

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

Monday, 7 July 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee held at Committee Room 2 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 7 July 2025 at 2pm

Present

Members:

Brendan Barns (Chairman)	Deputy Caroline Haines
Suzanne Ornsby KC (Deputy Chair)	Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP
Munsur Ali	Leyla Boulton
John Foley	Sophia Mooney
Deputy Emily Benn	Jamel Banda
James St John Davis	Melissa Collett
Jason Groves	Elizabeth Corrin
Alderman Bronek Masojada	Adam Hogg
Wendy Mead OBE	Vasiliki Manta
Anett Rideg	Tessa Marchington
Mark Wheatley	Gaby Robertshaw
Deputy Dawn Wright	Stephanie Steeden
Irem Yerdelen	Matthew Waters

In Attendance

Officers:

Rob Shakespeare	- Keats House, Environment
Jayne Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Emma Markiewicz	- London Archives, Head of Profession (Culture)
Rachel Levy	- Community and Children's Services
Omkar Chana	- Interim Culture Director
Andrew Buckingham	- Media Officer
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Kevin Colville	- Comptroller and City Solicitors
Laurie Miller-Zutshi	- Town Clerk's Department
Joanna Parker	- Environment (Principal Planning Officer)
Julia Pridham	- City Bridge Foundation (for item 17)
Elizabeth Scott	- Head of Guildhall Art Gallery
Andrew Impey	- Environment, Deputy Director
Laurence Ward	- Town Clerk's (Assistant Director, Audiences)
Sarah Walters	- Things Made Public (item 11)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Stephen Hodgson, Karin Dostolova, and David Sales.

The Chair welcomed Ammar Bharmal from Bancroft School in Woodford to the public part of the meeting.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, That the minutes of the meeting of 09 May 2025 be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

The Committee noted that an action tracker will be reinstated.

4. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee noted the forward plan, noting also that its contents will evolve.

Members were invited to raise questions or comments about Terms of Reference to the clerk ahead of the September meeting.

5. **BARBICAN AND COMMUNITY LIBRARIES BUILDING PROJECTS UPDATE**

Members noted the report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services updating the Committee on these three current Barbican and Community Libraries building projects:

- Barbican Community Meeting Room (The Bostock Room)
- Barbican Library Refresh
- Shoe Lane Library temporary move and redevelopment.

Members noted the delays to the Barbican Library projects due to financial and staff resourcing, noting that the support of the Barbican Renewal Team has enabled both projects to progress.

The Committee noted that work on the Bostock Room is due to start in August 2025.

Members heard that the Section 106 agreement for the redevelopment of Hill House has been signed off by the City of London Corporation's planning team and Landsec, and that work has begun to adapt units at One New Change to the specifications for the temporary library with Shoe Lane Library expected to be moved to One New Change in November 2025, with reopening by January 2026.

On libraries, a Member sought confirmation that sufficient capacity is still available for children's services provision and extension where appropriate, and that books would still be accessible as far as possible. The meeting noted that the libraries service is working hard to ensure that sufficient provision and expansion capability is available, noting also that access is a key consideration.

On the Bostock Room refurbishment, a Member asked for confirmation of its completion and whether resident adults would be able to access the space free of charge. The meeting noted that a phased refurbishment project is expected to be completed by the end of 2025 and that the room is mainly for hire to generate income.

6. **CULTURE & THE LONDON ARCHIVES - BUSINESS PLAN 2025-26**

On the 7-day opening for visitor services, a Member sought confirmation that the opening was supported by sufficient visitor numbers. The meeting noted that the objectives set out were previously agreed and that the numbers would be examined as part of the culture strategy.

Members sought clarification on the income targets set out in the documents, commenting that those figures could be more ambitious. The meeting heard that the targets are based on figures in past years. Members noted that a more wide-ranging ambitious cultural strategy is a good opportunity to re-set the targets, and noted that a briefing session is to be arranged for Members by early September (see action point).

A Member commented that in some cases the operating model might have to be adjusted to increase revenue, for example charging for tickets to the Guildhall Art Gallery.

RESOLVED, That the business plans for Culture and for The London Archives be approved.

7. **THE MONUMENT UPDATE 2024/25**

Members noted the report of the Executive Director Environment outlining achievements at The Monument to the Great Fire of London between April 2024 and March 2025 that included information on visitor numbers, income achieved, and other initiatives contributing to Corporate outcomes.

The Board heard that a deficit remains as things currently stand, and that the deficit would need to be addressed as part of ongoing discussions around its governance.

The meeting noted that paragraph 15 will be covered in the non-public part of the meeting.

Referencing the key data set out in Appendix 1, a Member asked why some figures for 2024/25 and 2025/26 figures are lower than 2019/20 figures. The Committee heard that the post-pandemic recovery has been slow and that visitor figures are still below pre-pandemic levels.

