

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

Monday, 10 February 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee held at
Committee Room 4 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 10 February 2025
at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Munsur Ali (Chairman)	Deborah Oliver
John Griffiths (Deputy Chairman)	Anett Rideg
Suzanne Ornsby KC	David Sales
John Foley	Deputy Dawn Wright
Jaspreet Hodgson	Alderwoman Jennette Newman
Wendy Hyde	Alderwoman Elizabeth Anne King, BEM JP
Alderman Bronek Masojada	Brendan Barns

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
Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Kevin Colville	- Comptroller and City Solicitors
Laurie Miller-Zutshi	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Amy Horscroft, Antony Manchester, Anett Rideg, Ian Seaton, Aaron D'Souza and Caroline Haines as well as these Members who were unable to attend in person but observed the meeting online: John Foley, Mark Wheatley, and Wendy Mead.

Also Andrew Impey and Laurence Ward (officers)

Rideg arrived at 1245
Jaspreet H at 1155

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, That the minutes of the meeting of 20 January 2025 be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee noted the report of the Clerk.

On action 2 (cultural calendar) the meeting noted that the current website has no calendar feature at this time but monthly events and activities are circulated every month. The meeting also noted that the Corporation's entire social media presence (for cultural purposes) is currently being reviewed as per the recommendations of the review undertaken by Paul Martin and that all events to May 2025 are shown on the 'What's On' section of the Corporation's website, with some events taking place later in the year also available on these two sites:

<https://www.thecityofldn.com/things-to-see-and-do/whats-on/>
<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/events>

On point 16 (CHL involvement in cultural planning), the meeting noted the following:

- Mechanisms are available for CHL formal representation at City of London Corporation (CoLC) planning committees (primarily Planning & Transportation, and Planning Applications Sub-Committee);
- At present 6-8 CHL Members sit on each of those Committees so there is currently sufficient exposure to Planning matters for CHL Members during meetings unless no CHL Members attend those meetings, noting that the membership does not constitute formal CHL representation;
- It is noted that by the time a planning application reaches the Committee stage it is invariably too late to meaningfully influence the cultural element of a planning application, so the input would need to be upstream of the Committee stage;
- The Planning structure at CoLC, and at other Local Authority organisations, is expecting to undergo significant shake-ups with the introduction of the Government's Planning and Infrastructure Bill expected in March 2025. There is little appetite to make many, if any, changes to the pre-Committee process of presenting planning applications before that time at the CoLC; and
- CoLC staff can be contacted to discuss decisions on cultural input for planning purposes at the point at which the application is shaped.

The meeting noted that discussions have already taken place with CoLC planning departments on having an input at an early stage, noting also that CHL Members input into cultural matters at planning committees. Members commented that there appears to be little engagement with residents on the creation of cultural or sporting spaces as part of development and planning applications.

5. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee noted the forward plan, Members commenting also that the cultural strategy needed to be embedded in the forward plan once it was finalised.

A Member suggested that a discount card be marked as a specific agenda item, noting that such a scheme was considered as part of a wider sports and culture strategy.

A Member suggested that a useful future item of discussion would be a planning item listing what cultural and community assets have been agreed since 2023 with a forward look so that the Committee is able to ascertain cultural input in the consultation phase.

6. **STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Committee heard an update on the cultural strategy.

Members commented on the importance of ensuring that the strategy incorporates the mechanisms by which the Committee can inter-relate with the planning process on cultural matters to encompass cultural priorities, noting also the need for interim measures ahead of the finalisation of the strategy given the number of developments in the pipeline. Members also noted the importance of securing resources to maintain cultural spaces.

Members heard that the two strategy development partners have been appointed: Things Made Public; and The Audience Agency.

Members noted that key timelines and deliverables will be shared with the Committee as soon as they are finalised that will encompass data that has already been gathered.

