

City Gardens Draft Management Plan 2017-2022

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Why do we need a Management Plan?

The aim of the City Gardens Management Plan 2017-2022 is to describe the role and function of the City Gardens team in managing City of London Corporation open spaces in the Square Mile.

The aim of the Management Plan is to support the City of London Open Space Strategy vision:

“The creation of a network of high quality and inspiring open spaces which helps ensure an attractive, healthy and sustainable and socially cohesive place for all the City’s communities and visitors.”

1.2 The City of London

The City of London is both a unique and an intense urban environment. A little over one square mile in size, this densely developed area is one of the world's leading financial, business and maritime centres. Offices make up over 70% of all buildings in the City and on weekdays 454,000 workers (Source: BRES 2015) of whom the majority commute from across the south-east, join the 8,300 (Source GLA, 2015) or so residents of the Square Mile. Visitors experience the City's rich history through key attractions such as St Paul's Cathedral, with an estimated 10.34 million visitors to the City of London in 2015 (Source: Facts of Tourism report 2015)

The City of London oversees approximately 376 open spaces, totalling 32 hectares of both private and City of London Corporation managed open spaces within the City itself. This includes parks, gardens, churchyards and plazas. Approximately 80% of the sites are less than 0.2%ha in size.

In order to guide the vision, objectives and priorities for the City of London Corporation managed open spaces in the Square Mile a Management Plan has been prepared by the City Gardens team.

2.0 Local policy

2.1 City of London Local Policy: Local Plan 2015

The City of London Local Plan sets out the City Corporation's vision, strategy, objectives and policies for planning in the City of London. It sets out the vision for shaping the Square Mile and contains the policies which guide planning decisions.

2.2 Open Space Strategy

The City of London Open Space Strategy, which was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in January 2015, sets out the principles to help improve the quality, management and accessibility of the open spaces of the Square Mile. The strategy comprises of ten strategic objectives, with the City Gardens team contributing in terms of day-to-day management and planned improvement to City Corporation managed open spaces as well as informing the design, construction and implementation of new open spaces.

2.3 Open Spaces Audit

A comprehensive audit of all open spaces owned and managed by the City Corporation and private landowners is carried out by the Department of the Built Environment every five years. The audit report provides details of the distribution and characteristics of the open spaces defined in the City of London Local Plan's Key City Places.

3.0 Open Spaces Department

The Open Spaces Department is responsible for the management of around 4,500 hectares in Greater London and south-east England. City Gardens together with The City of London Cemetery and Crematorium operate as local authority functions whereas the other spaces are managed through eight charitable trusts. The Open Spaces Department are also responsible for Tower Bridge, The Monument and Keats House.

Open Spaces Business Plan 2016-19

The Open Spaces Business Plan strategic vision is to:

'Preserve and protect our world-class green spaces for the benefit of our local communities and the environment'

Our department values are:

Quality: Provide safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces and services for the benefit of London and the Nation.

Inclusion: Involve communities and partners in developing a sense of place through the care and management of our sites.

Environment: Deliver sustainable working practices to promote the variety of life and protect the Open Spaces for the enjoyment of future generations.

Promotion: Promote opportunities to value and enjoy the outdoors for recreation, learning and healthy living.

People: Manage, develop and empower a capable and motivated work force to achieve high standards of safety and performance.

Our departmental objectives are:

OSD1: Protect and conserve the ecology, biodiversity and heritage of our sites.

OSD2: Embed financial sustainability across our activities by delivering identified programmes and projects.

OSD3: Enrich the lives of Londoners by providing high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities.

OSD4: Improve the health and wellbeing of the community through access to green space and recreation.

4.0 City Gardens, Open Spaces Department

The City Gardens team is responsible for tree and green space management for around 200 sites in the Square Mile including parks, gardens, churchyards, plazas and highway planting. The City Gardens team is also responsible for Bunhill Fields Burial Ground just outside the City boundary in the London Borough of Islington.

