

Committee:	Date:
Open Spaces & City Gardens	4 December 2017
Subject: Superintendent's update	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 2017.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report 	

Main Report

Finance

1. The budgets for both City Gardens and Bunhill Fields are in line with anticipated profile of expenditure for this time of year.
2. The contract for summer bedding plants 2018 has been awarded to Amethyst Horticulture. The City Gardens team are now working with colleagues in the Procurement section to create a framework contract for the supply of bedding that will last for a number of years, thereby reducing administration in the future.

Personnel

3. Recruitment has now been completed for the two vacant City Gardens Team Leader posts; one post was awarded to an internal applicant and the other to an external applicant who will be starting mid-December. The team are currently recruiting a further four posts; one Gardener and three Assistant Gardeners.

Operational Activities

4. **West Smithfield:** Improvements to the garden will see some sections of the existing surfacing replaced with paving in certain areas. This will reduce the ongoing liability of loose gravel maintenance and make the garden more

accessible and safer for all. Grass and planting will be replaced or improved, and the play equipment will be repaired where required. Posts will be installed so that the garden gates can be secured in the 'open' position. This is to discourage some users who currently insist on closing the gates whilst they exercise their dogs.

5. **Tower Hill Gardens:** Two new irrigation taps have been installed within the garden, bringing much needed watering facilities to a garden that previously had none. Other improvements will include play equipment repairs, planting improvements and safety surfacing repairs.
6. **Cleary Gardens:** The old wooden steps, which are beyond economic repair, will be replaced with metal ones ensuring that the public can use the garden safely. Metal fencing will also be installed on the middle tier of the garden to remove any potential high drop zone hazard. There will also be planting improvements, and the uneven concrete paving on the lower level will be replaced with York stone paving.
7. **Maintenance works:** All of the summer bedding plants have been removed and the spring bedding has been planted. The team is about to start an intensive mulching programme focussing on hedges and shrub beds. The mulch has been supplied by Buckingham Palace.

Capital Projects

8. **Aldgate gyratory:** Works to the piazza area are now under way and the team has filled the first of the large raised planters with soil, in readiness for planting in the next few weeks. The garden is now also fully connected to the new irrigation system. The Church frontage garden is nearing completion and this will be planted early in the New Year, once the last of the railings are installed. This area will include four new trees, hedging and under-planting.
9. **Mitre Square:** Planting was completed in early November. This garden now boasts two large lawn areas, 12 large multi-stemmed trees and areas of under-planting. The garden is automatically irrigated.
10. **Annual Tree Planting:** The programme to replace trees that have failed to establish will be starting soon. In addition to the trees at Aldgate, the City team will be carrying out tree planting for other capital projects such as Alderman's House; the environs of the Bloomberg development; Bartholomew's Close; and Heron Tower.

Other Works

11. The office team has been working with colleagues in Planning to get updated information in respect of the City's private tree stock. A survey has recently been completed and whilst this data has not yet been interrogated in any detail, early indications are that there has been a decrease in the number of

privately owned trees since the last survey in 2004. Further information will be provided on this in due course.

Community, Volunteering, Outreach and Events

12. Due to the team's success in this year's *London in Bloom* competition, they have once again had the accolade of being invited to represent London in next year's *Britain in Bloom* national competition.
13. The planting improvements at St. Ann Blackfriars Churchyard, Church Entry, have been completed. These were undertaken by a team of volunteers organised and led by the Friends of City Gardens, who are now assisting with the ongoing maintenance of the site.
14. The Friends of City Gardens were featured in this month's RHS *Grass Roots* magazine. The article focussed on how the Friends have supported the Mayor for London's Low Emission Neighbourhood campaign with pop-up gardens around the Square Mile.
15. The City in Bloom 2017 Clean Air Gardens Celebration was hosted by the Friends of City Gardens in conjunction with the City Corporation's Air Quality team on 28 November at St. Botolph without Aldersgate Church. An update on the event will be provided at the meeting.
16. This year's City Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony is being held on Tuesday 5 December.

Property

17. The City Surveyor inspects the memorials at Bunhill Fields Burial Ground on an annual basis; however this assessment does not include the stability of the memorials. There is the potential for memorials to become unstable, and this problem is being exacerbated by foxes undermining memorials, and voids (former grave chambers) collapsing. The team is working with colleagues in City Surveyor's to develop a proportionate and robust risk management approach to the issue within this listed landscape.

Appendices

- None

Jake Tibbetts

City Gardens Manager

T: 020 7374 4127

E: jake.tibbetts@cityoflondon.gov.uk