

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Thursday, 6 October 2022

Notes of the inquorate meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at
Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 6 October 2022 at
10.00 am

Present

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chair)
Andrew McMurtrie (Deputy Chairman)
Wendy Mead
Oliver Sells KC

In attendance virtually

Benjamin Murphy
William Upton KC

Officers:

Sally Agass	- Director of Natural Environment
Chloe Ainsworth	- Town Clerk's Department
Andrew Buckingham	- Town Clerk's Department
Simon Glynn	- Environment Department
Elisabeth Hannah	- Environment Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
Joe Kingston	- Environment Department
Katie Lawman	- Environment Department
Julia Pridham	- Bridge House Estate
Philip Saunders	- Remembrancer's Office
Jake Tibbets	- Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Catherine Bickmore, Catherine McGuinness, Alderman Gregory Jones and Verderer Paul Morris.

The Town Clerk noted that the meeting was inquorate and therefore, in line with Standing Order 36 of the Court of Common Council, the formal meeting would be dissolved and consideration of business adjourned until the next regular meeting of the Committee. Any business requiring approval prior to the next regular meeting would be considered by the Town Clerk under urgency procedure in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee.

Members agreed to discuss, informally, the items on the agenda that day. The Town Clerk agreed to take a note of the inquorate meeting for submission to the next regular meeting of the Committee.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

Members received the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 7 July 2022. The following amendments were made –

- Page 1 – Joanne Hill's department correct from Markets and Consumer Protection to Environment Department.

MATTERS ARISING

- Item 4 – The Chair informed Members that the change of name paper had been withdrawn from the next Policy & Resources Committee meeting.

4. **VOTE OF THANKS - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF COMMONS**

The Executive Director Environment thanked the Assistant Director of Commons for his years of service and his achievements in the City Corporation's open spaces.

5. **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITY REVIEW**

Members received a report of the Executive Director Environment which detailed the actions to be taken to ensure that the Open Spaces' charities are fit for purpose.

In response to a query, Members were informed that a proposed terms of reference for the Natural Environment Board was in development and that it had been shared with the legal team.

Members discussed the funding and resourcing allocation for the Natural Environment Charity Review.

6. **CHARITY REVIEW FINANCES**

The Executive Director Environment informed Members that this report was not available for this meeting as it remained under review.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Executive Director Environment setting out the risk management procedures in place and the Natural Environment Cross-Divisional Risk Register.

A Member stated that Officers should coordinate key priorities of the Open Spaces charities and was of the view that the risk register should be updated monthly to identify new risks and reflect when a risk has decreased.

The Deputy Chair noted that a useful method for identifying risks is to conduct in-person visits to the open spaces.

8. CITY GARDENS MANAGER'S UPDATE

Members received a verbal update from the Executive Director of Environment on the following points:

- a) Members were informed that the Resource Allocation Sub Committee and the Finance Committee were conducting a review of all projects across the organisation and that Officers from City Gardens have assisted with this review in relation to Finsbury Circus. An update on the review will be provided at a future meeting.
- b) In relation to memorialisation, Members were informed that the Committee would receive a report reviewing best practice within the Square Mile.
- c) A Member provided an update on his meetings with the Church regarding an NHS memorial. It was noted that a design for the memorial was close to being agreed, funding was in place and a future meeting with the Church had been scheduled.
- d) Members were informed of the work of the City Garden's staff throughout the national period of mourning for the queen.
- e) In relation to the drought, Members were informed that water restrictions remained in place and that these were likely to continue until Spring 2023. It was noted that the climate resilient garden had responded well during the drought.
- f) Members were updated on the tree planting scheme in the City.

Members thanked the City Garden's staff and volunteers for their assistance during the national period of mourning and in addressing the drought.

9. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Members received a report of the Executive Director Environment updating Members on the work of the Natural Environment Division since the previous meeting.

10. SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AWAY DAY

Members considered a report of the Executive Director Environment, which presented the second drafts of four of the five strategies agreed at the Open Spaces & City Gardens away day on 20 June 2022.

In response to a query from a Member, Members were informed that the strategy in relation to Conservation and Nature Resilience had not been updated as the Officer responsible for this area of work had left the City Corporation. Members were informed that this strategy would be updated and presented to the Committee at the next meeting.

Members noted that the Natural Environment Division was seeking its approval to develop a culture and heritage strategy. Members discussed whether it was within the powers of the Committee to approve such a decision. Some Members were of the view that the Committee's terms of reference should first be updated.

11. **OPERATIONAL PROPERTY REVIEW - IRISH CHAMBERS**

Members considered a report of the Executive Director Environment, which sought authority to declare the Irish Chambers as surplus to the Environment Department's operational requirements.

Members were informed that future staffing requirements had been factored into the recommendation to relinquish the building to the City Surveyor.

12. **LEVELLING UP AND REGENERATION BILL**

Members received a report of the Remembrancer providing an overview of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, as it relates to heritage and open spaces.

Members discussed the uncertainty around the progression of the Bill.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

15. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

Members at the inquorate meeting considered the non-public items.

16. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

Members received the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022.

17. **CHARITIES REVIEW UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Managing Director, Bridge House Estate. The report set out the Corporate Charities Review outcomes concerning the Open Spaces charities and how the Corporate Charities Review will continue to support Officers with their work on implementing its recommendations.

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

There were no questions.

19. **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.

20. **VERBAL UPDATE ON TOM2**

Members received a verbal procedural update on TOM2 from the Executive Director Environment.

The meeting ended at 11.48 am

Chairman

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