

OPEN SPACES AND CITY GARDENS
Monday, 10 October 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Spaces and City Gardens held at Committee Room - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 10 October 2016 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Graeme Smith (Chairman)
Wendy Mead
Barbara Newman
Virginia Rounding (Ex-Officio Member)
Catherine Bickmore (Observer)
Michael Welbank (Chief Commoner)
Philip Woodhouse (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy John Barker
Jeremy Simons
Verderer Peter Adams (Observer)

Officers:

Sue Ireland	-	Director of Open Spaces
Louisa Allen	-	City Gardens Manager
Natasha Dogra	-	Town Clerk's Department
Martin Rodman	-	Superintendent, Parks & Gardens
Alison Elam	-	Chamberlain's Department
Roger Adams	-	City Surveyor's Department
Patrick Hegarty		Department of the Built Environment
Kirpal Kaur	-	Comptroller's and City Solicitors
Kate Hazelwood	-	City Surveyor's Department
Clarisse Tavin		Department of the Built Environment

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Alderman Ian Luder and Karina Dostalova.

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

There were no declarations

3. MINUTES

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

4. STATE OF UK PUBLIC PARKS 2016

The Committee noted that the recently published Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) report "The State of UK Public Parks 2016" provided important insight into the

current state of UK parks. The report focussed on the issues and challenges set by HLF and summarised the City of London Corporation's response to date.

An important finding of the report was how well used parks have been, with originally 54% of adults surveyed using them at least monthly increasing to 57% and with families now 90% of households with children under 5 visit monthly. Only 12% of adults don't use parks and the most regular users being 16-17 yr. olds (44% visit a park weekly) and 25-34yr olds (32%).

On average 22.5% of parks budgets came from external sources. The report showed this was likely to increase to 29% in next three years. Members noted that the concern was that only 54% of local authority parks income was ring-fenced for parks and 79% are considering selling or transferring all or parts of parks.

The Committee noted that the Open Spaces department were undertaking work with the GLA which Members would be updated on in due course. The City of London Corporation had sought to support previous HLF reports including:-

- the introduction of Park Champions,
- engaged with the Greater London Authority in the preparation and production of 'Natural Capital –investing in a Green Infrastructure for Future London',
- has promoted and supported volunteering and learning
- reviewing and updating the green space strategy for the City

Members noted that the term "green infrastructure" was not as widely used not as user friendly as using the term "parks" though this term encompassed heaths, forests and commons when the City Corporation was concerned.

In response to a query regarding the role of Park Champions, Members noted that although these individuals did not have specific job descriptions their roles were very useful when seeking to create good working relationships with local authorities and councillors.

Resolved – that the report be received.

5. **OPEN SPACES BUSINESS PLAN - QUARTER 1 UPDATE**

The Committee considered the business plan update and noted that at the end of Quarter 1, the department was on track in achieving the various agreed milestones. As most of the performance indicators set were annual or six monthly measures, it was too early to give a clear indication in respect of the performance indicators.

Members noted that the five departmental risks were:

OSD 001 - Ensuring the health and safety of staff, volunteers, contractors and public (amber)

OSD 002 - Extreme weather (amber)

OSD 004 - Poor repair and maintenance of buildings (amber)

OSD 005 - Animal, plant and tree diseases (amber)

OSD 006 - Impact of housing and/or transport development (amber)

Resolved – that the update be received.

6. **CONSOLIDATED REVENUE OUTTURN 2015/16**

The Committee received the Consolidated Revenue Update report and noted that the Director of Open Spaces actual Local Risk underspend was £885,000. This better than budget position is mainly due to underspends at the Directorate, Epping Forest, and Hampstead Heath, accompanied by an over achievement in income at the Cemetery.

The £290,000 better than budget position in the City Surveyor was mainly due to an underspend in the additional works programme, and the £79,000 decrease in income within Central Risk was mainly due to a reduction in income generated by the Hampstead Heath Trust Fund. The £270,000 reduction in recharges was mainly due to a reduction in support services costs.

