

**WEST HAM PARK COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, 3 July 2025**

Minutes of the meeting of the West Ham Park Committee held at Committee Room -  
2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 3 July 2025 at 9.30 am

**Present**

**Members:**

James St John Davis (Chair)  
Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP (Deputy Chair)  
Deputy Caroline Haines  
William Upton KC  
Catherine Bickmore  
Tim Hodgson  
Councillor Jane Lofthouse

**In attendance:**

Deputy Anne Corbett  
Councillor John Whitworth

**Officers:**

Niranjan Shanmuganathan	- Chamberlain's Department
Jack Joslin	- City Bridge Foundation
Anna Cowperthwaite	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
Jo Hurst	- Environment Department
Andrew Impey	- Environment Department
William LoSasso	- Environment Department
Charlotte Williams	- Environment Department
Zoe Williams	- Town Clerk's Department

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Rafe Courage, Karina Dostalova, Wendy Mead OBE, Justin Meath-Baker and Deputy Benjamin Murphy.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Councillor John Whitworth declared an interest in relation to Item 13, as a Councillor of the London Borough of Newham and Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Climate Emergency & Environment.

Councillor Jane Lofthouse also declared an interest, in relation to Item 13, as a Councillor of the London Borough of Newham.

It was noted that the Members could be present for the item and engage in the discussion, but they would not be able to participate in the decision-making.

**3. MINUTES**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Jane Lofthouse to the Committee as a new Member and thanked outgoing Member, Councillor Joy Laguda MBE for their service on the Committee.

**RESOLVED** – That, the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting held on Thursday 1 May 2025 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

**4. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment which provided Members with an update on matters relating to West Ham Park since the last Committee meeting on 1 May 2025.

In response to a Member's question about the funfair held in the park over easter, the Assistant Director assured the Committee that all trading at the fair was conducted in accordance with the trading restrictions in place. Officers noted that there had been large queues for the fair in previous years, and they felt that holding the fair over an extended period meant there would be less queues and it would be easier for all of the local community to access.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members received the report and noted its contents.

**5. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment which sought to provide the West Ham Park Committee with assurance that risk management procedures in place within the Environment Department and its Natural Environment Division, which includes West Ham Park, were satisfactory and met the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.

The Chair noted that some Members had expressed concern regarding the addition of a new risk to the register relating to work-related stress among staff. They asked Officers to explain the triggers for escalating this risk, how it was being managed and how the Committee might support and monitor this moving forward. Officers explained that there had been changes within the City Corporation such as the Target Operating Model, that had impacted staff capacity. They acknowledged the challenge of balancing workload demands with available staffing resources. Officers noted that the risk had been included on the register to ensure proactive management and transparent reporting to the Committee.

A Member noted that senior leadership needed to be made aware of the impacts that the Target Operating Model had within the Natural Environment division that continue to impact staff capacity. Members also requested that Officers provide a timeline for addressing this risk, along with details of where personnel had been appointed to mitigate it, areas where gaps remain, and the sources of current pressures.

In response to a Member's query regarding support for staff, Officers explained that a Park-guard had been appointed to provide additional support to staff on the ground. Officers noted that mental health and wellbeing were standing agenda items at all team meetings. The Assistant Director had also been meeting

with staff across the North London Open Spaces teams to discuss these issues directly. Officers also reported that five staff members had recently qualified as mental health first aiders and were available to offer support to colleagues.

With regard to the potential impacts identified in the register, a Member queried whether they had started to see an increase in staff absence and turnover. Officers responded that staff in several areas were experiencing high levels of stress and feeling overworked, which prompted the inclusion of this risk on the register. They also highlighted that incidents across all North London sites contributed to this decision and confirmed that the risk has been added to the registers for all three charities and four open spaces they were responsible for.

The Chair asked whether the identified staff risk was concentrated within a specific group or evident across all staff in North London Open Spaces. Officers responded that they had received general feedback that staffing levels were inadequate. They noted that a key concern was the vulnerability of operations, in that if someone were to leave unexpectedly or be off sick, there might not be sufficient staffing levels in the park, resulting in more individuals working alone.

In response to a question about the supply of qualified staff, Officers acknowledged the ongoing challenges in recruiting within the open spaces sector, particularly in sourcing casual or short-term staff with the suitable qualifications, but that insufficiency of funding for suitable staffing was the cause. They noted they had met with the City Corporations staffing agency to communicate current needs.