7. **SCULPTURE IN THE CITY - 13TH EDITION REPORT AND 14TH EDITION DELIVERY PLANS**

The Committee received the report of the Head of Profession (Culture) updating the Committee on the success of the 13th Edition (2024) of Sculpture in the City (SITC) and outlining delivery plans for 2025 within a new delivery framework.

The Committee congratulated Wendy Hyde on her perseverance and dedication in securing another year of the programme and her chairmanship of the programme and also thanked the executive for their hard work. A Member asked whether the intention was to keep all 13th Edition Artworks in situ for another year, and the meeting heard that the artworks are expected to remain in place till summer 2026.

A Member asked whether artists and galleries were paid. The meeting heard that a nominal fee is paid.

Noting section 6 of the report as well as the press highlights and social media information set out in Appendix 1, Members asked for more information on the

communications methodology to raise the profile of the programme and whether there was evidence that those initiatives translated into footfall. The meeting heard that the communications was carefully targeted (including trail maps distributed to residents, schools and libraries) and was devised with the support of a PR agency to secure pieces in national newspapers and radio. The meeting also noted that further marketing initiatives were expecting to be rolled out.

Members commented that the City of London Corporation (CoLC) is not always sighted on the work done by BIDs in the culture realm.

8. UPDATE ON THE MONUMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director, Environment outlining the achievements at The Monument to the Great Fire of London between April and December 2024, including information on visitor numbers, as well as outlining the proposal to move responsibility for The Monument from the Environment Department (supported by the City Bridge Foundation) to the new Culture Team under the Head of Profession for Culture, requesting approval to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to progress this given the extended pre-election period.

It was noted that updated figures were circulated on Friday 07 February 2025 (with sections 9 and 10 of the cover report having been revised), and that the public-facing website was likewise updated on Friday 07 February 2025.

Referencing the £252K figure income from admissions and sales in section 9, a Member asked whether a breakdown existed to separate out admissions from sales. The meeting heard that such a breakdown is to be reinstated and reported at the next update during 2025, noting that Tower Bridge does produce such a breakdown.

On the closures due to staffing shortages, a Member asked whether Tower Bridge had closed due to staff shortages. The meeting was reminded that The Monument closes when Tower Bridge is unable to send permanent staff to The Monument (which cannot be staffed by casual staff due to security issues, among others). The meeting heard that no concrete information is available on whether Tower Bridge has ever had to close due to lack of staff but that it is extremely unlikely that such a situation has ever arisen.

The meeting was reminded that The Monument celebrates its 350th anniversary in 2027, and a member sought confirmation that the event would be marked in an appropriate way. Members noted that the event is expected to be celebrated.

Members commented that lunchtime closure of The Monument is unacceptable, commenting that it is likely that volunteers could be asked to support the venue to cover for staff lunch breaks. Noting that two permanent staff members are needed for The Monument (as well as for Keats House) at all times, the meeting noted the logistical difficulties and expense of covering lunch breaks given that requirement. The meeting noted that the staffing

structure and model for each of those venues is being reconsidered to mitigate the effects of the lunchtime situation.

A Member queried whether the figures shown in Appendix 2 were realistic and fair given that the venue is popular with visitors, and commented that the entry fee of £6 could be raised given how long the fee has remained at that level. The meeting noted that Monument ticket sales generate a profit for The Monument.

A Member commented that there is merit in selling joint tickets to The Monument and the Billingsgate Roman Baths.

RESOLVED, That the Committee

- Delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair, Deputy Chair and Head of Profession for Culture to progress a transition plan for The Monument to move the responsibilities, leadership and workflows from the Environment Department to a new and enlarged team under the Head of Profession for Culture;
- Delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair, Deputy Chair and Head of Profession for Culture to progress the proposed meanwhile use of The Monument 'Pavilion' building; and
- Delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair, Deputy Chair and Head of Profession for Culture to progress the proposal for a new visitor centre for The Monument.