In response to a request for an explanation of the Transport line of the budget, the meeting noted that 1000 is the minimum practicable amount for budgeting purposes and that in most cases the transport usage for staff is low: taxis are very occasionally used for staff carrying cash and for rapid transport needs.

Members noted the importance of the Monument to surrounding businesses and venues.

8. THE MONUMENT CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment presenting a Conservation Management Plan for The Monument to the Great Fire of London, noting that the Monument Conservation Management Plan provides guidance to aid long-term decision making about the conservation and management of The Monument that is a grade I listed building and scheduled monument.

RESOLVED, That Members endorse the Monument's Conservation Management Plan as a resource to guide maintenance and management decisions.

9. REVENUE OUTTURN - 2024/25

The Committee received the report of The Chamberlain, Deputy Town Clerk, and Executive Director of Community and Children's Services comparing the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee in 2024-25 with the final budget for the year alongside details of carry forward requests yet to be approved.

Members noted that overall total net expenditure during the year was £23.611m whereas the budget was £23.362m, representing an overspend of £0.249m on all risks. The local risk overspend was £0.047m – noting in particular the overall adverse variance to the final budget of £0.249m and the carry forward requests yet to be agreed of local risk budgets of £0.057m to 2025/26 relating to Destination City within the Deputy Town Clerk.

A Member commented that the Committee is unable to sponsor any specific event due to no allocation being available to the Committee itself. The Board heard that Committees themselves do not hold budgets, as these are the responsibility of chief officers – noting also that the Committee is working with officers to ensure that a budget is available to undertake specific actions.

A Member commented that scope exists to request funds from the Policy & Resources Committee Policy Initiatives Fund for special events, noting also that sustainable funding is critical to the delivery of cultural programmes noting also that part of the cultural strategy focusses on developing other funding sources.

The Committee discussed the creation of a cultural funding model that involves City businesses.

10. CITY ARTS INITIATIVE - RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk setting out the recommendations of the City Arts Initiative (CAI) which met on 12 June 2025, during which the CAI considered these four proposals:

1. Butterfly for Tea (for decision)
2. St Magnus House – Chronos Artworks (for decision)

3. Peggy Jones Statue (for information)
4. City Views Project (for information)

The Committee noted proposals 3 and 4.

The Committee congratulated the CAI team on the consideration and examination of the proposals.

A Member commented that the Queenhithe ward would benefit from the Peggy Jones statue given the ward's popularity with mudlarkers. The Committee noted that the public highways department would be consulted on the matter.

RESOLVED, That the Committee support proposal 2 – St Magnus House, and NOT support proposal 1 – Butterfly For Tea.

11. DEVELOPING THE CULTURAL STRATEGY - PROGRESS UPDATE APRIL TO MAY 2025

The Committee noted the report of the Deputy Town Clerk updating the Committee on activity between April and May 2025 on the development of the Cultural Strategy together with an outline of immediate next steps, and viewed a presentation produced by Things Made Public.

Members commented on the importance of good communication/PR and good relationships with other cultural entities – noting also the ongoing work in those areas.

A Member asked whether the London Symphony Orchestra had been consulted, together with other similar organisations. The meeting heard that the LSO has been consulted, together with other similar organisations.

The meeting noted that at least one Committee member is part of the cross-departmental Income Generation Working Group that covers issues related to advertising (in response to a question on advertising on street furniture) – though there are no plans to change current policy on advertising in the City. The Committee agreed to monitor the progress of the group's work (see action plan).

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

A Member commented that there is scope for the Committee taking on a more ambitious decision-making role as it assesses its Terms of Reference.

The Committee noted that the event 'Revealing the City's Past' launch event took place on 30 June 2025, and was referenced by approximately 260 media outlets with very positive feedback.

The Committee noted that the recent BeerFest at Guildhall Yard was very successful, with over 1000 tickets sold.

Members noted the forthcoming Sculpture in the City launch on 15 July 2025.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no other business.

14. **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.

15. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the meeting of 09 May 2025.

16. **THE MONUMENT - MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

17. **GUILDHALL LIBRARY CENTENARY FUND (206950) - PORTRAIT OF COLONEL SAMUEL WILSON, LORD MAYOR 1838, BY SIR WILLIAM JOHN NEWTON ON IVORY (HARBINGER PORTRAITS)**

The Committee considered the report of the Acting Managing Director of City Bridge Foundation.

18. **ART TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK - PROCUREMENT STAGE 2 AWARD REPORT**

The Committee noted the report of the Interim Managing Director Barbican.

19. **NON-COMPLIANCE WAIVER FOR GAG PROCUREMENT:**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk and the Head of Profession for Culture.

20. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

21. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

The meeting ended at 3.45 pm

Chairman

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