

OPEN SPACES, CITY GARDENS & WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE
Monday, 3 December 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, 3
December 2012 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Alderman Robert Hall (Chairman)
Dr Peter Hardwick (Deputy Chairman)
Alex Deane
Alderman Ian Luder
Deputy Wendy Mead
Deputy Janet Owen
Deputy Michael Welbank
Catherine Bickmore
Robert Cazenove
Councillor Joy Laguda
Charlotte Evans
Alderman Gordon Haines (Ex-Officio Member)
Barbara Newman (Ex-Officio Member)
Jeremy Simons (Ex-Officio Member)

Also Present:

Catherine Bickmore	- Nominated by the heir-at-law of the late John Gurney
Robert Cazenove	- Nominated by the heir-at-law of the late John Gurney
Richard Gurney	- Nominated by the heir-at-law of the late John Gurney
Justin Meath-Baker	- Nominated by the heir-at-law of the late John Gurney
The Rev. Stennett Kirby	- Nominated by the Benefice of West Ham Park
Councillor Joy Laguda	- Nominated by the London Borough of Newham
Charlotte Evans	- Nominated by the London Borough of Newham

Observers:

Verderer Peter Adams	- Observer Nominated by the Epping Forest & Commons Committee
Tony Ghilchik	- Observer Nominated by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park Committee

Officers:

Edward Foale	- Committee & Member Services Officer
Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's Department
Tony Halmos	- Director of Public Relations
Sophie Galasinski	- Press Officer, Public Relations Office
John Park	- Press Officer, Public Relations Office
Mark Jarvis	- Head of Finance - Citizen Services, Chamberlains
Roger Adams	- City Surveyor's Department

Melanie Charalambous	- Built Environment
Sue Ireland	- Director of Open Spaces
Denis Whelton	- Support Services Manager
Martin Rodman	- Superintendent, West Ham Park and City Gardens
Louisa Allen	- City Gardens Manager
Geraldine King	- West Ham Park Manager
Patrick Hegarty	- Open Spaces Department

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Deputy Stella Currie and Richard Gurney.

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

Jeremy Simons declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 16 as he was a Trustee of two of the St. Andrew Holborn charities.

3. **MINUTES**

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 8 October 2012 were approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman informed Members that he had contacted the Greater London with respect to the Committee's concerns on the proposed National Planning Policy Framework and Neighbourhood Planning report. A report was being prepared to be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee which will highlight the Superintendents' current use of resources on local planning matters, address issues concerning the legal status of Neighbourhood Forums' powers in relation to key legislation and make suggestions as to what the City's Open Spaces relationship with neighbourhood forums should be. It will be helpful to progress engagement with the County and District local planning authorities surrounding the City's Open Spaces.

4. **SCHEDULE OF VISITS REPORT**

Members considered a report of the Town Clerk that outlined a schedule of visits to the various open spaces Members noted that the format for the visits would be conveyed to Members in advance.

In response to a Member's query, the Town Clerk undertook to investigate the possibility of holding the City Gardens visit on 12 July 2013 instead of 19 July 2013, which was suggested in the report.

RESOLVED: that,

- i) all dates listed in the 2013 schedule of visits excluding 19 July, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed; and,
- ii) the Town Clerk investigate the possibility of holding the City Gardens visit on 12 July 2012 and report to the next Committee meeting; and,
- iii) the various dates that relate to visits for each Committee be noted.

5. OPEN SPACES, CITY GARDENS AND WEST HAM PARK: PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE

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

In response to a Member's query the Director advised that local press widely publicised the services for which Open Spaces was responsible, and Officers would continue to push publicity for the City of London owning and funding these Open Spaces through media activity.

**West Ham Park
CHARLOTTE EVANS - VOTE OF THANKS**

The Committee noted that this was Charlotte Evans' last meeting and the Chairman thanked Charlotte on behalf of the Committee for her contribution over the past four years.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update from the West Ham Park Manager. The following points were made:

- 60 trees were currently being planted in line with the Conservation Management Plan as coppices within the Park.
- Three staff had completed ten days mini excavator training which would now certify them to carry out operations involving digging in the Park. This training would assist with another CBT project: the removal of the tennis court hedge and replanting as it was suffering from Honey Fungus.
- The nursery had enjoyed a very busy month with the completion of floral displays for the Indonesian and Kuwait State banquets. The nursery had also completed the first delivery of bedding to Richmond, Bushy and Greenwich Park.
- The Friends of the Park held a successful building Newham's largest leaf pile day with over 70 people participating. Their next event was Park in the Dark, scheduled for Friday 7 December 2012 at 4pm.