9. THE LONDON ARCHIVES ACCOMMODATION PROJECT

The Committee heard an update on the London Archives accommodation project that included the following information:

- the lease on the main premises at Northampton Road expires in 2035;
- a period of 5-7 years is required to plan and move the collections if a move is made;
- no option has yet been finalised;
- a project board has been formed to consider and examine the various issues and £150,000 (including £10k costed risk provision) of funding was secured from Finance Committee's Contingency on 07 May 2024 to support that;
- the project is not currently attached to any other funding, and a bid to the transformation fund is being considered;
- various funding sources are being explored including National Lottery Heritage Fund bids;
- the future business model is being carefully explored including the potential addition of further storage space and commercial partnerships;
- five modelling scenario options have been put together that describe varying proportions of the collection remaining onsite; and
- three companies have been invited to submit capability statements by late February 2025, and a pre-feasibility report is expected to be formulated by June 2025.

10. **KEATS HOUSE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2025/26**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director, Environment setting out the proposed fees and charges at Keats House in 2025/26 including admission to the house, taught learning sessions and private hire rates.

The Committee noted the proposal to increase fees and charges, in general, to reflect growing costs while maintaining Keats House's reputation as a high-quality visitor attraction, particularly in the year of its celebration of 100 years as a venue open to the public.

Members also noted the request to allocate up to £25k from the Keats House charity's unrestricted reserves to fund various programmes and initiatives related to the 100th anniversary of the house opening to the public on 9 May 1925, which will be celebrated throughout 2025.

A Member sought confirmation on the likely impact of the fees increases to ensure ongoing viability. The meeting noted that the modelling has been done to ensure that 2025-26 targets are covered, and that the post-pandemic fall in private hire bookings has recovered though not to pre-pandemic levels.

A Member asked for an update on the performance of the shop at Keats House. The meeting noted that special lines will be introduced into the shop now that the branding has been agreed.

Noting the launch by the Fleet Street BID of the Festival of Words (14-17 May 2025), a Member asked what synergies might be achieved given its proximity in the calendar to the Keats House anniversary. The meeting noted that a meeting has taken place to discuss opportunities to promote Keats House during the event.

A Member asked for further information on the relationship with the National Trust. The meeting heard that the National Trust partnership stopped being a formal partnership during the pandemic, but Keats House has maintained a relationship with the organisation partly because there is some cross-over with visitors to nearby Fenton House. An overview of various concession agreements is expected.

RESOLVED, That the Committee, collectively acting on behalf of the City of London Corporation as trustee of Keats House and being satisfied that it is in the best interests of the charity to do so:

1. Approve the recommended fees and charges for 2025/26 outlined in the report; and
2. Approve expenditure of up to £25K from the Keats House Charity's unrestricted reserves to fund activities related to the 100th anniversary of Keats House opening to the public.

11. BECKFORD AND CASS STATUE PROJECT WEBPAGES

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Profession (Culture) providing an update on the Beckford and Cass statue plaques project ('Revealing the City's Past') as well as defining content and providing a preview of what would be published on the City Corporation's webpages as part of the 'Retain and Explain' approach, noting that some of the information is currently in the Non-Public part of the meeting.

Members noted that the matter was discussed on 05 February at the Corporation's Equality Diversity & Inclusion Committee, and the Communications & Corporate Affairs Committee both on 05 February 2025. In both cases the proposals were welcomed, and some comments were made on the extended timeline of the exercise.

Members noted that the 'Retain and Explain' approach was agreed in October 2021, a team was put together subsequent to that agreement that included people from the Guildhall Art Gallery along with an external steering group and a range of other stakeholders. The finalised plaque designs were agreed by March 2023 following an extensive consultation period, and Listed Building Consent was granted in August 2023, with the texts being agreed in May 2024. The brass plaques were completed by September 2024, and web pages to accompany the plaques were developed in late 2024.

The meeting noted that the Committee has the delegation from the Corporation's Policy & Resources Committee to make decisions on the project.

