

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Monday, 3 February 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 3 February 2020 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Oliver Sells QC (Chairman)
Alderman Ian Luder
Barbara Newman
Jeremy Simons
Deputy John Tomlinson
Deputy Philip Woodhouse (Ex-Officio Member)

In attendance:

Catherine Bickmore

Officers:

Richard Holt	- Town Clerk's Department
Kristina Drake	- Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Mark Eyre	- Senior Principal Surveyor, City Surveyor's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, Parks and Gardens Open Spaces Department
Gerry Kiefer	- Open Spaces Business Manager, Open Spaces Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Deputy Chairman Graeme Doshi-Smith, Caroline Haines, Wend Mead and Verderer Dr Joanna Thomas.

A Member noted that Verderer Thomas would be stepping down from the role at the end of February 2020 and that appropriate communication should be produced to send as a thanks for her years of service. A Member suggested that an Honorary Reeve of Epping Forest would be appropriate and had previously been received by Verderers upon retirement but noted that this was within the powers of Epping Forest district Council. The Chairman confirmed that he would undertake with colleagues to provide a suitable thanks to Verderer Thomas.

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

There were no declarations received.

3. **MINUTES**

The Committee considered the public minutes and non-public summary of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee meeting held on the 9th of December 2019.

RESOLVED- That the public minutes of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee 9 December 2019.

4. **ACTIONS**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the public actions of the previous meeting.

The Chairman noted that he had received communication from the Chairman of the Finance Committee in response to his note regarding action 1/2019/P. It was explained that the Chamberlain and Director of Information Technology had confirmed that they would be providing a full response regarding the functionality of the City of London Corporation Website's open spaces web pages. Members discussed the importance of fully functioning open spaces' web pages to the Department and noted that it was vital the access issues were resolved by the summer season. In addition, the Director of Open Spaces explained that representatives of the Information Technology team would be attending the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee meeting in April.

Further to Action 3/2019/P on the policy for festive trees in 2020 it was noted that a draft report on the Policy was currently being considered by the City Surveyor's Department and the Department of Built Environment with a final report for Members being prepared for consideration at the April Committee meeting. The Chairman commented that adequate time should be allowed for procurement of the trees in time for Christmas 2020.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

5. **DEPARTMENTAL AND SERVICE COMMITTEE BUDGET ESTIMATES AND HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21 - OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Open Spaces and Chamberlain on the Departmental and Service Committee Budget Estimates and high-level summary Business Plan 2020/21 for the Open Spaces Department. The report presented for approval the budget estimates and the draft final high-level summary Business Plan for the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee for 2020/21 for submission to the Finance Committee.

The Director of Open Spaces provided Members with an update on the capital projects for the Open Spaces Department explaining that the Finsbury Circus and Nursery Site projects had received approval from the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee while the Artificial Grass Pitch Provision at Wanstead Flats was deferred for more information to be provided. The Chairman noted that this was a better position than was previously feared and thanked Members for their work in arguing the case for the open spaces related projects.

Replying to a question from an observer appointed to the Committee the Director of Open Spaces provided a definition of the term heritage as used within the report.

RESOLVED- That: -

- I. The Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee proposed revenue budget for 2020/21 be approved for submission to Finance Committee; and
- II. That the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee proposed capital and supplementary revenue projects budgets for 2020/21 be approved for submission to Finance Committee; and
- III. The provisional 2020/21 revenue budget for the services overseen by other committees as per Appendix 6 be noted; and
- IV. That the Chamberlain be authorised, in consultation with Director of Open Spaces to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from the Fundamental Review, Corporate Projects, other reviews and changes to the Cyclical Works Programme; and
- V. That minor amendments for 2019/20 and 2020/21 budgets arising during budget setting be delegated to the Chamberlain; and
- VI. That the final draft high-level summary Open Spaces Department Business Plan for 2020/21 be approved.

6. CITY GARDENS UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces updating Members on activities within the City Gardens since December 2019.

The Director of Open Spaces introduced the report and highlighted that, due to the number of permissions required from the affected parties, and the time constrained nature of the funding, it would not be possible to complete the works by the end of March. Replying to a query regarding the completion date of these works the Director explained that this would be dependent on decisions made regarding the allocation of resources for 2020/21 Budget. A Member commented that disability access to this Garden, as well as all open spaces managed by the City of London Corporation, was a vital component and should be provided appropriate consideration by Officers.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had been invited to meet with the Archdeacon of London to discuss the opportunities for Churchyards within the City of London and he would provide an update to the Committee on this meeting.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

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

There were no questions considered in the public session.

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

There was no urgent business considered in the public session.

9. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED- That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the following items of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

10. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee meeting held on the 9th of December 2019.

RESOLVED- That the non-public minutes of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee 9 December 2019 be approved as an accurate record.

11. **NON-PUBLIC ACTIONS**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the non-public minutes of the previous meeting.

RESOLVED- That the report be noted.

12. **RENNIE GARDENS**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor on Rennie Garden.

RESOLVED- That the report be agreed.

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 considered in the non-public session.

The meeting ended at 12.12 pm

Chairman

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