Members thanked the Manager and staff at West Ham Park for providing the flower arrangements at the State Banquets.

Open Spaces

7. TREE DISEASES - THE CURRENT POSITION AND IMPACT ON OPEN SPACES

Members received a presentation from the Director of Open Spaces relative to tree diseases. The following points were noted:

- There is considerable variation in the makeup of the tree population across Open Spaces, with the urban parks such as City Gardens and West Ham Park

containing relatively more London plane and less ash and oak trees than the rural open spaces including of Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath, City Commons and Burnham Beeches.

- Massaria, which attacks London plane trees, is likely to have a costly impact on our sites: for example £80,000 had been spent inspecting trees in the City. Of 1,200 London plane trees inspected at West Ham Park, to date, only one was affected by Massaria. Treatment involves removing diseased limbs. At Queens Park 6 of 80 trees had been attacked. The disease was first identified in these areas in June 2012. Staff will inspect trees in the City three times a year, but it was too early to estimate a financial cost of the disease. City Commons and Hampstead Heath were on high alert for Massaria. £19,000 had been spent removing limbs attacked by Massaria in the southern areas of Epping Forest.
- Oak Processionary Moth (OPM): Although not yet identified in any of our Open spaces, it is likely that this disease may affect Highgate Wood, City Commons and Hampstead Heath due to the high number of oak trees present here.
- Ash Dieback: This was currently of less concern for Open Spaces although the long-term implications will see the loss of many trees. Any tree with Ash Dieback would only be felled if it was deemed dangerous.
- Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner: Epping Forrest and Queens Park were losing a few trees each year to this disease.

Action would be taken locally to address key issues including:

- a Risk Assessment review would be undertaken by the department to ensure resources are being effectively used and lessons learnt from current records. The need for a consistent policy across the department was highlighted.
- The introduction of increased biosecurity would be considered, including tree purchases and how staff and contractors work on site, The public would be informed about how they can also help.
- The impact of mildew on oak regeneration is not well understood and requires research.

An information report on the impact of tree diseases on trees in the Open Spaces is being prepared for circulation to all Members of the Court of Common Council.

Regional Action: The Director was working closely with the Forestry Commission and asked Members to consider hosting a Forestry Commission Conference early next year. The Director is chairing OPM Advisory Group meetings working to produce an OPM action plan. It was also suggested that the City of London should consider funding the training of volunteers to help identify these diseases in trees.

The Director was then asked by the Chairman to brief Members following her visit to Berlin, she highlighted the following:

- The Tiergarten, the central park in Berlin, did not currently have a Park Manager and the Director advised this would help by having a single person able to take responsibility for the park.
- Volunteers were not used in the Tiergarten, although it was apparent that local people wanted to volunteer. The Director hoped to work with the Berlin Senate to encourage volunteering.

Members welcomed the work undertaken by Officers, and agreed that hosting the Forestry Commission Conference would help create a more focused approach going forward. In response to a Member's query, the Director advised the Committee that biosecurity should be used to help visitors understand more

about the impact of diseases and thus take appropriate actions whilst visiting the open spaces, rather than deterring visitors.

RECEIVED.

8. ANNUAL REVIEW OF FILMING IN THE OPEN SPACES

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces informing the Committee of the extent of filming activity in the Open Spaces and the income received in 2011/12. It also provided guidelines for filming charges for 2013/14. Details of the activity at each Open Space were outlined in the report. Members noted that income from filming across all the Open Spaces in 2011/12 amounted to £73,550, compared to £78,300 in the previous year, although the amount of filming in any year remains unpredictable.

In response to a query from Members, the Support Services Manager advised that damage to sites from film crews was very limited and the Superintendent held the discretion to impose restrictions on film crews when using the sites, and in extreme circumstances to suspend filming.

RESOLVED: That the guidelines for filming charges in the Open Spaces in 2013/14 be approved.

9. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS - 2012/13 AND 2013/14

Members considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Open Spaces that updated the Committee on its latest approved revenue budget for 2012/13 and sought approval for a provisional revenue budget for 2013/14, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee. The budgets had been prepared within the resources allocated to the Director. Members noted that overall the provisional Original budget for 2013/14 totalled £2.901M, an increase of £34,000 compared with the latest approved budget for 2012/13.

In response to a query from Members, the Head of Finance advised that any further changes would be sent to the Committee Chairman. The Head of Finance agreed to review the tables in the report and consider including historic figures to help put the current position into context.