The City Garden Team is overseen by the Superintendent of Parks & Gardens, who is responsible for City Gardens and West Ham Park. The City Gardens Manager has management and budget responsibility for the City of London Corporation managed open spaces in the Square Mile. The City Gardens Manager is supported by a Supervisor and five staff providing technical, operational and administrative support. The City is divided into four operational areas, each with its own Team Leader and team of Gardeners and Assistant Gardeners.

4.1 Governance

The Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee is the overarching policy and strategic body in relation to the activities of the City Corporation's Open Spaces Department. It is also responsible for the day-to-day management of those gardens, churchyards and green spaces in the City under the control of the Common Council, together with Bunhill Fields Burial Ground.

4.2 How are the open spaces managed by City Gardens funded?

The open spaces managed by City Gardens team are generally within the Square Mile and are mostly funded by the City Fund. Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, located in the London Borough of Islington, is funded by City's Cash.

City Fund pays for the City of London's local authority, police authority and port health authority activities and is money received from central government, a share of business rates income and the proceeds of the local council tax.

City's Cash is an endowment fund built up over the last eight centuries. Its income is derived mainly from property, supplemented by investment earnings, and the fund is now used to finance activities mainly for the benefit of London as a whole but also of relevance nationwide. The majority of the City's open spaces outside the Square Mile are charitable trusts and are funded by City's Cash at no cost to the public.

Rennie Garden in Southwark is funded from the City's Bridge House Estate as a historic landholding forming part of the southern bridgehead of Blackfriars Bridge. Planted areas around Guildhall are maintained on behalf of the City Land Committee. City Gardens look after the Barbican Estate and the City of London School for Girls and recharged to those organisations.

Open spaces owned as part of the City's investment portfolio that are accessible to the public are managed by City Gardens and costs recharged to the City Surveyor.

The Community Infrastructure Levy, Section 106 agreements and to a lesser extent, Section 278 agreements provide direct capital for improvements from developers. We usually seek to include 20 years maintenance costs within the funding for new capital projects (and net increase in maintenance costs for refurbishment of existing gardens). Where possible we seek benefits in kind such as agreements for cleansing arrangements or access to storage and operational facilities with local stakeholders. Occasionally improvements are carried out with funding from local stakeholders via unilateral agreements, amendments to leases and licences, e.g. scaffolding, filming, photography and events. Grants are sought from various bodies and through programmes such as TFL tree planting and air quality schemes.

A City Gardens' Reserve Fund has been set up to help pay for garden improvements which cannot readily be met from other sources.

5.0 What do we maintain?

5.1 Gardens

Often offering the full package when it comes to what is seen as a 'green space', our parks and gardens provide areas of serenity in the Square Mile. These sites have historically been laid out as formal gardens and may include footpaths, lawns, trees, seasonal bedding, shrub and herbaceous planting and water features. Some sites are enclosed with railings and gates and are locked at dusk, whilst others form part of the open public realm. Many of these sites have been historically acquired under City Corporation title as Public Open Space or are managed under the Open Spaces Act 1906 'for the enjoyment of the public as open space and for no other purpose'.

5.2 Churchyards

Active, with a church onsite, or disused

City Gardens is responsible for soft landscaping maintenance of nearly 40 churchyards within the Square Mile. Approximately half of these are on a site where a church still exists, whilst others are the remnants of churches either destroyed or not rebuilt after the Great Fire of London in 1666 or bomb-damaged during World War II. Churchyards in the City first became open spaces, and were laid out as public gardens as a result of a series of Burial Acts passed in the 1850s, which led to the closure of the City's churchyards to burials. Many of the City's churchyards are in the ownership of the local parish or Diocese of London and are maintained by the City Corporation. The amenity value of churchyards varies greatly, with some now more closely associated with a traditional park or garden. Churchyards provide an important historic context to the City of London, which should be balanced with their use and enjoyment as open spaces.