RESOLVED, That the Committee:

- Approve the long historic texts for Beckford and Cass for publishing on the City Corporation's website (Appendix 2);
- Approve the content that has been developed for publishing on the City Corporation's website (Appendix 3);
- Note that any operational updates to the webpages (e.g. minor revisions, factual corrections) will be made under the direction of the Head of Profession for Culture; and
- Note that any new commissions or ongoing commitment to additional work would need to be considered separate to the report and could risk further prolonging the project.

12. DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2025/26 - THE LONDON ARCHIVES

The Committee reviewed the report on the high-level Business Plan for The London Archives including the Culture Team for 2025/26, that was circulated on Friday 07 February 2025.

The Committee agreed that the matter be deferred to the May 2025 meeting given the timing of the circulation.

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

A Member asked how the City of London Corporation (CoLC) was collaborating with key visitor attractions (such as Horizon 22) to ensure information on things to do in the City is available to visitors. The Member commented that the City Information Centre's promotion of Chelsea Football Club (CFC) does not align with its objectives. The meeting heard that the CFC was a revenue-generating exercise. The meeting heard that the promotions team works with nearly 100 organisations, attend events and previews and liaise with a wide range of tourist and events organisations as well as producing online and paper content, acknowledging that there is always more work to be done.

Members reviewed the updated Terms of Reference following discussions at the January 2025 meeting.

RESOLVED, That the Terms of Reference as circulated on Friday 07 February 2025 be approved.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

15. 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.

16. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED, That the Non-Public minutes of the meeting of 20 January 2025 be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

17. BANKSY ARTWORK RELOCATION

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Profession (Culture) setting out options for the relocation of the recent Banksy piranha artwork produced in August 2024 on a City of London Police sentry box.

The Committee noted that on 20 January 2025 Members had requested further consideration on the prospect of the artwork going to the London Museum as an acquisition (gift) or a long-term loan. Members had also requested further consideration of the possibility of gifting Banksy an additional City Police sentry box as part of a reciprocal arrangement, noting that neither the City Surveyor's Department (as owners of the sentry boxes) nor the City of London Police (as owners of the logo and branding) are not supportive of any such gift.

The Committee noted that the artwork is to remain on display at Guildhall for as long as possible during 2025 noting that the Museum will need to move the artwork to its Smithfield site in Autumn 2025, noting the benefits of the artwork being on display for as long as possible in a different part of Guildhall if feasible (noting that the current location is in direct sunlight that could degrade the quality of the artwork).

In response to a question on when the artwork will be on public display after its move to the Museum, the meeting heard that no specific date has been provided but that is likely to be in mid-2026, noting that the artwork is designed to be enjoyed by the public.

Commenting on the potential for licencing arrangements that could benefit the City of London Corporation, a Member asked what opportunities might be available to retain some benefit in the form of some gain-sharing if the opportunity arose.

The Committee noted that the decision-making regarding the long-term home of the artwork is entirely separate to the contractual basis of the gifting and will be treated as such. Members requested that officers consider whether any provision can be made within the confines of any agreement with the London Museum on potential artwork copyright for reproduction and commercial benefit to the City of London Corporation. The executive confirmed that the matter would form part of the discussions during the acquisitions process, noting that agreements around copyright do not affect the Committee's decision to gift the artwork to the Museum.

RESOLVED, That Members

1. Approve the recommendation for the long-term home of the artwork as **Option 1b)** – a (semi) indoor location at the London Museum;
2. Subsequently approve the new short-term temporary location to be stored by the London Museum; and
3. Approve the contractual basis as set out in option 3a – for the artwork to be gifted in perpetuity through an acquisitions process, transferring ownership of the artwork to the Museum.

18. NON-COMPLIANT WAIVERS FOR GAG PROCUREMENT

The item was deferred to the May 2025 meeting due to the report still being in the review cycle prior to submission.

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

There were no questions.

20. **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 1.00 pm

Chairman

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