

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS **Monday, 8 June 2015**

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 8 June 2015 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Robert Howard
Alderman Ian Luder
Barbara Newman
Jeremy Simons
Graeme Smith
Verderer Peter Adams (Observer)
John Beyer (Observer)

Officers:

Paul Double	Remembrancer
Susan Attard	Deputy Town Clerk's
Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Emma Sawers	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Baxter	Town Clerk's Department
Nigel Lefton	Remembrancer's Department
Sam Cook	Remembrancer's Department
Ed Wood	Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Alison Elam	Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Sue Ireland	Director of Open Spaces
Martin Rodman	Superintendent, West Ham Park
Esther Sumner	Open Spaces Business Manager
Louisa Allen	City Gardens Manager, Open Spaces Department
Jo Hurst	Epping Forest Business Manager, Open Spaces Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Catherine Bickmore, Deputy Alex Deane, Alderman Gordon Haines, Wendy Mead, Virginia Rounding and Michael Welbank.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL 23RD APRIL 2015

Resolved – that the Order of the Court of Common Council be received.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 29. The Town Clerk read out a list of Member's eligible to stand and Alderman Ian Luder, being the only Member to express his willingness to serve, was declared the duly elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 30. The Town Clerk read out a list of Member's eligible to stand and Graeme Smith, being the only Member to express his willingness to serve, was declared the duly elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

Appointment of a Representative to the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee

Following a ballot, Jeremy Simons was appointed as the representative to the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee for the ensuing year.

6. **MINUTES**

Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

7. **PROMOTION OF A CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION (OPEN SPACES) BILL**

The Committee considered a report of the Remembrancer seeking agreement to the promotion of a private Bill in Parliament to make changes to the legislative framework governing the City Corporation's Open Spaces. The principal aims of the changes would be to clarify and expand the management powers available to the Corporation, to increase opportunities to generate revenue for the benefit of the Open Spaces (consistently with their status as public places of recreation and enjoyment), and to strengthen enforcement powers. The proposals followed informal local consultation that had previously been agreed by the Committee.

The Remembrancer was heard. Attention was drawn to the likelihood that appropriate policies about the exercise of the new powers, prepared in consultation with consultative committees and other interested parties, would assist in securing local support for the legislation. Members noted that in the event that new powers were obtained, the responsibility for exercising them would be that of the appropriate management committee.

Members were informed that the Bill was no longer intended to apply to West Ham Park as, owing to the particular legal position of that land, parliamentary powers were not considered necessary in order to achieve the relevant management objectives.

The Committee noted that if the proposals were also agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee, the Court of Common Council would be invited to authorise the sealing of a petition to Parliament in order to enable a Bill to be deposited in November this year.

Resolved – that the Committee approve a recommendation, subject to the concurrence of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Court of Common Council, that a City of London Corporation (Open Spaces) Bill be promoted to seek the legislative changes described in the Report.

8. **GRANT GIVING - REPORT OF CROSS-CUTTING SERVICE BASED REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the outcome of the cross-cutting review of the City Corporation's grant giving activities.

It was noted that the proposals had been considered by the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee and Policy and Resources Committee, and were recommended for approval subject to responsibility for strategic oversight and performance management of the City Corporation's grant giving activities being given to the Finance Committee rather than to the Finance Grants Sub-Committee.

The Committee acknowledged that a de minimis limit would need to be established as part of the governance process.

The Director of Open Spaces informed Members that the review would provide more transparent governance and allow for a more structured approach to be taken to the ad hoc grants awarded by the various Open Spaces Committees.

The proposal for a formalised grants programme, which would be jointly governed by all Open Spaces Committees, would benefit from further discussion with Members. The Committee agreed that a Working Party should be formed to discuss the matter. The group would consist of up to three Members from the Open Spaces & City Gardens, Epping Forest & City Commons and Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queens Park Committees, 1 Member of the West Ham Park Committee and 1 representative of the Finance Grants Sub Committee.

The Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee appointed the Chairman and Deputy Chairman to the Working Party, and would seek a third appointment via email prior to the next Committee meeting. The Working Party would meet on 16 September at 9:30am and 25 November at 3:30pm and each meeting would last 1 hour.

RESOLVED – That:-

1. Approval be given for a more structured approach to grant giving which was jointly governed by all Open Spaces and which was publicised and managed as part of the City Corporation's suite of grants programmes; and
2. That a Working Party comprising of up to three Members from the Open Spaces & City Gardens, Epping Forest & City Commons and Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queens Park Committees, 1 Member of the West Ham Park Committee and 1 representative of the Finance Grants Sub

Committee be created to report back and update the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee at their meeting on 7th December 2015.

9. **OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN 2014/15 - OUTCOMES**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces and noted that the Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2013-16 was approved by the Open Spaces and City Garden Committee on the 8th April 2014. Members noted that significant progress had been made against a number of projects this year. There had also been successes in non-capital projects, with progress being made in integrating Burnham Beeches and City Commons, the introduction of a land category board and the introduction of the new identity project, to promote the charitable trust status of our sites.

Discussions ensued regarding the usefulness of some of the key performance indicators, particularly financial management. Officers informed Members that the business plan reported to the Committee at their last meeting highlighted the need for further work to be undertaken in relation to KPIs to ensure that they were a useful and accurate reflection of the work of the department.

Resolved – that the business plan outcome report be received.

10. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

The Committee received an update from the City Gardens Manager and noted that the City Garden's budget is in line with agreed budget profiles.

Members noted that the annual summer bedding was currently being planted over the coming weeks, nectar rich species have been selected where possible. The Nigel Dunnett scheme on Beech Gardens was complete. The planting consists of 39,000 plants and 18 trees. The planting for the pond had also been designed by Nigel Dunnett and would be installed in July.

The City's in Bloom campaign was underway. The Friends had recruited volunteers to judge entries for the City wide campaign. Details of how to enter or nominate a garden, project, window box etc. can be found on the City Gardens pages on the website. Judges for London in Bloom are visiting the gardens in early July. Members noted that the Friends were aware of Open Spaces Committee meetings and were welcome to attend the meetings or request agendas if they wished to do so.

As part of the Open Squares Weekend 13/14 June, a diverse range and increase of activities had been planned for the weekend, in partnership with the friends. For the first time, four poets would be in residence in; Postman's Park, St Dunstan's in the East, Christchurch Greyfriars garden and Bunhill Fields Burial Ground. The poets would recite and create poetry about the gardens. A number of walks and talks had been organised and will be delivered by City Garden Guides, the Friends of City Gardens and the City Gardens team. Talks would be delivered by John Price, the author of the recently published book about the Watts Memorial; will take place in Postman's Park on both days.

Members noted that the Open Spaces Tree Lighting Ceremony would take place on 8th December 2015.

Resolved – that the update be received.

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

There were no questions.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

There was no urgent business.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

MOTION: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

14. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

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

There were no questions.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 2:30pm

Chairman

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