

OPEN SPACES, CITY GARDENS & WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE Monday, 23 July 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces, City Gardens & West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 23 July 2012 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Robert Hall (Chairman)
Dr Peter Hardwick (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Stella Currie
Alex Deane
Sheriff & Deputy Wendy Mead
Deputy Janet Owen
Deputy Michael Welbank
Catherine Bickmore
Robert Cazenove
Justin Meath-Baker
Charlotte Evans
Barbara Newman (Ex-Officio Member)
Jeremy Simons (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Edward Foale	- Committee & Member Services Officer
Esther Sumner	- Policy Officer, Town Clerk's Department
Mathew Lawrence	- Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Janet Fortune	- Head of Recruitment and Learning & Development
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Denis Whelton	- Support Services Manager
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Andy Barnard	- Superintendent, Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common
Geraldine King	- West Ham Park Manager
Declan Gallagher	- Operational Service Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Ian Luder, Sheriff & Deputy Wendy Mead, Alderman Gordon Haines, Richard Gurney, the Reverend Stennett Kirby and Councillor Joy Laguda.

2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 11 June 2012 were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

Item 6 – Superintendent's Update

The Chairman noted that the Past Times in the Park event on 23 June 2012 had been a great success and that it was wonderful to have had the opportunity to meet the full Gurney family at its picnic, which celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth of John Gurney.

Item 8 – Annual Review of Volunteer Working on the Open Spaces

The Chairman advised that the report had been received by the Court of Common Council on 19 July 2012. The Chairman undertook to write a letter to all those who volunteered on the City's Open Spaces on behalf of the Court of Common Council.

4. **REVIEW OF THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS IMPLEMENTED IN 2011**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk, prepared on behalf of the Governance Review Working Party, which sought comments from the Committee on the governance arrangements introduced in 2011 and the impact that they may have had on the operation of the Committee.

A document was tabled which summarised the Chairman's suggestion that the Committee consider the creation of a separate Committee for the consideration of West Ham Park business. The Chairman reminded the Committee that those Members who were present for business relating to West Ham Park only were eligible to stand as Chairman and/or deputy Chairman. This presented a dilemma as to the format of the discussion of Open Spaces and City Gardens matters, were one of these Members elected for the role.

A Member suggested that the Committee return to the arrangement that predated the implementation of the 2010/11 Governance Review. Discussion ensued and Members agreed that in principle the current arrangement had not been satisfactory.

A Member who had been nominated by the heirs-at-law of the late John Gurney advised that they appreciated the proposal, however as it had been tabled they had received insufficient time to consider the matter. The Chairman undertook personally to write to the Committee to clarify his proposed response to the Governance Review. Discussion ensued and the Committee agreed to delegate to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman the task of drafting a document to be submitted to the Governance Review Working Party for Consideration.

The Town Clerk reminded Members of the convention that one observer nominated by the Epping Forest & Commons Committee and one observer nominated by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee would sit on the Committee, however this had never been reflected in the Committee's terms of reference. Discussion ensued and Members decided to refer this matter to the Governance Review Working Party. The Director reminded Members that the Open Spaces Committee, which existed prior to the Governance Review, had a third observer from the Committee of Managers of West Ham Park. If the option of creating a separate Committee for discussion of West Ham Park business were pursued it would be necessary for the new Committee to nominate an observer to sit on the Open Spaces, City Gardens & West Ham Park Committee.

A Member advised that they believed the Cemetery should be under the management of the Committee, rather than the Port Health & Environmental Services Committee. The Director advised that it made practical sense in management terms to have both the cemetery and the crematorium under the management of one Committee. Discussion ensued and Members agreed to reconsider the matter in twelve months' time.

RESOLVED: that,

- i) the Committee submit the discussion captured above for consideration by the Governance Review Working Party.
- ii) the Committee delegate to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, the task of drafting a further document containing recommendations regarding future governance arrangements for the Committee, and the management of the assets currently within its portfolio, to be submitted to the Governance Review Working Party for consideration.
- iii) Members revisit the discussion surrounding the future management of the City of London cemetery and crematorium in twelve months time.