Officers also emphasised that staff were being actively discouraged from working beyond reasonable limits, with clear messaging that such expectations were not part of their role. They confirmed that they would continue to report staffing pressure points to the committee, assess what can realistically be delivered within the year and adjust plans accordingly.

A Member noted the possibility that staff numbers have declined over the time and the issue may not be about increasing staffing but restoring it to previous levels. The Chair queried whether there was a point in the timeline that staffing could be measured from to determine the difference. Officers responded that this risk became most apparent following the Target Operating Model where three or four positions were lost. They noted that they were now at the point where additional resource was needed. The Chair noted that they would need to ensure the new funding model would need to be implemented in a sustainable way that can be delivered in the long term.

Another Member noted that the Target Operating Model was intended to be subject to review and suggested there was scope to revisit the staffing levels previously deemed adequate. They questioned whether the identified risk should now be considered at a strategic level. The Chair acknowledged that collaboration between the Chairs of the Natural Environment Committees would be essential in addressing this matter. They emphasised the need to strike a

balance between centralised support and the responsibilities that should be led by individual charities.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members confirmed, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the West Ham Park Summary Risk Register (Appendix 1) satisfactorily identified the key risks to the West Ham Park charity and that an appropriate risk management process was in place, subject to receiving the requested timeline for addressing the work related stress risk, and an interim update with details of where personnel had been appointed to mitigate it, areas where gaps remain, and the sources of current pressures.

**6. REVENUE OUTTURN 2024/25**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment which compared the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee in 2024/25 with the budget for the year.

In response to a point of clarification, Officers confirmed that with the transition to the Grant Funding Model, the presentation of other risk budgets in the report for the upcoming year would be presented differently.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members received the report and noted its contents.

**7. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITY REVIEW – UPDATE ON FUNDRAISING WORKSTREAMS**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Environment which detailed the progress made since 2024 and the next stages of the workplan.

With regards to the recent Biodiversity Net Gain presentation and the opportunities that had been highlighted in West Ham Park, a Member queried what would mean for West Ham Park. Officers responded that the considerations on whether to proceed with these opportunities would depend on the demands for each site. Officers noted that once the information had been presented, the Superintendents would then present to the Committees what the most beneficial solution for each of the sites would be.

The Chair requested clarification on the timeline for this information to be presented to the Committee, as well as the City Corporation's overarching position on the matter. Officers responded that the position would depend on the ongoing assessments of each land parcel, although West Ham Park would be more straightforward than others. They explained that it would be up to the land managers to evaluate potential conflicts and opportunities. They noted that there was no fixed deadline.

**RESOLVED** – That, Members:

- Noted the report and its contents.
- Noted the two planned briefing sessions for all interested Members on Biodiversity Net Gain potential at Natural Environment sites, and fundraising opportunities and resourcing for the Natural Environment Charities.

8. **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITY REVIEW - CHARITY ASSETS UPDATE FOR WEST HAM PARK**

The Committee received a report which summarised the processes used to audit the land assets held by the City Corporation as trustee of the West Ham Park Charity.

A Member sought clarification on the two small land parcels identified in the report. Officers responded that they were identified as separate land parcels as they were subsequent small acquisitions that were separate to the main park title.

**RESOLVED –** That Members:

- Noted the audit process undertaken for the land assets of the West Ham Park Charity and the steps to maintain the Asset Register.
- Noted the list of charity land assets of the West Ham Park Charity included in the appendix to the report.

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

There were no questions raised relating to the work of the Committee.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT.**

There was no other business that the Chair considered urgent.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED –** That, the following matters relate to business under the remit of the Court of Common Council acting for the City Corporation as charity Trustee, to which Part VA and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 public access to meetings provisions do not apply. The following items contain sensitive information which it is not in the best interests of the charity to consider in a public meeting (engaging similar considerations as under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act) and will be considered in non-public session.

12. **NON PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED –** That, the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 May 2025 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

13. **WEST HAM PARK FORMER NURSERY SITE**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment.

14. **CITY CORPORATION GOVERNANCE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHARITIES – UPDATE ON PLANNED CHANGES**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Environment.

15. **COMPLEMENTARY LAND POLICY AND ASSETS APPRAISAL**

The Committee received a presentation from Officers of the Environment Department.

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

There was one question discussed in non-public session.

17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no other items of urgent business raised in non-public session.

**The meeting ended at 10.51am.**

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Chairman

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