

<b>Committee:</b> Open Spaces and City Gardens	<b>Date:</b> 9 December 2014	<b>Item no.</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Open Spaces and City Gardens: Annual Public Relations update	<b>Public</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Public Relations	<b>For Information</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>This report updates Members on Public Relations activities in support of the services for which the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee is responsible during the period October 2013 to November 2014. The activities in this report are also in support of the <i>Communications Strategy 2014- 2017</i>. Highlights of the support for the services of the Committee include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Media</li><li>▪ Public Affairs</li><li>▪ Events</li><li>▪ Website</li><li>▪ Digital communications and social media</li><li>▪ Literature and related activities</li><li>▪ Member and internal communications</li><li>▪ Filming</li><li>▪ Sponsorship</li></ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Recommendations</u></b></p> <p>The Committee is recommended to receive this report on Public Relations activities during the period October 2013 to November 2014 in support of the services for which the Committee is responsible.</p>		

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report highlights the activities of the Public Relations Office, in the period October 2013 to November 2014, in support of the services for which this Committee is responsible.
- 1.2 As part of the current *Communications Strategy* there are two specific communications priorities at present while are relevant to Port Health and Environmental Services:
  - Working in partnership with London's communities – the work the City Corporation does to support education, as well as social and

cultural opportunities, for all Londoners to help to improve their quality of life, through promoting employability and encouraging greater aspiration and diversity, and to provide jobs and growth across the capital; and

- Contributing to London's culture, heritage and green spaces – the work the City Corporation does across London and the UK to help preserve the nation's heritage, contribute to its cultural life and provide green spaces across the capital and beyond.

## **2. Media**

2.1 Throughout the year, October 2013 to November 2014, the Media Team achieved 798 Open Spaces stories in print online, television and radio. According to Gorkana (the independent media monitoring agency), the total advertising value of the coverage achieved in print amounted to £1,052,996.

2.2 Highlights of stories initiated by the Media Team in the PR Office throughout the period September 2012-October 2013 include:

- *The Guardian* ( 24 October 2014) – Director of Open Spaces Sue Ireland and Epping Forest Conservation Manager Jeremy Dagley were interviewed in a major feature on the negative impact of foraging on UK woodlands. Sue was also interviewed on BBC Radio 4 *Farming Today* and *BBC London 94.9*.
- Paul Maskell, Leisure & Events Manager at Hampstead Heath was interviewed on *ITV News London* (TV, 03 November 2014) on the Hampstead Heath Heritage Festival and mass conker championships
- The City of London Corporation's sponsored guardian at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show was broadcast as the lead item on the flagship BBC 1 programme, with a peak audience of more than three million. The Media Team publicised the garden to the BBC producer and developed the sequence for broadcast.
- Hampstead Heath Business Manager Yvette Hughes was quoted in an *Evening Standard* article (29 May 2014) after the Heath began granting license for weddings
- *ITV News London*, *The Independent*, *The Metro* and the *Epping Forest Guardian* (12 December 2013) all ran stories after a life-size fly-tipped stuffed black panther was spotted in trees by Forest Keepers on the foggiest day of the year.

- 2.3 In addition to the work outlined above, the Media Team has been working closely with the Director of Open Spaces and the Surveyors Department on the Epping Forest Tea Hut tendering process and also on the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project and Dog Control Orders at Burnham Beeches.

### **3. Public Affairs**

- 3.1 The PR Office provides Public Affairs advice to Departments across the organisation on specific issues that may affect their work as and when required. Work undertaken has included the visit of Shadow Employment Minister Stephen Timms MP to West Ham Park last summer.

