ensure a balanced residents' view. In response to a

question on the kinds of questions being asked (as a way of supporting the process with constituents), the meeting heard that a report outlining the key questions and responses will be submitted to the Committee, alongside the online and hard-copy survey available to Members and the public.

Members commented on the importance of creating space for additional target audiences as part of the cultural strategy alongside optimising for the existing target audience, as well as incorporating the City's Global City of Sport strategy and nurturing a wide range of partnerships such as Visit England and tour operators in order to realise the scope of the 'World in One City' ambition together with exploiting any cross-marketing initiatives. In response to a question on the extent to which the Cultural Strategy was aligned with UK Government strategies, the meeting noted that the Corporation is in active dialogue with national-level bodies such as the Arts Council and Historic England as well as reaching out to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Members noted that a range of existing and future partnerships are being cemented and established and heard, in response to a question on whether all opportunities for international outreach have been exploited, that further areas are still being explored but that resources are being carefully targeted.

In response to a question on the advertising of City cultural assets in the public realm, the meeting heard that such advertising is currently restricted by planning policies although a new working party was established at the Corporation on 08 May 2025 to discuss income generation via advertising.

Referencing section 8 of the main report ('Where Culture Means Business'): 'Change perceptions of culture in corporate environments and generate cultural life to attract workers': a Member sought clarification on whether those workers were being invited to stay longer in the City or visit the area at the weekends (as that would impact on the mode of engagement).

**14. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN: WILDLIFE SCULPTURE AT PATERNOSTER SQUARE**

**15. CITY ARTS INITIATIVE - RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE - LONDON FESTIVAL OF ARCHITECTURE 2025**

The Committee considered the report of the City Arts Initiative on the London Festival of Architecture 2025, noting that the recommendations were due to be approved under the CAI delegated authority as agreed by the Committee in May 2024. The Committee noted that on this occasion the timing was such that the approval process is quicker via the conventional committee process rather than via the delegated process and that the documents were submitted to the

Committee as late papers so that approval could be secured earlier than would otherwise be the case, lowering the risk to the delivery timeline.

**RESOLVED**, That the following be approved:

- a. Whispers by Oskar Zieta at Ludgate Hill for a duration of 3-4 months
- b. Unheard Voices of the City at Bartholomew Hospital Courtyard for up to 1 month.
- c. Aldermanbury Summer Activation for a duration of 3 days.

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

A Member asked for further information on the links between the Committee and the Remembrancer's Office, and whether the Remembrancer's Office could support the Committee with developing relationships with embassies – particularly in respect of events in 2026 to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of American independence. The meeting noted that the relationships would be further explored.

**17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no other business.

**18. 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 the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

**19. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**, That the non-public minutes of the meeting of 10 February 2025 be approved as an accurate record.

**20. NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

On the proposed Salisbury Square text, some Members commented that there was merit in revisiting some of the texts given the apparent unsuitability of some of it and its potential impact on the Corporation's reputation, particularly its apparent critique of lawmaking. Members noted that text 1 and the Kipling texts are expected to be replaced.

Members noted that the Capital Buildings Board (CBB) is expected to further review the texts in late May 2025 and asked the Capital Buildings Board to note the concerns raised (including the typeface), which was noted by the Board's Deputy Chair in attendance at the meeting who added that a wide range of representations have been taken on the matter, that extensive consideration has been given to presentation and content particularly in the light of the building's long life expectancy, and that CHL Members were welcome to express their views to the CBB.

Members noted that the City Arts Initiative has recommended contact with a charity that promotes prisoners' poetry that could potentially be showcased at Salisbury Square.

Members were broadly supportive of the texts, noting the proposed changes and the use of QR codes.

The Committee noted that the final decision on the content rests with the CBB, which has been given oversight of that specific project including any texts represented at Salisbury Square.

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

There was no other business.

**The meeting ended at time not specified**

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Chairman

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