5.3 Highway Planting

Highway planting covers all landscaping that is not identified by the City Gardens team as a park, garden or churchyard. It includes fixed or mobile planters and planted beds. City Gardens provide the horticultural maintenance of these sites, with other City Corporation departments providing other services such as cleansing. These spaces are maintained under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 which gives the power to maintain planted areas and street furniture on the public highway. These soft landscape elements make an important contribution towards providing a high-quality public realm. Highway and street tree planting provide important connectivity of green spaces and green infrastructure in the urban landscape.

5.4 Bunhill Fields Burial Ground

Bunhill Fields Burial Ground is a 1.6 hectare, Grade I listed public open space located in the London Borough of Islington. It has been managed by the City of London Corporation since 1867, when the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground Act ensured its role as an open space for the public to enjoy in perpetuity.

The site has a long history as a burial ground, having been used as such since the 1600's, but is most widely known for its Nonconformist connections dating from the 18th and 19th Centuries. Many of its inhabitants are well-known figures from British history, including Bunyan, Defoe, Blake and members of the Cromwell family. Over 123,000 people have been interred at Bunhill Fields, but following extensive bomb damage during the Second World War only 2,333 memorials can be seen today. 75 of the tombs have been individually listed.

Due to the site's historic significance a Conservation Management Plan was prepared in 2006. This document brings together research from a number of sources on the site's history which details the site's significance and present-day usage, to ensure it is managed appropriately in the future. A separate five-year management plan also details the vision, priorities and objectives that guide day-to-day management and operations.

5.5 Historic significance

The parks, gardens, churchyards and public realm contribute not only to the modern streetscape but also to the rich historic environment, with open spaces providing the setting for conservation areas, listed buildings, ancient monuments, above-ground archaeology and other historic assets. The City Corporation was responsible for the creation of many new open spaces and planting of trees throughout the City in the post-war period.

The City Gardens team is responsible for the maintenance of three sites that feature on the Historic England 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of specific historic interest in England', which identifies sites of particular historic significance.

The special historic interest of the churchyards is frequently recognised through listing, scheduling and other designations. The City of London Churchyard Statements of Significance project, carried out by the City's Historic Environment Team, provides a detail of their character and significance and forms a useful evidence base. Planning permission, scheduled monument consent or other consents may be required for work in churchyards and open spaces.

The City Gardens team acknowledges the historic value of these urban spaces and will contribute towards their preservation and enhancement.

6.0 What do our users think?

Each year the City Gardens team along with other divisions within the Open Spaces Department conduct a 'snapshot survey' which is a quantitative based survey designed to gain an indication of user satisfaction at City Gardens managed sites in the City of London. The aim of the survey is to gain an understanding of what we are doing well and where we need to improve. The survey asks respondents to indicate which specific site they have visited, the date, and the reasons why, length of visit, how they rate the various features and optional information regarding age, gender and ethnicity. The criteria for the survey is derived from the key criteria of the Green Flag Award assessment which is a national award scheme that recognises and rewards the best green spaces in the UK. It also provides the opportunity for respondents to provide any additional comments and to give feedback on any events which may have been taking place on the day.

Key facts from City Gardens Snapshot Survey 2016-17

- 86% of respondents rated the garden they visited as 'good' or 'very good'
(Total respondents: 76)
- 51% of respondents stated they were City workers, 25% residents and 31% a visitors. (Total respondents: 72)
- 47% of respondents were aged 20 - 44 (Total respondents: 61)
- 64% of respondents arrived at the garden between 12 noon and 2pm.
(Total respondents: 68)
- 46% of respondents stated their visit was for 'peace and quiet', 36% visited to enjoy their 'lunch break' and 25% visited for 'walking'.
(Total respondents: 66)

In addition to the 'Snapshot Survey', which contributes towards an Open Spaces Business Plan performance indicator, the City Garden team also commissions a more extensive Customer Satisfaction Survey of users and non-users. The survey is an important way of gaining a greater understanding of our customers and informs future design and management of our open spaces.

A 'You Said, We Did' page will be created on the City Gardens webpages to demonstrate how we have responded to suggested improvements and equally

explain why something might not be possible. This demonstrates the value of completing the survey to individuals.