### **4. Events**

- 4.1 The PR Office facilitates events which engage staff from across the organisation, including:
- The contribution of all relevant departments to the London Councils Summit, which took place on 22 November 2014 – each department submitted publicity material to promote the services and activities of the City Corporation to an audience of over 250 pan-London councillors and chief officers.
  - The annual City Wide Residents' Meeting, which took place on 23 June, provided City residents with an opportunity to meet City Corporation officers from across the organisation and learn more through stalls at the event about the wide range of services offered by the City Corporation.
  - The PR Office also facilitates arrangements for the Open House London, allowing buildings owned by the City of London to be opened to the public during the weekend of 20-21 September. Over 6,000 visitors came to both the Guildhall and Mansion House over the course of the weekend.

In addition to the above activities the Team runs various staff only events including Staff Annual Lunches, Masterclasses and Strategic Briefings.

### **5. Publishing and related activities**

- 5.1 The PR Office is also responsible for the corporate publications strategy and its implementation. In addition, the PR Office is also responsible for the City Corporation's brand identity and assists Departments with branding guidelines. The PR Office has worked with Open Spaces to

develop their new brand identity which has now been rolled out across sites and published materials. The Lord Mayor's Show leaflet and programme included copy on the City Corporation's wider services with specific references to green spaces. The PR Office also published a double-sided map of City Corporation services that benefit London and the nation with one side mainly focused on green spaces across the capital.

## **6. Website**

- 6.1 The PR Office is responsible for the City of London Corporation's external website. During the past year the majority of this work has been focussed on the quality of its content – across the four main clusters – to make it as easy as possible to find via search engines and for it to be relevant, current and user-friendly. The Office has organised a number of workshops and facilitates regular weekly meetings with content providers across the organisation to share best practice and discuss any issues. It regularly reviews pages relating to Open Spaces and alerts editors when content is out of date, needs rewriting for clarity or is missing information. Green spaces pdfs and maps continue to be popular downloads from the site. PRO is now working on a 'Customer Carewords' initiative to fine tune the site so it continues to be geared to the needs of users, including those of the City Corporation's green spaces.
- 6.2 Work has included promoting key Open Space events on the home page – both in the New this Week rolling news feed and the featured Don't Miss section – and including imagery from Open Spaces as part of the home page carousel.

## **7. Digital communications and social media**

- 7.1 The Public Relations Office is responsible for the creation and development of digital communications. It also gives advice to departments on how to communicate across social platforms. The City Corporation now has 23 Facebook pages (including Hampstead Heath and City Commons pages) and just over 50 Twitter feeds (including Epping Forest and West Ham Park), a YouTube channel and Flickr account which cover the wide range of services we provide (a full list is available at [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/social](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/social)).

## **8. Member and internal communications**

- 8.1 The PR Office, working closely with the Member Services Team, has responsibility for communications with Members. This includes the Members' Briefing which has recently been reviewed, as well as providing updates and briefings to Members on topical issues.

- 8.2 The PR Office provides internal communications for the City Corporation as a whole and gives support to individual Departments as and when required. Open Spaces are regularly supported and assisted in improving communications through a number of channels and in a variety of ways from communication advice and practical assistance where required (for example, design and editing issues) for news and feature publicity via the corporate channels and in some cases local communications activity.
- 8.3 The PR Office ensures that story coverage in the e-magazine the Leader, the intranet, the Town Clerk's Bulletin and the eLeader bulletin is regular, timely and in particular celebrates the successes of the Open Spaces and showcases latest initiatives and service developments. The last edition of The Leader included a page authored by Clare Eastwood about Epping Forest's annual deer count.

## **9. Filming**

The PR Office has a dedicated Film Team responsible for liaising with film crews and City Corporation departments to facilitate shoots within the Square Mile and on City Corporation property. The Film Team have liaised with several film crews in the past year with regard to use of City Gardens. St-Dunstons-in-the-East's churchyard in particular remains popular with filmmakers.

## **10. Sponsorship**

The City of London sponsored the Urban category in the British Wildlife Photography Awards which produced this year's overall winner. The City Corporation received recognition through the Awards website, the 25,000 print run awards book and the photographic exhibition which toured the UK for six months.

## **Background Papers:**

Members will find it useful to refer to the *Communications Strategy 2014-2017*

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