

Committee(s): Open Spaces & City Gardens	Dated: 15 February 2022
Subject: Bunhill Fields Community Arts Project	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3 & 4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin – Executive Director Environment	For Decision
Report author: Jake Tibbetts, City Gardens Manager	

Summary

City Gardens have been approached by Islington Council's Heritage Service, which is running a community development arts project. They will engage with three local artist-educators over three years to work with the community in order to create one work of art each year. The art works aim to explore the history of the Bunhill area. It is their desire to install these artworks within Bunhill Fields.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- agree in principle for Bunhill Fields to be used to exhibit appropriate art installations;
- nominate the City Gardens Manager to represent the City of London on the steering group;
- that officers report back for approval once details of the specific artworks are available.

Main Report

Background

1. Bunhill fields is owned and managed by the City of London, it is located in the southern part of the London Borough of Islington, within the Bunhill electoral ward. The site is a Grade I listed garden on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

There are numerous listed structures (8 list entries at Grade II* and 68 list entries at Grade II, including the boundary walls and railings). The site is also listed as a Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation (SBINC).

2. Islington council's Heritage Service's prime purpose is to enable people to realise their full potential by providing them with full and equal access - appropriate to their various needs - to information, ideas, knowledge and creative works.
3. Bunhill Heritage is a community development project. Islington Heritage Service are working in partnership with the St Luke's community centre, which works to support the lives of residents, creating opportunities for inclusion and development, while improving wellbeing and reducing social isolation.

Current Position

4. Islington Council's Heritage Service has approached City Gardens to request for permission to use Bunhill Fields to exhibit works of art that have been developed by a commissioned artist-educator working with the community. Islington Heritage Service's new heritage project encompasses the history of the whole ward of Bunhill.
5. At this stage it is unclear as to the type, size and appearance of the installation. Any proposed installation may be subject to planning consent depending on its size and impact on the site. NB Islington Council are the planning authority for Bunhill Fields. Due to Bunhill Fields listing; Historic England will need to approve the installation. Any art installation would need to be appropriate for the site, which cannot be assessed until the art installation has been designed.
6. The design process will commence with the resident artist working with the community to develop ideas. Once a final design has been agreed, drawings and/or a scale model will be produced. This will be presented to the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee and the Heritage Team for approval. If it is deemed by either the City of London, Historic England or the Planning authority to not be appropriate for Bunhill Fields, another site in the area will be used.
7. Islington Council intend that the City Corporation is given representation on the project steering group. It is proposed for this to be the City Gardens Manager
8. Details of the project can be found in appendix 1. This report will be accompanied by a presentation to committee from Islington.
9. Islington will take on full liability for any structures or installations installed as part of this project and will be covered by their public liability. Risk assessments and method statements will be submitted to and approved by city of London before installation. Islington will be responsible for costs of any maintenance, repairs, installation, removal and other associated costs.
10. Friends of City Gardens have been in communication with Islington council's Heritage Service and are in support of this project.

11. This type of project would be beneficial for the local community and could not only increase the number of users of Bunhill, but also deliver new ways that the site is engaged with and how it is experienced.

Proposal

12. That the first completed work of public art be temporarily installed in Bunhill Fields for the duration of one year, beginning January 2023.

Options

13. **Option 1.** The request is refused, and Islington find other sites for their installations. There are no benefits to the City beyond this being the lowest risk approach. **Not recommended**

14. **Option 2.** Committee agree for this to proceed on the basis that:

1. the City Gardens Manager represents the City of London on the Steering Group.
2. The final design is presented to Open Spaces Committee for approval for use in the site (see paragraph 8)

Option Two is recommended

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. Strategic implications –Corporate Plan Outcomes:

3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.

Financial implications – There are no financial implications for the City as this is funded by Islington Council

Resource implications - None

Legal implications - Any art installation approved would need to be assessed against and comply with City Corporation policy, byelaws and legislation.

Any art installation approval would also be subject to the relevant planning considerations and listed building consents.

Equalities implications – Islington Heritage Service are partnering with the St Luke's Centre. St Luke's work with communities considered to be at risk including elderly residents, families, vulnerable young people, women's groups, asylum seekers and people of all ages with disabilities. The project aims to further inclusion and integration and promote wellbeing across the community.

Climate implications - None

Security implications - None

Conclusion

16. The City should support this cross-borough project as outlined in option 2 above. The project will enrich and activate the space in new ways, encourage new visitors into the space and support City gardens business plan objectives.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Bunhill Heritage – Project Overview

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