

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Friday, 29 April 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 29 April 2022 at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chair)
Andrew McMurtrie (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Graeme Doshi-Smith
Alderman Ian Luder
Catherine McGuinness
Wendy Mead
Benjamin Murphy
Oliver Sells QC

Officers:

Ben Dunleavy	- Town Clerk's Department
Sally Agass	- Director of Natural Environment
Anne Bamford	- Community and Children's Services Department
Melanie Charalambous	- Environment Department
Elena Clements	- Town Clerk's Department
Kristina Drake	- Town Clerk's Department
Polly Dunn	- Town Clerk's Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Juliemma McLoughlin	- Executive Director, Environment
Graham Nickless	- Chamberlain's Department
Kehinde Olagunju	- Town Clerk's Department
Torri Stewart	- Community and Children's Services Department
Jake Tibbetts	- Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

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

There were no declarations.

3. ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL

The Committee received the Order of the Court of Common Council dated 20 April 2022 for the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee.

Caroline Haines made a statement to the Committee hoping that the Committee would support her, if elected as Chair in the next item, in organising an awayday for Committee members to discuss the strategic direction for the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 29. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that Caroline Haines as the only Member expressing their willingness to serve was, therefore, duly elected as Chairman for the ensuing year and took the Chair.

RESOLVED – That Caroline Haines be elected Chairman of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee for the ensuing year.

Wendy Mead moved a vote of thanks to Oliver Sells, the immediate past Chairman.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that the Members of the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee express their sincere thanks to:

OLIVER SELLS, Q.C.

for his most exceptional dedication to the work of both these committees.

Oliver, as Chairman has demonstrated great leadership, dedication and tenacity through a most challenging period. His role in overseeing improvements to key areas across the Open Spaces Portfolio cannot be overestimated, reinforcing his commitment and obvious understanding of the need for outdoor space for all members of the community with benefits for health and wellbeing.

Specific mention should be made of his work on West Ham Park Committee, an outstanding park, much loved and used by the local communities. The new play area, the implementation which Oliver oversaw will be officially opened by him and he will so enjoy seeing the new playground in use.

His forward thinking has seen many other notable achievements that are testament to his passion for creating living and leisure areas benefitting city residents, workers and visitors for years to come.

Finsbury Circus, an area much prized in the City, was disrupted by Crossrail activity for almost a decade and in urgent need of regeneration. Under Oliver's leadership, the reinstated gardens and restoration of the Central Pavilion are now once more a much needed and welcoming green space for all to enjoy.

A compassionate and caring Chairman, Oliver has proposed a permanent commemoration in Postman's Park, between Aldersgate Street and King Edward Street who have lost their lives helping others through the recent Covid pandemic, a fitting tribute to his sympathetic understanding of the cost of human life.

In taking leave of him as their Chairman, his colleagues wish to thank Oliver for all the accomplishments under his leadership and wish him much success in his continued service in the City of London Corporation and in other bodies.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30.

As multiple expressions of interest were received, a ballot of Members was undertaken and Andrew McMurtrie, upon receiving a majority of votes cast, was duly elected as Deputy Chair for the ensuing year.

The newly elected Deputy Chair thanked Members for their support.

6. **MINUTES**

The public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 15 February 2022 were approved as a correct record.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE STREETS AND WALKWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the appointment of one Member of the Committee as the representative on the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that two expressions of interest had been received. A ballot was undertaken and Alderman Ian Luder, upon receiving a majority of votes cast, was appointed as the representative.

RESOLVED, that – Alderman Ian Luder be appointed as the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee representative on the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee.

8. **COOL STREETS AND GREENING PROGRAMME: CITY GREENING AND BIODIVERSITY PROJECT**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment relative to the Cool Streets and Greening Programme.

A Member asked for further clarification on the works taking place in Finsbury Circus west leg, and if there was scope to move the loading bay being used by construction workers. In reply, an officer said the City of London Corporation was the developer on this site, and was required to install scaffolding on this site under the Highways Act. The officer undertook to investigate options for changing the location of the loading bay and return to Members with an update.

The Chair asked if an update on the Finsbury Circus works could be provided at the next meeting, including information on what plans there were for communications and signage.

RESOLVED, that – Members:

1. Approve the commencement of the project;
2. Approve the release of £80,000 from the Cool Streets and Greening programme for staff costs, fees and site investigations to reach the next gateway;
3. Note that delivery will be phased across 3 years with an initial Gateway 5 (Chief Officer approved) report in autumn 2022 to enable tree planting to take place in the next planting season;
4. Note the total estimated cost of the project at £1.5-2.5m

9. **CITY CLUSTER VISION - WELL-BEING & CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE: JUBILEE GARDENS IMPROVEMENTS***

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment relative to City Cluster Vision.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

10. **CITY GARDENS UPDATE***

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment providing an update on the activities of the City Gardens section.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

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

Following a request from a Member, officers undertook to provide an update on developments at Postman's Park after the meeting.

The Deputy Chair praised the quality of the benches that had been installed on Aldersbury Square.

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

The Chair informed Members that an away day for the Committee, and the West Ham Park Committee, would be arranged to take place on 20 June 2022.

A Member suggested that it might be appropriate for the Committee to request a second appointment to the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee. The Chair said that it would be helpful for the Committee to consider where it could be effectively represented in general.

13. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

14. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

A Member reiterated the concerns they had expressed at the previous meeting over the costs of the Finsbury Square project and the potential impact on the Open Spaces budget.

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

17. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

The confidential minutes held on 15 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

The meeting ended at 11.19 am

Chairman

Contact Officer: Richard Holt

Richard.Holt@cityoflondon.gov.uk / 020 7332 3113