7.0 Challenges

The Open Space Strategy identifies a number of recurring key issues that must be addressed in all open space creation and improvement schemes in order to ensure sustainable open spaces. The City Gardens team will contribute towards addressing these challenges as well as identifying key issues that are specific to the team.

Challenges for the City Gardens team include an aging workforce and ensuring green space skills throughout the team are developed. This is in addition to ensuring that the long term maintenance costs of new open spaces are acknowledged and sources of funding agreed at an early stage. The anticipated increase in the daytime population of the City and increased pressure on open spaces bring their own challenges, including general and smoking-related litter.

To invest in the future of young people in the horticultural industry and to ensuring a sustainable workforce for the future the Open Spaces Department is supporting The City of London Apprenticeship Programme. This will help address the age imbalance within the team as well as sharing the skills and knowledge of our open spaces and maintenance that exist within the team.

8.0 Action Plans

To deliver and achieve the vision of the management plan three action plans have been developed. To achieve this vision we recognise the importance of working towards an agreed national standard for good practice in the management of parks and open spaces. As a result we have developed three action plans that contribute towards the Green Flag Award criteria, the benchmark national standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom:

Action Plan 1: Horticulture and open space management

Green Flag Award criteria:
Section 1: A welcoming place
Section 2: Healthy, safe and secure
Section 3: Well maintained and clean

Action Plan 2: Environmental responsibility

Green Flag Award criteria:
Section 4: Environmental management
Section 5: Biodiversity, landscape and heritage

Action Plan 3: Community involvement and communication

Green Flag Award criteria:
Section 6: Community Involvement
Section 7: Marketing and communication

9.0 Action Plan 1: Horticulture and open space management

Grounds maintenance operations are key to the City Gardens team's provision of high-quality and safe open spaces for public use. In line with good horticultural practice an annual horticultural calendar has been developed to inform day to day operations and forward planning. Where required, a grounds maintenance specification is produced to support a service level agreement to maintain other City of London Corporation owned land outside the immediate remit of the City Gardens team, such as the Barbican Estate.

9.1 Delivering new and improved open spaces

The City Corporation is developing 16 Area Enhancement Strategies aimed at improving the streets and public spaces in the Square Mile.

The City Public Realm Technical Manual SPD July 2016 sets out the City Corporation's vision for the public realm including the main principles for controlling change and informing street enhancement schemes and provides general guidance for street works to ensure there is consistency of form and quality.

10.0 Action Plan 2: Environmental responsibility

10.1 Sustainability

The City of London Local Plan 2015 identifies energy consumption, air quality and the urban heat island and climate change as particular sustainability issues faced in the City.

As extreme weather events such as flooding, drought and heatwaves become more frequent the City's open spaces and the public realm need to become more resilient to remain a pleasant place to live, work and visit.

Planting in new and refurbished parks, gardens and churchyards should predominantly be selected for suitability to the local site conditions but also with resilience to future climatic conditions in mind. Opportunities to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into planted beds should be encouraged where condition permits as well as other interventions that reduce the amount, flow or rate of surface water discharged into sewers.

10.2 Waste

The Waste Strategy 2013-2020 – planning a sustainable future for the City of London, details how the City of London will deal with its waste.

The City Gardens team is responsible for the cleansing and litter collection of many sites, typically those enclosed with railings and gates. The Department of the Built Environment oversees the contractor that carries out this function on Highways sites, with the City Gardens team maintaining the landscape elements only.

The litter collected in our gardens is classed as household waste and therefore counts towards the waste-reduction and recycling objectives of the Waste Strategy.

City Gardens are responsible for waste produced as a result of maintenance or project work, which is classed as commercial waste. All green waste is recycled. The City Gardens team is committed to continuing to work with the Department of the Built Environment colleagues to find solutions to the challenge of separating out recyclable material from litter collections.

10.3 Noise

The City of London Noise Strategy 2016-2026 addresses the management and mitigation of noise in the Square Mile. With other City Corporation department the City Gardens team will contribute towards the aim of protecting the enhancing the acoustic environment and soundscape of the City of London.