5. **CHIEF OFFICER APPOINTMENT**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk. Members noted that the Terms of Reference of the Port Health & Environmental Services Committee approved by the Court did not reflect the dissolution of the Department of Environmental Services, nor the wish to involve the Chairman of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee in the appointment of the post of Director of Markets and Consumer Protection and the Director of Open Spaces. The report set out how to resolve this satisfactorily.

Following a suggestion from the Chairman, Members agreed that the report should be for decision rather than for information. The Head of Recruitment and Learning & Development clarified that the proposal allowed for the Port Health & Environmental Services Committee to have only its Chairman on the Appointment Panel for the Director of Open Spaces, whereas the Open Spaces, City Gardens & West Ham Park Committee would continue to have three representatives on the Panel.

The Chairman therefore put the matter to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

Those in favour of the motion below – **four votes**

Those against the motion below – **two votes**

Those abstained – **one vote**

The motion was therefore carried.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate HR unit note the report and make the necessary preparations to give Port Health and Environmental Services Committee appropriate representation in the future appointments of the Director of Open Spaces.

6. **CONSOLIDATED REVENUE OUTTURN 2011/12**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Open Spaces. The report compared the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee in 2011/12 with the final agreed budget for the year. In total, there was a better than budget position of £1,873,000 for the services overseen by the Committee compared with the final agreed budget for the year as set out in the report. Members accepted that the City Surveyor's underspend of £1,242,000 related mainly to the Additional Works Programme which would be rolled over to 21012/13.

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7. **REVENUE OUTTURN 2011/12- OPEN SPACES, CITY GARDENS, AND WEST HAM PARK**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Open Spaces. The report compared the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee in 2011/12 with the final agreed budget for the year. Members noted that there was a better than budget position of £194,000 for the services overseen by the Committee compared with the final agreed budget.

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Part A - West Ham Park

8. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Superintendent of West Ham Park & City Gardens relative to West Ham Park matters. The following points were made:

- Between one hundred and one hundred and fifty Tamil protestors had arrived in West Ham Park on the evening of 22 July 2012, and subsequently moved on to Romford Road. Following a Metropolitan police request for assistance in advance of the event, West Ham Park staff had helped to keep the event under control. The protest was peaceful and well managed.
- Spending was currently within budget.

- The inclement weather meant 2012 had been unusual so far for staff. The Park remained very quiet during long rainy spells but visitors used the Park more than usual during the brief spells of sunshine. It was hoped that the anticipated warmer weather would enable the daily management of the Park to settle into a routine cycle.
- Newham's Festival of Sport was providing free coaching in eight sporting disciplines, which gave 8 – 16 year olds an opportunity to sample athletics, basketball and volleyball. The festival had started on 16 July and would finish on 31 August. It would form the focus of the Park's Green to Gold day on 3 August 2012.
- The number of Metropolitan Police Service "uncalled visits" had dropped over the previous year; however, the Service remained on call for emergencies. Members noted that the West Ham Park Manager sat on the Wards Policing Panel. This formed part of a co-ordinated approach by police to tackle the local gangs. The Park manager sat on the ward Police panel where it was noted that several other parks in the area had much higher crime rates than the Park, therefore resources were redistributed to target those areas. Several individuals aged between approximately fourteen-sixteen years had recently committed anti-social acts and vandalism within the Park. They had been arrested outside the Park.
- The nursery continued to hold sizeable stocks of Olympic bedding in case they were needed for replacement following damage to City planting, which was expected following the torch relay and the marathons. However, some had already been used following the death of an entire bed in a key location due to waterlogging.

Members recorded their thanks to those staff members involved with ensuring the protest on 22 July 2012 was able to take place without incident.

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9. FRIENDS OF WEST HAM PARK - ANNUAL UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces. In July 2006, following public consultation on the West Ham Park Management Plan, the Friends of West Ham Park group was formed. The report set out the projects that the Friends of West Ham Park had successfully achieved throughout 2011/12.

Members noted and commended the important contribution made by the Friends of West Ham Park.

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10. WEST HAM PARK MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces presenting Members with data and statistics relating to the use and management of West Ham Park during the 2011/12 financial year.

A typographical error was amended as follows:

“2. Park visitor numbers April 2011 – March 2012”

Members recorded their appreciation of the hard work and commitment of the staff and volunteers at West Ham Park.