Resolved – that the update be received.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE OCTOBER 2016**

The Committee received an update from the Superintendent of City Gardens and noted that a number of accolades had been won by the City in the London in Bloom finalist award celebrations, including the following:

Town Category

City of London Gold

Small Park Category

Beech Gardens, the Barbican Estate Gold

Christchurch Greyfriars Church Garden Gold

Churchyard Category

St Olave, Hart Street Churchyard Gold & Category Winner

Discretionary Awards

The London in Bloom Meadows Award - Beech Gardens, the Barbican Estate

It's Your Neighbourhood

Level 5 'Outstanding', the highest award available, in the community based awards.

City in Bloom

On Monday 12th September over 100 guests were welcomed to the City Centre and the Roman Amphitheatre in the Guildhall for the City in Bloom Award Ceremony, sponsored by J. B Riney & Co. Ltd. organised by Friends of City Gardens and supported by the City Gardens team. Over 130 entries were received across nine different categories, from window boxes and hanging baskets to roof gardens, terraces and green roofs. Entries were judged by 20 volunteer judges using criteria including horticultural excellence, site suitability and biodiversity and sustainability, with those shortlisted invited to the award ceremony. Both entries and individuals were awarded one of a total of 26

awards recognising the outstanding contribution to areas, including food growing, community engagement and commercial planting. Best in Show was awarded to Middle Temple for their vegetable garden.

The Christmas tree lighting ceremony would take place on 6th December at 4pm, the Lord Mayor will be in attendance and the St Paul's Cathedral School Bread Street choir will be singing at the event. Following the event refreshments will be served at the St Paul's Cathedral School.

Resolved – that the update be received.

8. FINSBURY CIRCUS REINSTATEMENT - ISSUE REPORT

The Committee received the report advising Members of provisional representations from the City of London Bowling Club (CoLBC) regarding a possible return to Finsbury Circus. The Bowling Club wishes to present business proposals to the City Corporation setting out details for its more efficient use of a reinstated facility and a maintenance regime, and is seeking reconsideration of your Committee's previous decisions not to reinstate a specialist sporting surface. The Bowling Club has been invited to make written representations by the 15 October, with the intention of presenting these to your meeting on 5 December 2016, together with officer views and recommendations.

In consultation with the Deputy Chairman and Director of Open Spaces, and having taken advice from the Town Clerk's and City Solicitor's departments, the Chairman has agreed to consider a written submission from the CoLBC at this Committee's December meeting. CoLBC have been invited to submit a proposal of up to three sides of A4 paper for consideration in advance of the meeting. This submission should set out the Club's business case for running the facility, should state the currently active membership of the Club, and its activities since the closure of Finsbury Circus six years ago. The submission deadline agreed with the Club is 15 October 2016.

Members of the Committee were in agreement that the submission from the CoLBC should include a clear business case, their financial plan and the number of active users of the club. The Committee also requested that the report include all background papers relating to the Finsbury Circus reinstatement.

Resolved – that the update be received.

9. ST MARY-AT-HILL GATEWAY 5 REPORT

Members noted that St Mary-At-Hill church is a grade I listed building that was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke in 1670-74. The churchyard represents one of the few open spaces in the Fenchurch & Monument area. It is located within the Eastcheap conservation area within the setting of the grade I listed church and the grade II listed No. 6-7 St Mary-at-Hill. It has a fine sense of seclusion and historic character, but is at present in a state of disrepair with low quality paving, poor access and limited planting. In addition to these deficiencies, surveys have revealed below ground structures and

inadequate drainage causing potential damage to the church and churchyard wall, considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

Resolved – that Members:

- Approve the implementation budget of £425,200 to be funded from the 20 Fenchurch

Section 106 Agreement, as set out in section 5 of this report;

- Approve the detailed design

- Approve the authority to start works, subject to obtaining Faculty and Planning permissions and sign off of associated legal agreements.