The aim is to protect, and where possible enhance, the acoustic environment and soundscape in suitable parts of the City in such a way that any measures will contribute to an improvement in health and quality of life and wellbeing for residents, workers and visitors.

In delivering this aim it will be necessary to seek opportunities for the enhancement of the acoustic environment, for the promotion of soundscape initiatives and for the protection of quiet and tranquil places when and where such measures are supported by the local community.

The policies include identifying open spaces that would benefit from further protection or enhancement of the acoustic environment.

10.4 Tree Inspections and maintenance

The City Gardens team manages approximately 1400 trees within our parks, gardens and churchyards as well as street trees within the Square Mile.

Trees managed by the City Gardens team are inspected by an independent arboriculture surveyor. The inspection regime is influenced by both the age of the tree and the species. All City Gardens managed trees are inspected at least every four years. Tree's categorised as 'mature' are inspected annually. As a result of increased Massaria, a disease that affects London Plane trees, these species are inspected three times a year, which may result in further aerial inspections. All trees, their associated details and record of maintenance are recorded on a GIS-based tree management software; Arbortrack. Following the surveyor's inspection a schedule of works is agreed for the appointed arboricultural contractor to carry out. The City Garden team also liaises with relevant borough officers for tree management outside the Square Mile at City Gardens managed sites such as Bunhill Fields Burial Ground.

Service Level Agreements may also be in place for inspections and works on other City of London Corporation owned or managed sites.

10.5 Tree Strategy

The City of London Tree Strategy, prepared by the Department of the Built Environment, provides advice and guidance on the role and importance of trees in the Square Mile. The aim of this Strategy is to increase the number of trees in the City and ensure that all trees are safeguarded and planted in accordance with sound arboricultural practices, whilst taking account of their contribution to amenity and the urban landscape. Part 1, Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), is the policy framework which includes the strategy itself and objectives. Part 2 provides evidence and practical guidance including tree species, tree pits and irrigation.

10.6 Biodiversity

The City Gardens team is responsible for the City of London Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The BAP provides a framework to ensure all legislative requirements relating to the management of green spaces are taken into consideration at all times and both identifies and priorities actions for biodiversity at a local level. The City of London Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020 covers the open spaces, habitats and species in the City of London only, regardless of management or ownership.

The aim of the BAP is to produce a set of objectives and actions to assist members of the City of London Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Partnership Group and the wider community in delivering strategically planned biodiversity networks for both the City and Greater London, taking into consideration both local and national priorities.

The BAP will be delivered under the following themes:

- **Open space and habitat management**
Aim: to protect and enhance habitats and species in the City of London
- **The built environment**
Aim: to improve green infrastructure in the built environment
- **Education and community engagement**
Aim: to promote a greater understanding of the City's biodiversity
- **Data collection, surveys and monitoring**
Aim: to improve monitoring and data on biodiversity in the City of London

Although the BAP covers both City Corporation and privately-managed sites, the majority of the objectives include The City Gardens team as the Lead Partner with the assistance of other City Corporation departments and resident's and community groups. The City Gardens team is also responsible for the maintenance of 10 of the 13 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the Square Mile, plus Bunhill Fields Burial Ground. As a result, all the objectives relating to biodiversity will be delivered as part of the BAP, including the development of individual site management plans where identified.

10.7 Health and Safety

Health and safety practices and procedures are integral to the day-to-day operations of the City Gardens team, the safety of those who visit our sites and the protection and infrastructure of the gardens. Our approach to health and safety is informed by the City of London Corporation Health and Safety Policy and relevant legislation. Actions to ensure a safe working environment include induction and training for staff, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and accident and incident reporting and investigation.

Site and/or operational specific risk assessments and method statements are held for all tasks and operations to ensure the safety of staff, members of the public, volunteers and infrastructure. A series of daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual inspections are scheduled and reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation and ensure a safe environment for staff and visitors to our spaces.