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Part B - Open Spaces

11. ANNUAL REPORT

The Support Services Manager advised that, based on Members' comments in 2011, the Annual Report had been amended in the following ways:

- There had been a substantial change in cover design and overall layout.
- The report was now in landscape rather than portrait format.
- There were more photographs.
- A volunteering section had been added.
- Items relating to the City of London Cemetery had been included for the first time.
- The final pages, including the staffing resources, organisational structure, budget and sports facilities had been simplified using diagrams.

Members commended the improvements made to the annual report for 2011/12 as compared to the 2010/11 annual report.

In response to a Member's query, the Support Services Manager undertook to investigate the possibility of including contact details for the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the Open Spaces, City Gardens & West Ham Park Committee, Epping Forest & Commons Committee, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee and the Port Health & Environmental Services in the future.

A Member suggested that in future it should be made clearer that income generated was reinvested into the City's open spaces.

Another Member suggested that in future each photo should feature a description as to what it depicted.

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12. OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN - FIRST QUARTER PROGRESS REPORT 2012/13 AND REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE IN 2011/12

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces. The report presented the first quarter review of the Plan and a summary of financial performance and outlined performance on the indicators for 2011/12 that were included in the previous Business Plan.

In response to a Member's query, the Director advised that in future those key performance indicators that related only to the City of London Cemetery and

Crematorium would be removed from the report to be submitted to the Committee.

The Director advised that it was hoped that the average number of sick days per department employee could be reduced to six, which would be in line with the corporate average.

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13. DOG CONTROL ORDERS

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces relative to Dog Control Orders. The report informed the Committee of the City's recent acquisition of a Designation Order, which enabled the City to make and enforce Dog Control orders outside the Square Mile, which came into force on 31 May 2012.

Members noted that the current intention was to consult on the introduction of one or more Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches before determining the way forward for other Open Spaces. In response to a Member's query, the Director confirmed that it was hoped that a consultation exercise could be held in the near future, and the Dog Control Orders could then be introduced in Burnham Beeches in September 2013.

The Director informed the Committee of new proposals covering anti-social behaviour, which could see Dog Control Orders replaced with a wider form of Order.

RESOLVED: that Members,

- i) note the report and the approach to trialling Dog Control Orders and;
- ii) approve that engagement with the Government on maintaining Secondary Authority status within the proposed new regime for anti-social behaviour can proceed.

Part C - City Gardens

14. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update from the Superintendent of West Ham Park & City Gardens relative to City Gardens matters. The following points were made:

- A Committee visit to the City Gardens had taken place on 20 July, which had allowed the Committee to review the ongoing CrossRail construction works in Moorgate.
- There was currently a 7% overspend due to the recent influx of Massaria into the City and Olympic spending. This would be covered by a carry forward from the 2011/12 budget and additional funding from the Olympic Centre.
- Louisa Allen, the new City Gardens Manager, would start her new role on 30 July.
- Olympic Planting was now complete however, as with several other items of 'Look & Feel,' quality had been an issue. Olympics Street

dressing was due to be completed on 24 July 2012. 6 foot Olympic mascots were in place, which had proven very popular. 40 foot inflatable mascots would appear on the lawns at St Paul's and Moorgate at various times over the summer.

- The flame would visit the City on Thursday 26 July. The City's biggest Olympic risks continued to be litter and transport. During the Olympic period, the City Gardens team would report to the City of London Olympic Coordination Centre twice each day in order to highlight any ongoing issues or successes. To ensure that departments could help best use the resources available by teaming with the Environmental services section, a great deal of planning has gone into staff timetables. All key dates and activities were on the Olympic pages of the City's website.
- A visit from the All Party Parliamentary Horticulture Group had recently been received.
- A visit from the Bishopsgate Ward Club was scheduled for 24 July 2012.

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

There were no questions.

16. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

17. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: 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 as follows:-

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraphs in Schedule 12A</u>
18	3
19-20	-

EXTENSION OF THE MEETING

At this point, the time limit for Committee meetings as set out in Standing Order 40 had been reached, but there being a two-thirds majority of the Committee present who voted in favour of an extension, the Committee agreed to continue the meeting.

18. **DEBT ARREARS - INVOICED INCOME FOR PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2012**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Open Spaces.

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

There were no questions.

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

There were no urgent items.

The meeting ended at 3.46 pm

Chairman

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