

WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE
Monday, 10 July 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Room -
2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 10 July 2023 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chair)
Andrew McMurtrie (Deputy Chairman)
Alderman Ian David Luder
Wendy Mead
Benjamin Murphy
Oliver Sells KC
Catherine Bickmore

In attendance:

Catherine Bickmore
Rafe Courage
Councillor Joy Laguda MBE

Officers:

Jako Beatrix	- Chamberlain's Department
Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Simon Glynn	- Environment Department
Clem Harcourt	- Chamberlain's Department
Elisabeth Hannah	- Environment Department
Stefania Horne	- Environment Department
Jack Joslin	- Bridge House Estates
Jonathan Meares	- Environment Department
Ricky O'Garro	- Environment Department
Julia Pridham	- Bridge House Estates
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department
Edward Wood	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Justin Meath-Baker, Richard Gurney and John Whitworth.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Apologies for absence were received from Justin Meath-Baker, Richard Gurney, Councillor Joy Laguda MBE and John Whitworth.

3. ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL

The Committee received the order of the Court of Common Council held at the Guildhall of the City of London on Thursday 27th April 2023, which appointed the Committee and approved its Terms of Reference.

Members were provided, upon arrival, with a corrected version to the Court Order. Noting that James Bromiley-Davis took the vacancy left by Catherine McGuinness and has therefore replaced her on the revised Membership.

RESOLVED – That, the Order be noted.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee considered the report to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 29.

The Committee received an one expression of interest from Caroline Haines to be elected as uncontested Chairman of the committee.

RESOLVED – That, Caroline Haines be declared as Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee considered the report to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30.

The Committee received one expression of interest from Andrew McMurtrie to be elected as uncontested Deputy Chairman of the committee.

RESOLVED - That Andrew McMurtrie be declared Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

6. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting held on 13 February 2023, be approved as an accurate record.

7. **ASSISTANT DIRECTORS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment providing an update to Members of the West Ham Park Committee on management and operational activities at West Ham Park since May 2023.

The Committee were informed of unfortunate news about a stabbing incident that had occurred in the afternoon on Sunday 9 July. The Assistant Director expressed her gratitude to all the staff who were present and promptly responded to the situation. It was noted that the police and ambulance services arrived quickly to help and manage the situation. In response, the park was immediately closed to ensure public safety.

Members were informed that the victim, a 16-year-old boy, was transported to the hospital and while his condition is serious and critical, the latest update indicates that at present, he is still alive and is receiving care from medical consultants and the hospital team who are working diligently to save his life. Officers informed the Committee that they are fully cooperating with the police and offering support to assist in their investigation of this crime, as well as the situation in the park.

In response to a question raised by a Member, Officers noted that West Ham Park is a space that caters to a diverse range of people with various interests. Events held in the park provide a platform for engaging with hundreds of community members who come to enjoy the park for their own recreational purposes. These events contribute to the park's wide-ranging use and serve the needs of various groups and visitors. Officers noted to gain a better understanding of the park's usage, the Environment Department are currently collaborating with a company that measures the number of visits, unique visits, and the total amount of visitors who attend the park.

MATTERS ARISING

The Director of Natural Environment provided a formal thanks to the outgoing Assistant Director/Superintendent, North London Open Spaces.

In the brief time I've been at the Corporation, I've been greatly impressed by Stefani's enthusiasm, drive, leadership skills, and commitment. She has admirably delivered results in the face of challenging circumstances, including the implementation of the Target Operating Model (TOM), the loss of Declan Gallagher and other staff, sickness, and vacancies. Stefani and the team have navigated through these difficulties.

Stefani's energy, insight, creativity, and her proactive approach to the new North London open spaces portfolio and structure have been commendable. She has faced crises and challenges with a positive attitude, always ready to step up. Despite the short time we've worked together, it has been a rewarding experience, and I will miss her. I wish her all the best in her new role, and I extend my thanks on behalf of the team.

The board observed a moment of reflection as requested by the Chairman for the passing of Declan Gallagher. The Assistant Director provided an Obituary.

In his 17 years of service with the City of London Corporation, Declan was a dedicated and professional manager who put his heart and soul into looking after Hampstead Heath and other open spaces in North London.

Thanks to his very positive attitude and extensive experience, he was instrumental in maintaining the highest of standards.