10.8 City Gardens Working Safely Manual

The City Gardens Working Safely Manual is used to make staff aware of their responsibilities with regard to health and safety as prescribed by the City Gardens Health and Safety Policy. The policy provides a summary of responsibilities for all staff and an overview of the system in place for City Gardens.

10.9 Parks and Gardens Contractor Protocol

A Parks and Gardens Contractor Protocol has been produced for the use and management of all external contractors that work at West Ham Park and City Gardens managed sites. The code contains information concerning working practices and requirements expected of all contractors to ensure the safety of staff, contractors and members of the public.

11.0 Action Plan 3: Community involvement and communication

11.1 City Gardens Events Policy

The City Gardens Events Policy, approved by the Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee in April 2015, was developed to provide guidance to City Corporation officers and individuals, groups and businesses when proposing to hold small-scale outdoor events at some of the City's most unique and historic sites. The policy provides a mechanism to evaluate requests while protecting residents and visitors and ensuring open space infrastructure is protected. A fees and charges structure was developed to ensure administrative costs were accounted for when processing applications and if successful, licensing the events.

The policy acknowledges community groups that support the work of City Gardens and are often also involved in the maintenance, interpretation, development and enjoyment of the City's open spaces. The City Gardens team will continue to host and support events which have a wide range of positive benefits to the community

The City has a number of different garden user groups who help oversee the maintenance, development and enjoyment of our gardens. These volunteer groups hold a number of events throughout the year and, in recognition of the invaluable role played hire fees are not charged for such events.

11.2 Health and Wellbeing

The City of London's Health and Wellbeing Board exists to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities within the City of London and to reduce health inequalities across the Square Mile. The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy agrees what are the most important issues for the local community based on evidence, what can be done to address them and what outcomes are intended to be achieved. The City has populations with different health needs and mental health issues which include residents, City workers and rough sleepers.

Priorities – Priority 2: a healthy urban environment

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies that a well-designed public realm with high-quality green open space will encourage physical exercise, improve mental health and increase biodiversity.

A consultation exercise revealed that residents and workers in the Square Mile lack green and community space and space to exercise, which came up repeatedly as a health and wellbeing issue. Green spaces can play a role in promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing stress and preventing illness and can also help with social inclusion by providing a space to socialise.

An initiative called “Smoke Free Gardens” is a voluntary smoking ban in three of our gardens with play provision where more vulnerable people congregate, has been successfully introduced since 2015.

The City Gardens team supports the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and will support the work the City of London's Health and Wellbeing Board in achieving their vision of working in partnership to achieve longer, happier, healthier lives in the City of London.

11.3 How do we recognise our achievements and those of others?

The City Gardens team understands the importance of both achieving quality green spaces for the City community and recognising the contribution and successes of others.

London in Bloom is a regional campaign that celebrates the efforts of boroughs, communities, businesses and individuals to make London a greener place to live and work in and visit. Each year the City Gardens team enters the City of London in the relevant category as well as individual sites. Each year London in Bloom nominates entries for the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) UK Finals, for which the City of London has been nominated previously for its consistently high standards.

'It's Your Neighbourhood' is aimed at the growing number of entries at a community level. The assessment provides a criteria focus on community participation, environmental responsibility and gardening achievement. The assessors provide constructive feedback to those involved.

At a local level the achievements of those based in the City are recognised by City in Bloom, our local In Bloom campaign organised by the Friends of City Gardens. Members of the City Gardens team are also judges for London in Bloom and the Green Flag Awards in support of the green space industry not only in London but across the UK.

The judging criteria for London in Bloom focus on horticultural achievement. Environmental responsibility and community participation are also key components.

11.4 Engaging with the City community through volunteering

The parks, gardens, churchyards and built environment of the Square Mile provide opportunities for volunteers to contribute towards the careful management and understanding of open spaces.