RESOLVED: that Members:

- i) approve the budget for submission to the Finance Committee;
- ii) approve the draft Capital Budget;
- iii) authorise the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Director of Open Spaces, to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, departmental reorganisations and other reviews, changes to the Additional Works Programme, and implications arising from Carbon Trading Allowances.

10. OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN - SECOND QUARTER PROGRESS REPORT 2012/13

Members considered a report of the Director of Open Spaces that updated the Committee on the progress of the Open Spaces Business Plan for 2012-2015, which the Committee approved on 25 April 2012. The report presented the second quarter review of the Plan, which showed progress on achieving the indicators for 2012/13 and a summary of financial performance. At the end of the second quarter, the overall departmental local risk budget was overspent by £63,000. However, all of the Open Spaces were expected to remain broadly in line with their local risk budgets at the end of the year.

The Director informed Members that an evaluation of Learning and Development would be undertaken every six months and the impact of courses organised would be included in the half year and end of year Business Plan progress report.

RECEIVED

City Gardens

11. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update from the City Gardens Manager. The following points were made:

- Work was being undertaken to convert 15 annual bedding areas into more sustainable planting beds using shrubs, perennials, herbaceous planting to create planting schemes that give seasonal interest as well as introducing biodiversity features. Relevant bodies had been consulted regarding how they would be affected by the works and positive responses in general were received
- The team had undertaken a tree planting programme and staff had just planted 8 new trees to replace trees that have either been diseased, damaged or died, 11 new trees with a further 12 to be planted in the New Year, linked to the 2nd year of the Green Corridors project. Further tree planting is planned subject to trial pits being identified.
- Seething Lane Gardens was now closed due to extensive works taking place at 10 Trinity House nearby. A newly landscaped garden would re-open in 2014. Information about closure and the new design has been posted on the hoarding and on our website.
- Monkswell Square tree pruning was about to take place, to lift and protect two existing trees from scaffolding which was about to be installed around the Barber Surgeons Hall, as part of refurbishment works to the building. The scaffolding would remain in place until June. Re-landscaping the garden would take place in the summer of 2013, City Gardens would undertake the planting in early autumn
- User Survey - City Gardens had commissioned ASK, a market research company to assess residents, city workers and visitors opinions and views of City Gardens. The findings from the survey would inform the Open Spaces strategy. The opportunity would be used to promote our parks and green spaces by field workers, they will give out interpretation leaflets to passers-by and to ask if people would be interested in volunteering

- Volunteering in the City of London Corporation - The Thyme Out project, based in Bromley – a horticultural training project for adults with learning disabilities was carried out in the City had refreshed 3 of our insect hotels and installed additional stag beetle loggeries in Cleary Gardens, Bunhill Fields and Postman’s Park. They also helped the team plant over 20,000 bulbs planted in Tower Hill Gardens.
- Volunteers and the City Gardeners cleaned out and checked on the City’s 48 bird boxes, 29 % occupancy slightly less than last year. The team were looking to find ways to increase this level of occupancy this coming year.
- Volunteers from the Prudential sanded down railings and undertook bulb planting in Bunhill Fields.

RECEIVED.

12. PROPOSALS CONCERNING RENNIE GARDEN, LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces relative to a proposal by Carlyle Investment Management LLC for a major development scheme either side of the southern approach to Blackfriars Bridge to provide a mixed commercial and residential scheme. If approved, the development would adjoin Rennie Garden. Members were asked to put forward their views on the proposal. Concerns were expressed at the net reduction of our trees on the site and the problems which can arise from split responsibility for maintenance of the sites.

In response to a Member’s query the Director advised that Southwark Council’s Planning Committee would be determining this application, however it had not yet been submitted. Members queried the maintenance regime of the trees going forward as the trees were outside of the City’s boundary. Officers advised that the maintenance plan would form a key part of their discussions with contractors, and that Officers would be robust in their discussions.

A timescale had not yet been placed on the application. Nevertheless, an update report would be considered by Members at the next meeting of the Committee.

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

There were no questions.

14. URGENT ITEMS

There was no urgent business.

15. 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:

Item

16

Paragraph

3

16. **ISSUE REPORT - ST. ANDREW'S HOLBORN CHURCH GARDENS**

Members received a report of the Director of the Built Environment relative to St. Andrew's Holborn Church Gardens.

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

There were no questions.

18. **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.

The meeting ended at 3.16 pm

Chairman

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