

<b>Committee:</b> Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park	<b>Date(s):</b> 3 December 2012
<b>Subject:</b> Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park: Public Relations update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Public Relations	<b>For Information</b>

### **Summary**

This report updates Members on Public Relations activities in support of the services for which the Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park Committee is responsible during the period October 2011 to September 2012.

Highlights of the support for the services of the Committee include:

- Media
- Website
- E-communications and social media
- Literature and related activities
- Public Affairs
- Events
- Member and internal Communications
- Filming

The activities in this report are also in support of the ‘*Communications Strategy 2012- 2015*’, the three strands of which are:

- to support and promote “The City” as the world leader in international financial and business services;
- to promote the success of the City of London Corporation as the provider of modern, efficient and high quality local and policing services within the Square Mile for workers, residents and visitors; and
- to promote the role of the City of London Corporation as a provider of valued services to London and the nation as a whole.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

- Receive this report on Public Relations activities during the period October 2011 to September 2012 in support of the services for which the Committee is responsible.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This report highlights the Public Relations activities, in the period October 2011 to September 2012, in support of the services for which this Committee is responsible.

1.2 As part of the revised communications strategy there are two new communications priorities, running alongside the promotion of financial and business services:

- Supporting London's communities – the work the City Corporation does to support educational and cultural opportunities and economic development, thereby helping to provide jobs and growth and improve the quality of life throughout London.
- Helping to look after London's heritage and green spaces – the work the City Corporation does to look after London and the nation's heritage and to provide green spaces across the capital and beyond.

The Public Relations Office is working with Departments across the organisation to deliver these two new priorities across the full range of PR activities. In particular, colleagues have been working closely with Open Spaces under the second communications priority with initial discussions underway for a new research publication and other such opportunities.

1.3 In addition to the work described below, a major focus for the Public Relations Office over the course of the period October 2011 to September 2012 was the Occupy LSX encampment at St Paul's. The Public Relations Office worked with Members and Departments across the City Corporation throughout the period of the encampment to ensure that communications were effectively managed throughout. In addition, Quiller Consultants provided high level strategic PR advice. The communications plan for the removal of tents and equipment operated as intended on the night. Media officers were present at the site and were able to provide 'eyes and ears' for the team located at Guildhall. Members were kept informed of developments via email and all staff were updated via the intranet. Twitter was successfully used during the removal to monitor the situation and to broadcast official statements. All major broadcasters and national press covered the removal overnight. BBC were broadcasting live during the removal. The City Corporation statement was included in the coverage.

The Public Relations Office emergency communications plan has been reviewed following the lessons from St Paul's. The City Corporation also

has in place effective social media monitoring arrangements which have been implemented across various areas of work, including the one year anniversary of the OccupyLSX encampment in early October.

- 1.4 The Public Relations Office worked closely with the various services for which this Committee is responsible to communicate important information to both external and internal audiences relating to Celebrate the City, the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and the Olympic and Paralympic Games including changes or disruptions to services.

Colleagues across the Public Relations Office assisted with delivering the public event held on Tower Bridge on Sunday which was organised with the assistance of Dominic Reid.

In addition, the Public Relations Office worked closely with colleagues to ensure successful events for the Olympic Men and Women and Paralympic Marathons were delivered.

## **2. Media**

- 2.1 Throughout the year, October 2011 - September 2012, there were 699 stories about Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park that appeared in the UK print media, online, radio and television. According to Durrants (independent media monitoring agency), the total advertising value of the coverage amounted to £970,309.

- 2.2 Highlights of stories initiated by the Media Team in the Public Relations Office throughout the year, October 2011 – September 2012, include:

- *BBC Radio London Breakfast Show with Gabby & Paul* (1<sup>st</sup> week of October 2011) interviewed Hampstead Heath's Leisure and Events Manager Paul Maskell on the Heath's (successful) attempt to break the world record for the biggest conker competition ever held. *Timeout*, the *Ham&High* and the *Camden New Journal* also covered the event.
- The *Newham Recorder* (21 December 2011) reported on the City of London Corporation's agreement with the Kennel Club, which is designed to promote responsible dog walking on the City's green spaces. Chairman Bob Hall is pictured and quoted.

- *Horticulture Week* (1 June 2012) covered the planting of a flower meadow in West Ham Park. Outreach Officer Sue Banks is quoted. The *Newham Recorder* (6 June) also covered the story.
- The *Financial Times* (20 June 2012) ran an article on the City of London Corporation's open spaces stating that they benefit the whole of London. The article came after 'Occupy Hampstead Heath' protestors set up camp on the Heath.
- The *Chingford Times*, *Horticulture Week*, and the *Epping Forest Guardian* (throughout July) ran stories on the opening of the new Visitor Centre next to the Hunting Lodge. Chairman Haines and the Duke of Gloucester are pictured and quoted.
- The *Epping Forest Guardian* (02 August 2012) carried articles on the registration for election of the Epping Forest Verderers. Superintendent Paul Thomson is pictured and quoted.

2.3 In addition to the work outlined above by the Media Team, both initiating stories and responding to ad-hoc media requests, the Head of Media has also been the public relations lead on hydrology issues at Hampstead Heath ponds and Highams Lake at Epping Forest.