The reach of volunteering within the community to support our open spaces and objectives within City Gardens extends beyond the boundaries of spaces across the Square Mile as a whole and extends to the City fringes. Volunteers' personal interests and activities can often extend beyond those available within our open spaces into the communities where they live and work, which contribute towards diverse and rewarding volunteer opportunities across the City.

The City Gardens team both encourages and supports individuals, residents and community groups across the Square Mile that both directly and indirectly support our aims and objectives and have a positive impact on our open spaces, the surrounding environment and the community. Volunteers make a highly valuable contribution to the management and understanding of the parks, gardens, churchyards and built environment within the Square Mile and are well placed to pursue local action that delivers both community and Open Spaces aims.

The 'Vision for Volunteering' describes what a positive and productive culture of volunteering looks like for the Open Spaces Department. The vision has been developed by the Learning Team who are delivering the department-wide learning programme. A Volunteer Strategy has also been developed which will inform actions by the City Gardens team to support the vision.

City Gardens expresses its commitment to volunteers by allocating time and resource to directly and indirectly support volunteer activity which improves the natural and built environment for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors to the City.

11.5 Case Study – Friends of City Gardens

Friends of City Gardens (FoCG) are a community group of over 200 volunteers based in the City of London. FoCG support the City Gardens Team, Open Spaces Department by organising constructive and inclusive activities for volunteers that improve access to the City's green spaces, enhance biodiversity and help preserve the City's garden heritage. FoCG organise a range of activities that appeal to different sectors of the City community, from gardening to building leaf compost bins, biodiversity surveys to walks and talks.

FoCG were established in 2013 and now contribute over 4,000 volunteer hours a year. As well as encouraging best biodiversity practice through the annual City in Bloom challenge, FoCG also works to create improve existing and create new green spaces in the Square Mile. In 2015 they designed and installed a 100 metre long pop up garden on the disused platform of Barbican Underground Station, working with TfL, local businesses that provided both financial and volunteer support. In 2017 FoCG created two new street level pop up gardens in the public realm as part of a campaign to raise awareness of air quality and encouraged over a dozen corporates to refresh their planters as part of the RHS Greening Grey Britain campaign.

FoCG also carry out biodiversity surveys, including an annual breeding bird survey; facilitate skills training for volunteers and have delivered Green Roof Enhancement Workshops for City building managers and planners. FoCG work closely with companies such as Skanska to provide corporate volunteering opportunities in City Gardens and run a major programme of food growing and outdoor learning activities with local primary schools to help children learn about biodiversity as well as how to grow and cook their own vegetables.

Having an established Friends group has created a closer working relationship between the City community and the City Garden Team. As the group has grown in its ambitions this had led to new opportunities and working relationships between community groups, City business and City Corporation departments. This has contributed to a stronger engaged community in the City, the health and wellbeing of those who participate and both harness and develop the skills of individuals.

This positive and productive culture of volunteering is supported by a departmental vision and divisional strategy which provides steer to the City Gardens team.

Related Plans and Strategies

Visit the City: visitor strategy and action plan for the City of London 2013-17
CoL Corporate Plan
The Local Plan
Open Spaces Strategy
Tree Strategy Parts 1 & 2
Open Spaces Business Plan
City Public Realm Technical Manual SPD July 2016
City Gardens Working Safely Manual
OSD Vision for Volunteering
OSD Volunteer Strategy
Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy – City of London Corporation 2017/18 – 20-20/21
City of London Tree Strategy Part 1 – Supplementary Planning Document 2012
City of London Tree Strategy Part 2 2012
BFBG Conservation Management Plan
BFBG Management Plan
Open Space Strategy (January 2015); Tree Strategy (May 2012)

Appendix

Churchyards are usually managed and maintained on behalf of the Diocese of London under powers granted by one of the following Acts of Parliament:

- Open Spaces Act 1906 - Section 9 grants local authorities the power to maintain any Open Space or Burial Ground at their own cost.
- City of London (Various Powers) Act 1952
- The Burial Act 1855
- Disused Burial Grounds Act 1884

