

WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 10 December 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Room -
2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 10 December 2024 at 9.30 am

Present

Members:

Caroline Haines (Chair)
Eamonn Mullally (Deputy Chairman)
Anne Corbett
Wendy Mead OBE
Benjamin Murphy
Catherine Bickmore
Tim Hodgson
Councillor John Whitworth

In attendance:

Rafe Courage
Councillor Joy Laguda MBE
James St John Davis

Externals:

Wendy Fidler (Land Management Services)
David Withycombe (Land Management Services)

Officers:

Niranjan Shanmuganathan	- Chamberlain's Department
Anna Cowperthwaite	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's
Emily Brennan	- Environment Department
Simon Glynn	- Environment Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
Jo Hurst	- Environment Department
Bill LoSasso	- Environment Department
Charlotte Williams	- Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Andrew McMurtrie JP and Justin Meath-Baker.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

No declarations of interest were received under the Code of Conduct.

3. MINUTES

Cllr Laguda requested her title be changed on the minutes from OBE to MBE.

RESOLVED – That, the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 17 October 2024 were approved as a correct record, subject to the agreed amendments.

4. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received a report which included the Terms of Reference for the Committee's consideration before submission to the Policy and Resources Committee.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) The Chair suggested leaving the Terms of Reference as they were due to awaiting the outcome of the Natural Environment Charities Review (NECR).
- b) The Chair also suggested the July or September meeting of the Committee may be dropped, although indicated holding off on that until the timeline of the Nursery Site scheme had been developed.
- c) A Member asked for it to be reflected in the minutes that the Terms of Reference did not accurately reflect the relationship with other Committees, but understood it would be addressed as part of the NECR.
- d) A Member raised concerns at dropping a meeting. The Chair stated it could be affected by the NECR, the makeup of the Committee and the timeline of the Nursery Site proposal and once a tighter framework had been established for the Committee, it may be that no change is needed. However, the Town Clerk had asked for Committees to review meetings to consider whether they were relevant.
- e) A Member stated that as Trustees of the Charity, Members had far more responsibilities for the Open Spaces than just the charitable aspect and meetings could not just be cut based on what charity Officers felt was needed.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Approved the Terms of Reference of the West Ham Park Committee, subject to any comments, for submission to the Court of Common Council in April, and that any further changes required in the lead up to the Court's appointment of Committees be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman;
- Considered whether any change was required to the frequency of the Committee's meetings.

5. **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Committee received a report which provided Members with an update on matters relating to West Ham Park since the last Committee meeting on 17 October 2024. The report also noted that the new report format had been developed in agreement with the Committee Chair and it reported on key accomplishments against the four strategies of the Natural Environment Division, which were released in January 2024.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) A Member asked why floodlights were linked to padel. Officers indicated that the recommendation was for padel to have floodlighting, but it would need to be investigated as it would need to be provided all year around. Officers added that paddle also used perspex walls which required planning permission if an alternative site was to be used to the tennis courts.
- b) Officers informed Members that a meeting with Stratford Padel Club had been organised to see if demand met the need to create new padel courts.
- c) A Member queried if longboarding had been considered as an option in comparison to padel. Officers responded that it had already been considered and noted that the longboarding club had told them that far less work would be required to make the tarmac fit for purpose for longboarding and skateboarding as there was less maintenance and it would only require a new tarmac covering.
- d) Officers added that the longboarding club would welcome the opportunity to bring the club to West Ham Park as there was nowhere else in London that provided such an open space without conflicting with cyclists.
- e) Another Member stated, in regard to the learning sessions taking place, that their understanding was it was an allocated cost based on the hours and suggested it would be interesting to see the percentage overall of the cost as it accrued through reporting. Officers confirmed it was a below the line recharge on the learning team cost and added that the learning team charges were set and forecast at the start of the financial year.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report.

6. **UPDATE TO MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR WEST HAM PARK**

The Committee received a report which summarised the work done to update the management plan for West Ham Park and sought Committee approval to finalise the document and prepare for layout and publication.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) The Chair indicated that the management plan would be developing a similar overall strategic approach to those prepared for Highgate Wood and Queen's Park. Representatives of Land Management Services (LMS) explained 30- or 50-year plans were very rare when associated with parks or open spaces and 10 years was not very long in the life of a park. They added it provided enough scope to plan ahead, and with the 5-year interim review, felt it was an appropriate amount of time.
- b) The Chair queried the lack of mention of the 150th Anniversary Event. LMS representatives indicated it would be included in future revisions.
- c) Representatives of LMS stated the criticism in the Green Heritage Assessment stemmed from the fact that the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) had not informed the Management Plan. They added there was a need to update to update the habitat map and the tree map as it would help to understand how the tree cover had changed over 10-15 years and would help to inform a tree succession plan.
- d) The representatives of LMS added that the management plan, backed up by annual work programmes, would be adequate to satisfy Green Flag status. They added that the Committee may not consider going for Green Flag status until next year to ensure plans were updated.
- e) A Member queried why it had been decided that the Management Plan would last for 10 years.
- f) The Member questioned whether there was still flexibility within the Management Plans, through the Project prioritisation Process, to complete tasks when needed.
- g) Officers were asked by the Member if a digital and data strategy had been built into the Management Plan and whether any data surveys had been conducted to express how the site was being used by visitors.
- h) A Member suggested more specific recommendations were needed to ensure they could be monitored and mentioned there was no mention of the buildings and storage areas in the Park. The Member added that ecological networks were likely to be an important part of any nature conservation and recovery. The Chair agreed that ecological networks were important and suggested Pollinating London could also be included.
- i) A question was raised by a Member as to whether the vocabulary needed to be strengthened in relation to the corporate net zero targets and how those targets would feed down and impact the Park.
- j) Another Member noted there was a plan for nature enhancement in the new Local Plan at the London Borough of Newham which sought to

increase green space concurrently with the increase in population. The Chair suggested the Member provide some words to be included in the Management Plan in reference to Newham's local plan.

- k) The Chair asked when a decision needed to be made for the Green Flag application. LMS representatives indicated it would need to be in advance of putting an application in for January.
- l) The Chair suggested an update needed to be provided in early January to indicate what objectives had or had not been achieved in preparation for a Green Flag submission.
- m) Officers indicated they believed they would be in a good position to make a Green Flag and Green Heritage submission in January and it would be a different judge who would recognise that the 2011 Conservation Management Plan had been updated, as well as having addressed other issues.
- n) The Chair suggested the management plan needed to be more data-driven and directional.
- o) A Member queried what the downside of not putting an application in was. Officers suggested the impact could be reputational, noted they had always put in application and stated this was the first year the Green Heritage award had not been received.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Noted the report and attached draft West Ham Park Management Plan.
- Authorised the Superintendent, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair, to finalise the update to the management plan for West Ham Park, subject to further information being circulated to Members in January.

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

No questions were received on matters relating to the work of the Committee.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT.

No other business was raised by the Chair for consideration.

9. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That, Members agreed not to exclude the public.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024 were approved as a correct record in public session.

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

No non-public questions were received on matters relating to the work of the Committee.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

No other business was raised by the Chair for consideration in non-public session

The meeting ended at 10.34 am

Chairman

**Contact Officer: Callum Southern
Callum.Southern@cityoflondon.gov.uk**