Declan was very passionate about his work and very proud of Hampstead Heath and all the other open spaces he managed, including Queen's Park, Golders Hill Park and West Ham Park.

A lot of the improvements over the years were delivered because of Declan's hard work and determination, starting from the stumpery in Golders Hill Park at the beginning of his career, to the more recent projects such as the renovations of the playgrounds at the Heath Extension and in Queen's Park. He was also involved in the recent transformation of the sport facilities, including the cricket pitches at Parliament Hill and West Ham Park and the Athletics track at Parliament Hill.

Declan was highly respected in the green spaces sector, becoming a judge in the national Green Flag Award scheme. He was very experienced in horticulture and grounds maintenance, and extremely knowledgeable in all the operations needed to maintain our own green spaces to the highest standards. Declan managed a wider team of dedicated staff and under his leadership, the Heath, Queen's Park and – recently - West Ham Park were able to receive awards such as the Green Flag and London in Bloom every year. He was an exemplary manager and leader.

Declan was a lovely man and touched the heart of so many during the years he worked at the City of London Corporation. His funeral, attended by many of his colleagues and friends, was testament to the number of people who loved and respected him. He was respected by staff and stakeholders including the Heath and Hampstead Society, local Friends groups such as QPARA and Friends of West Ham Park, Friends of Kenwood, the Hampstead Gardens Suburb Trust, Heath Hands and many other local groups. He was also respected by the Members of both the Consultative and Management committees and local councillors from Camden, Haringey, Barnet, Brent and Newham, alongside many other local sport clubs and organisations.

His passing was a shock for all. His staff, friends and colleagues have many fond memories of Declan. He was kind, generous and had a great sense of humour. He will be greatly missed but we will cherish his memory.

RESOLVED – That Members,

- a) Note the report.
- b) Note the formal thanks to the Assistant Director/Superintendent, North London Open Spaces.
- c) Note the moment of reflection and obituary.

8. OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN 2022/23 - YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment providing Members with a review of the delivery of the 2022/23 high-level Open Spaces Business Plan.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

9. REVENUE OUTTURN 2022/23 - WEST HAM PARK

The Committee received a joint report of Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment comparing the revenue outturn.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. WEST HAM PARK TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The Committee received a joint report of Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment regarding the Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2022 for West Ham Park (charity registration number 206948).

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment providing the West Ham Park Committee with assurance that risk management procedures in place within the Environment Department and its Natural Environment Division.

Officers noted the Natural Environment Division is conducting an operational property review. Members were informed the review's purpose is to consolidate data about property ownership, usage, and restrictions, especially concerning properties owned by the charity within West Ham Park. As the review progresses, it was noted that Members will have the opportunity to provide input on any related proposals.

RESOLVED – That Members confirm, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the West Ham Park Summary Risk Register satisfactorily identifies the key risks to the West Ham Park charity and that appropriate systems are in place to effectively identify and mitigate risks.

12. SENIOR OFFICER RECRUITMENT

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment concerning the retirement of a senior officer and proposing a recruitment plan.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

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

There were no questions in the public session.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT.

There were one items of other business.

The new Director of Natural Environment provided a brief introduction noting her excitement to take on the role of Natural Environment Director for the City of London Corporation. The Director informed the Committee of her background as an ecologist with experience in various UK species and habitats, coupled with her work in non-profit organisations, including London Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation, and roles in visitor attractions such as the Zoological Society of London and the Natural History Museum. The Director noted in the month she had in the role; she had been collaborating on the development of natural environment strategies and planned to continue this work through workshops for committees and staff. She noted her other key priorities include the carbon sequestration report, operational property review, and addressing high-risk issues.

15. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**
RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.
16. **MINUTES**
RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2023 were approved as a correct record.
17. **CORPORATE CHARITIES REVIEW SCOPING EXERCISE TO SUPPORT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITIES REVIEW**
The Committee considered a joint report of Managing Director Bridge House Estates and Natural Environment Director.
18. **HISTORICAL INCOME REPORT (2017/18-2023/24) FOR WEST HAM PARK.**
The Committee received a report of Executive Director, Environment.
19. **PROJECT UPDATE**
The Committee received a verbal update of Executive Director, Environment.
20. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
There were no non-public questions.
21. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
There were no non-public items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 1.45pm

Chairman

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