Table 1 – Action Plan 1: Horticulture and open space management

Action No	Action	Lead Partner	Link to OSBP	Start/end Date
HOSM1.1	Reinstate Finsbury Circus Gardens.	CoL OSD	OSD1	2018
HOSM1.2	Deliver the Churchyard Enhancement Programme.	CoL OSD	OSD4	2016 and on going
HOSM1.3	Retain Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Site Accreditation for Bunhill Fields Burial Ground.	CoL OSD	OSD1	2017 and annually
HOSM1.4	Support London in Bloom by entering the City of London as a main entry plus additional parks and churchyards. Achieve Silver-Gilt as a minimum award for main entry.	CoL OSD	OSD1	2017 and annually
HOSM1.5	Develop quality standards and indicator tool kit as a benchmark for maintenance of City Gardens managed open spaces.	CoL OSD	OSD1	2018
HOSM1.6	Improve as a minimum one green space annually using either, and or S106, CiL, City Fund and/or or sponsorship funding. Specific sites to be identified.	CoL OSD	OSD1	2017 and annually
HOSM1.7	Achieve an increase in City Corporation owned trees by 5% outlined in the City of London Tree Strategy SPD 2012 by 2019.	CoL OSD	OSD1	2019

Table 2 – Action Plan 2: Environmental responsibility (includes sustainability, biodiversity and heritage)

Action No	Action	Lead Partner	Link to OSBP	Start/end Date
ER2.1	Review and tender the City Gardens fleet for renewal in 2020 incorporating clean emission and sustainability features.	CoL OSD	OSD1	2018-2019
ER2.2	Monitor, deliver and report on the City of London Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020.	CoL OSD	OSD1	Annually to 2020
ER2.3	We will identify, where possible, potential open spaces in the City that would benefit from further protection and/or enhancement of the acoustic environment and/or from soundscape initiatives in conjunction with relevant internal teams and interested external organisations.	CoL M&CP	OSD1	2016-2026
ER2.4	Review and agree how the City of London Corporation's duties and commitments to biodiversity should be delivered following the new publication of the Mayor of London's Environment Strategy published in late 2017.	CoL OSD	OSD1	2018
ER2.5	Commission review of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the City of London. Reviewed sites to be adopted via the City of London Local Plan.	CoL OSD	OSD1	ER2.5 2020-2022
ER2.6	To review sustainability action plan to include: increasing onsite recycling, reduction of waste generated by users, water management, SUDS, sustainable planting and plant selection.	CoL OSD		2018-2020

Table 3 – Action Plan 3: Communication and community involvement

Action No	Action	Lead Partner	Link to OSBP	Start/end Date
CCI3.1	Prepare and submit 'Parks for People' Heritage Lottery Fund application for Bunhill Fields Burial Ground	CoL OSD	OSD1 OSD2	2017-2019
CCI3.2	Create and enable increased opportunities for 'supported' and 'unsupported' volunteering.	CoL OSD	OSD3	2017
CCI3.3	Produce a City Gardens volunteering policy and manual to support volunteering.	CoL OSD	OSD3	2017-18
CCI3.4	Review and produce an annual Communications Plan for the City Gardens team.	CoL OSD		Annually March
CCI3.5	Review and update the City Gardens Map for printed and web based use.	CoL OSD	OSD3	2018
CCI3.6	Review, design and install information and interpretation signage across City Gardens.	CoL OSD/CPR	OSD1	2018-2020
CCI3.7	Create a sponsorship policy to encourage partnerships and funding for City Gardens.	CoL OSD	OSD2	2019
CCI3.8	Review and revise the City Gardens Events Policy annually to ensure compliance, management and pricing are in line with Open Spaces policies and other London boroughs.	CoL OSD	OSD1 OSD 2	Annually April
CCI3.9	Opportunities Checklist for garden improvement and development projects to be developed, to ensure that the wide range of aims and objectives for open spaces are	CoL OSD		March 2018

	considered at design stage and that a strategic approach to gardens across the city is developed. These will include sensory gardens, play, biodiversity, SUDS, health, soundscape etc.			
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