10. **SENATOR HOUSE GARDEN - DELEGATED AUTHORITY REQUEST**

The Committee noted that the City has been approached by Legal & General (L&G), the owner of Senator House (a City freehold property), who wish to use the adjoining Senator House Garden as a temporary works area during refurbishment works of its property. The Committee has previously agreed to a similar request by the former owner of Senator House which included the requirement that the developer was to undertake improvement works following its use for site logistics. As pictorial design and perspective images for the improvement of Senator House Garden plus the upper level of Cleary Garden was presented for Members information.

Resolved – that Members authorise the grant of delegated authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman to approve the use of Senator House Garden by Legal & General Assurance (Pensions Management) Limited or such other designated subsidiary as a temporary works area in conjunction with refurbishment of the adjoining Senator House and the subsequent reinstatement of Senator House Garden to include landscaping improvements to Cleary Garden according to a design to the satisfaction of the Superintendent and all upon such terms to be negotiated and without cost to the City Corporation.

11. **SEETHING LANE GARDEN - DELEGATED AUTHORITY REQUEST**

The Committee noted that the City has been approached by Reignwood Investments UK, the owner of 10 Trinity Square, EC3 and freeholder of Seething Lane Garden, to seek a revised extension to their occupation of Seething Lane Garden to practical completion of the landscaping works in April 2017.

Members noted that an April 2015 at the request of the developer, your committee approved an extension of their use of the site to the end of 2016. This was in light of the cited delay to the project caused by the discovery of items of archaeological interest during the excavations that affect 10 Trinity Square, and the impact of the actual delay when compared with that anticipated as part of the initial archaeological assessment.

As a result the developer needed to find alternative space for the displaced building activity and to use Seething Lane Garden to facilitate a welfare and logistics strategy that helped reduce the impact on traffic congestion to the area and surrounding businesses whilst carefully considering the safety of local

residents and public. As a gesture of goodwill, Reignwood relocated the bust of Pepys, which used to reside in the garden, to the nearby St Olave's Churchyard so as to make it publically accessible during the continued works period and offered a goodwill payment of £30,000 in recognition of the additional inconvenience caused by the continued closure of Seething Lane Garden.

Discussions ensued regarding the extension and Members agreed that Officers should be instructed to negotiated the shortest extension possible to ensure that the garden as ready for use during the spring next year. There are no financial implications at this stage as discussions with Reignwood are ongoing. In the circumstances Delegated Authority is sought for the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman to approve transaction terms and the period of the extension once they can be presented.

Resolved – that Members authorise the grant of delegated authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman to instruct Officers to negotiation the extension of use of Seething Lane Garden by Reignwood International UK or such other designated subsidiary or contractors as a temporary works area and the subsequent reinstatement of Seething Lane Garden and all upon such terms, to the satisfaction of the Superintendent and without cost to the City Corporation.

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

In response to a question regarding the need for a policy outlining the City Corporation's views on the use of animals in circuses taking place in the City's open spaces, the Director informed Members that it would be beneficial to firstly seek the views of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee on whether there was a need for such a policy. Members agreed that the local reaction should initially be gauged before the decision regarding the need for such a policy could be taken.

In response to a question regarding the West Ham Park Nursery review, the Committee noted that earlier in the year the Superintendent had been tasked with working with consultants to consider all of the options for the future of the Nursery. Members noted that a report would be submitted to the West Ham Park Committee either in December 2016 or February 2017. An update would be circulated to the Committee Members, along with the Superintendent's update,

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

There was no urgent business.

14. EXCLUSION OF 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 Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

15. **DEBT ARREARS - INVOICED INCOME FOR PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2016**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces regarding the debt arrears for the period ending 31 March 2016.

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

There were no questions.

17. **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 2.35 pm

Chairman

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