### **3. Website**

3.1 The Public Relations Office is responsible for the City of London Corporation's external website. During the past year the majority of this work has been focussed on re-launching the website. The Office organised and supervised the analysis of all the pages on the old site in order to migrate the correct content. A lot of work has been done on the quality of this content to make it as easy as possible to find via search engines and for it to be relevant, current and user-friendly. The Office has organised a number of workshops and facilitated regular meetings to address these issues and to help empower cluster users to whom responsibility for content has now been devolved. So far this new structure is working well and the Public Relations Office continues to support and mentor users as the development of the website continues.

3.2 Work has included promoting key Open Space events on the home page and highlighting a survey on behalf of Epping Forest.

#### **4. E-communications and social media**

- 4.1 The Public Relations Office is responsible for the creation and development of e-communications.

The eshot email marketing offering, which is sent to more than 12,000 subscribers, helped promote the department's Green to Gold campaign before and during the summer. The team has worked closely with Open Spaces, and in particular the Marketing Manager, to review and take forward their social media offering; Epping Forest (@CoLEppingForest) and Hampstead Heath (@CityCorpHeath) have Twitter feeds. Training has been offered on-site in Highgate Wood and at Guildhall. There are plans to continue to progress this area of work over the forthcoming months.

In total the City Corporation now has 12 Facebook pages and 30 Twitter feeds a YouTube channel and Flickr account, *Visit the City* app and *Love the Square Mile* app which cover the wide range of services we provide (full list at [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/social](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/social))

#### **5. Literature and related activities**

- 5.1 The Public Relations Office is also responsible for the corporate publications strategy and its implementation. In addition, the Public Relations Office is also responsible for the City Corporation's brand identity and assists Departments with branding guidelines. Earlier this year the City Corporation's logo was formally registered as a Trade Mark in the UK.
- 5.2 Cityview's summer edition featured articles on Open Spaces's Wellbeing/Green to Gold Festival and other activities as part of its Olympic preview spread. Work is also being undertaken with Open Space officers to identify key activities or issues that can be promoted as part of PRO's new communications priorities initiative.

#### **6. Public Affairs**

- 6.1 The Public Relations Office provides Public Affairs advice to Departments across the organisation on specific issues that may affect their work as and when required. This includes initial planning relating to public affairs activities under the second communications priority.

#### **7. Events**

- 7.1 The Public Relations Office provides an event management service for Departments across the organisation. This has included:

- On 2 December 2011 the Lord Mayor turned on the Christmas lights at St Paul's Cathedral. Members of the Open Spaces Committee and Civic Party then attended a drinks reception at the Grange Hotel St Paul's
- An event was arranged around the launch of the City Bridge Trust Diamond Jubilee grant scheme 'Growing Localities' which had significant involvement from Open Spaces. The scheme (launched in the Guildhall Yard on 17 May) focusses on Growing and Greening and Horticultural Work Training.
- A large number of Open Spaces staff attended the thank you drinks reception for staff who were involved in making the Games such a success on 2 November.

7.2 The Team also facilitates events which engage staff from across the organisation, including:

- The contribution of all relevant departments to the London Councils London Summit on 19 November 2011– each department submitted publicity material to promote the services and activities of the City Corporation to an audience of over 250 pan-London councillors and chief officers.
- The launch event for the Celebrate the City weekend which saw representation from across City Corporation departments on 21 June.
- The annual Central City Residents meetings, which took place on 30 May, provided City residents with an opportunity to meet City of London officers from across the organisation and investigate more the wide range of services offered through stalls at the event

In addition to the above the Team runs all staff only events which includes Staff Annual Lunches, Master classes and Strategic Briefings.

## **8. Member and internal communications**

8.1 The Public Relations Office, working closely with the Member Services Team, has responsibility for communications with Members. The Members' Briefing, which has recently been reviewed by Members, will be revised over the coming months. The Public Relations Office also provides updates and Briefings to Members on topical issues.

8.2 The Public Relations Office provides internal communications for the City Corporation as a whole, as part of the work of the Corporate Affairs Team, and gives support to individual Departments as and when required. Open Spaces are regularly supported and assisted in improving

communications through a number of channels and in a variety of ways from communication advice and practical assistance where required (design, editing etc) for news and feature publicity via the corporate channels and in some cases local comms activity. This year specifically included promoting staff involvement during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, including a staff ballot for Olympic and Paralympic tickets and related photographs for the City Corporation's Flickr account.

- 8.3 The Team ensure that story coverage in the e-magazine the Leader, the intranet, the Town Clerk's Bulletin and the eLeader bulletin is regular, timely and in particular celebrates the successes of the Open Spaces and showcases latest initiatives and service developments.

## **9. Filming**

The Public Relations Office has a dedicated Film Team responsible for liaising with film crews and City Corporation departments to facilitate shoots within the Square Mile and on our property. The Film Team have liaised with several film crews in the past year with regard to use of City Gardens. St-Dunstons-in-the-East's churchyard in particular remains popular with filmmakers.

## **Background Papers:**

Members will find it useful to refer to the '*Communications Strategy 2012-2015*'

## **Contact:**

*Tony Halmos*

*Director of Public Relations*

020 7332 1450

[tony.halmos@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:tony.halmos@cityoflondon.gov.uk)