

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Natural Environment Board	Dated: 11 Dec 2025
Subject: City Gardens Fees and Charges 2026/27	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	Flourishing Public Spaces Providing Excellent Services Vibrant Thriving Destination
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Katie Stewart Executive Director Environment
Report author:	Jake Tibbetts

Summary

This report recommends that charges for corporate events that are held in City Gardens sites are increased by 4.3% for the start of the 2026/27 financial year. This is in line with the Retail Price index (RPI) for October 2025. The charge for non-profit and charity events is recommended to be frozen. The new fees and charges are to be implemented from 1 April 2026. The fees also cover the cost of bench sponsorship,

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the proposed 2026/27 fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

Main Report

Background

1. The City Gardens Team processes requests from members of the public, charitable groups and corporate organisations who wish to hold events within its gardens.
2. Members of this Board approved the updated City Gardens Events Policy in December 2024. The policy does not need reviewing, however the Fees and Charges that are laid out in appendix 1 of that report are intended to be reviewed on an annual basis.
3. Members of this Board approved the Commemorative Benches and Trees Policy in September 2023. The fees for commemorative bench are now included in this annual review.

Current Position

4. The hire of City Gardens sites generates income that is used to contribute towards the maintenance cost of our sites and staff resources. During the 2024/25 financial year City Gardens generated £11,151 from 31 events. At the time of writing £6,776 has been generated by 22 events so far, during the current financial year.
5. In 2024/25 the most popular type of event continued to be photography with 19 bookings.
6. Table 1 below shows the number of events and photography applications for the last three full financial years.

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	Number	Income	Number	Income	Number	Income
Events	12	£ 8,382.00	7	£ 2,305.00	12	£ 6,876.00
Photo	22	£ 4,630.00	23	£ 4,945.00	19	£ 4,275.00
Total	34	£ 13,012.00	30	£ 7,250.00	31	£ 11,151.00

Table 1

7. The number of photographic events have remained largely static ranging between 19 and 23 annually since 2022/23.

8. Event numbers in 2024/25 were the same as 2022/23, but the income total has dropped. This is due to events being shorter in length and therefore generating less income.
9. There will be a focus over the next year to review and improve the marketing of our sites for events. This will now include a renewed Finsbury Circus Gardens, which was not completed early enough in the Calendar year to allow events to be booked in it this summer.
10. In 2024/25 two benches were purchased under the commemorative benches scheme and so far this financial year four have been purchased.
11. Since 2017 we have based the annual increase for events on the RPI index for October of each year. The RPI index for October 2025 is 4.3%. We set the Fees and Charges increase at this time so that fees are in place for those wanting to book events early in the year.

Options

- A. Apply no increase and retain current fees and charges. This option is not favoured as anything less than a rise in line with inflation would reduce our ability to cover costs and meet income targets. **This option is not recommended.**
- B. Increase all fees and charges in line with the Retail Price Index, apart from non-profit and charity events which are to remain at current levels. Prices to be rounded up to the nearest £5. This option keeps fees and charges abreast of inflation whilst also considering the impact on charities. **This option is recommended.**
- C. Increase fee and charges by a greater amount than the Retail Price Index to offset savings. This is not favoured as it is considered that a larger increase could result in a reduced number of sales. Considering the high price of inflation and the need for the generation of income from events this option is considered risky and may reduce event numbers and overall income. **This option is not recommended.**

Proposals

12. The proposed option is B. Increase fees and charges in line with the Retail Price Index apart from the fees for charity and non-profit events which are to remain at current levels. City Gardens will focus on reviewing and improving marketing and promoting the gardens for events to drive up numbers whilst maintaining the balance of keeping our spaces open and enjoyable for as many people as possible.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

Facilitating and generating income from events helps us meet the following corporate objectives:

- Flourishing Public Spaces
- Providing Excellent Services
- Vibrant Thriving Destination

Financial implications - The financial implications are contained within the body of the report

Resource implications - Resourcing the processing of event applications is covered by the income generated from events.

Legal implications - Section 7 of the City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Act 2018 authorises the City to impose charges for temporary use of part of an open space for an event or for admission to an open space area where access is restricted for an event, and requires that the power be exercised in accordance with the relevant policy. Paragraph 15.8 of the Open Spaces Event Policy 2018 makes provision for the charges and also provides that the schedule of charges will be reviewed annually. The exercise of the charging power and the review of charges is in accordance with the 2018 Act and the Policy.

Risk implications – None

Equalities implications – Whilst equality implications should be considered when event applications are made, there are none when considering only the associated fees and charges.

Climate implications – None

Security implications - Whilst there are some security implications of events being held, there are none when considering only the associated fees and charges.

Conclusion

13. Events held in City Gardens are important to our communities. The proposed increase in Fees and Charges reflects increased costs, enables us to continue to facilitate events in a sustainable manner and provides a small amount of income that contributes towards maintaining our gardens and our staff resources.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges increase for City Gardens for 2026/27

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