

Committee(s):	Date:
Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee	7 th December 2015
Subject: Superintendent's update December 2015	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Parks & Gardens	For Information
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>This report provides an update to Members of the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee on management and operational activities across the City Gardens section since October 2015.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report 	

Main Report

Budget

1. The City Gardens budget is in line with agreed budget profiles.

Personnel

2. A full complement of staff is in place. Two members of the team were recognised in the Celebrating Our People Awards which took place on 6th November 2015 in the categories of Best Newcomer and Excellent Customer Service, respectively.

Operational Activities

3. The City Gardens team have completed planting out the seasonal spring bedding during November; nectar rich species have been selected where possible.
4. Officers are working with the Barbican Estate team to plan and implement the second phase of replacing a further 16 timber planters with concrete planters, the project will take place in the New Year.
5. The City Garden's annual tree inspections and maintenance works have been completed for the year.

6. The City Gardens Team has been working closely with City of London colleagues and outside agencies on the development of the following projects: The Aldgate Public Realm Improvement Project, the Cycle Super Highway, Finsbury Circus reinstatement, and London Wall Place.
7. Since 16th November, temporary free standing signs requesting smokers not to smoke have been installed in three gardens containing children's play equipment: Smithfield Rotunda, Tower Hill and Portsoken Street Gardens. This is a joint initiative between Community and Children's Services and Open Spaces Departments, as previously reported at the Open Spaces & City Gardens Committee held on 2 June 2014. It is intended that the sixth month pilot of 'smoke free' play areas will de-normalise smoking for children. Officers will be monitoring the response and will report back to Members in six months' time.

Community, Volunteering, Outreach and Events

8. Over the course of two weekends in November, Barbican residents have planted 10,000 bulbs, 500 primroses and wild flower seeds in the Barbican Estate gardens for an ongoing naturalised display from February 2016. The events attracted approximately 70 residents including children.
9. In addition, throughout November, the Friends of City Gardens led on and delivered three successful bulb planting days which took place in the newly landscaped St Andrew's Holborn churchyard and Bunhill Fields Burial Ground. The events attracted 40 people including regular volunteers from Friends of City Gardens, parishioners from St Andrew's and corporate volunteers from Kingston Smith respectively. The church and Kingston Smith paid for the bulbs and sundries as part of the events.
10. The Friends of City Gardens held their third Annual General Committee Meeting on Saturday 14th November. A new committee was proposed and elected by the membership. The chairman's annual report highlighted the Friends of City Gardens projects and achievements for the year, i.e. the installation of the Barbican 'Pop Up' Station Garden, the City in Bloom campaign, biodiversity surveys and activities and £16,000 of external funding achieved over the year.
11. The Friends of City Gardens were selected by Bloomberg earlier on in the year to work with the international artist, Melanie Manchot, to create a video installation celebrating their work as a community group in the City. As a result, a short film, 'The Gift' is currently being shown at the Bloomberg Space Gallery in Finsbury Square until 19th December 2015.
12. The artist Abraham Cruzvillegas, known for creating sculptures by improvising with different materials, has created *Empty Lot*, a large geometric sculpture created using scaffolding, a grid of triangular wooden planters, and soil collected from parks across London including Beech Gardens. Nothing has been planted in the soil, but it is lit by lamps and watered throughout the six month display. The unpredictable nature of the work, which may grow and change from one week to the next, provokes questions about the City, and

nature, as well as wider ideas of chance, change, and hope. The sculpture can be seen at Tate Modern until 3 April 2016.

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