

Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust Committee Minutes

Wednesday 7 September 2022

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Alex Sanderson (Chair), Bora Kwon and Dominic Stanton

Co-opted members: Miriam Shea and Stephen Waley-Cohen

Advisors to the Trust: Steve Hollingworth (Assistant Director, Leisure, Sports and Culture), Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager), Vicki Abel (Trust Development Manager), Emma Jerrard (Senior Events Manager), Catherine Field (Events Manager) and Nicholas Falcone (Senior Corporate Accountant)

Clerk: Debbie Yau

External Guests:

Dr Miriam Burke, Simon Donovan and Sevda Ozsezer-Kuruc (London Development Trust)

Brittany Woodham, Rob Haworth, Amy O'Brien, Kath Tomlin, and Carly Morrell (Secret Cinema)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. MANAGER'S REPORT

HS2 Update

Steve Hollingworth (Advisor to the Trust) presented the report and outlined the progress in respect of the Stamford Brook Sewer (SBS), UTX site and demolition of the Wycombe Line Bridge.

In reply to the Chair's enquiry about the duration of the road closures after the demolition of the Wycombe Line Bridge commenced in December 2022, Steve Hollingworth advised that while the Trust was yet to receive further details, he understood that the road closures would be kept to a minimum.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted member) enquired about the scope of the reinstatement of the landscape after the associated site of the SBS was handed back in December 2022. Steve Hollingworth confirmed that the reinstatement on SBS would be the same as agreed for the alternative access road with same soil and seed mix.

Thames Valley Harriers (TVH) Clubhouse

Steve Hollingworth briefed members on the TVH's proposal to refurbish their clubhouse to improve the gym equipment, catering and toilet facilities at a cost of £400,000 with a view to securing more usage of the clubhouse by the wider community. Members noted that the TVH asked the Committee to consider contributing £40,000 towards the cost of these works.

Miriam Shea (Co-opted member) enquired about the extent of opening up the clubhouse to the wider community in terms of facilities and the opening hours. Steve Hollingworth said he believed that the operator would open the café to the wider community as much as possible during daytime and through to the evenings in summer. He agreed with the view of Miriam Shea that the Council might have a view on the opening hours of the café when granting the operating licence. The Chair added that the Committee needed to ensure that the said facilities were made available to the wider community after the refurbishment. Councillor Bora Kwon echoed that the Committee needed information on the community's access to the facilities and the hours of operation.

Councillor Dominic Stanton considered it helpful if a business plan reflecting the operator's financial capacity was in place for members to consider the proposal having regard to the income and expenditure forecasts. Stephen Waley-Cohen expressed support to the TVH proposal and considered it would be great if the Committee could give a green light for the TVH to identify potential café operator and produce the business plan. Reiterating her support in principle, Miriam Shea considered it prudent for the café operator to plan ahead when the margin was not desirable.

In reply to Councillor Dominic Stanton's enquiry about the timeline of the refurbishment works, Steve Hollingworth said he understood the TVH would like to proceed as soon as possible with a view to operating the refurbished facilities by next season. Noting members' views, he undertook to follow up with the TVH for the additional information and include the relevant conditions in the draft grant agreement for consideration and approval by the Committee at its next meeting scheduled for 14 December.

The Chair reiterated the Committee's view to ensure the Trust's money was well spent and the facilities were well managed. Members gave their support in principle as long as the aforesaid conditions were met.

ACTION: Steve Hollingworth

Stephen Waley-Cohen asked approval to bring a paper to the December meeting setting out suggested ways forward for the Linford Christie Stadium. Members agreed.

ACTION: Osama El-Amin

LDT Consultation

At the invitation of the Chair, Dr Miriam Burke of the London Development Trust (LDT) introduced her colleagues, Simon Donovan and Sevda Ozsezer-Kuruc. She presented the Summary Findings of Consultation 2022 conducted by the LDT.

Summary of recommendations

The remit of the consultation was to identify how people used the Scrubs, what the barriers and hopes for the future were:

- 79% of respondents agreed that biodiversity should be protected and enhanced.
- A similar proportion highlighted the need to enrich the educational offer of the space.
- Improving paths would support those with mobility issues, while protecting biodiversity by keeping footfall to specific areas.
- Improving the number and variety of facilities on offer, including - toilets, picnic benches, tables and water fountains.
- Reviewing the frequency of litter picking.
- Placing emergency phones at designated areas.
- Placing more effective controls on Dog Walking.
- Orientation signage could be integrated into other signage to support new visitors.
- Producing a long-term maintenance plan for the Scrubs.
- Delivering an impactful approach to Equality Diversity and Inclusion.

Stephen Waley-Cohen said he looked forward to receiving and reading the summary report as well as the full report, and until then would he be able to discuss and comment on the actions to be taken for the Scrubs.

Before Dr Burke and her colleagues left the meeting, the Chair thanked the LDT for the comprehensive summary of findings as well as LDT's time and effort put onto the consultation.

On the next steps, Steve Hollingworth informed members that the LDT would circulate the full report for members' comments, provide clarification where necessary and pass on the recommendations to the LUC consultants and the Council's ecologist to help incorporate them into the Master Plan which would be included in the Manager's Report for the next Committee meeting.

ACTION: Steve Hollingworth

OPDC Local Plan

Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager) gave an update on the OPDC Local Plan. In summary, the Local Plan was a statutory policy planning framework which had been in gestation since February 2016 before its adoption in June 2022. The Local Plan aimed to deliver a vision for the area known as Old Oak and Park Royal, with a view of delivering 20,000 new homes and 35,000 new jobs. It also included 4 proposed interconnected walking/cycling routes around the new hub of HS2, as well as access routes.

Osama El-Amin drew members' attention that in line with LBHF which was a statutory consultee to the OPDC, he was liaising with the OPDC and LBHF's legal and planning teams to ensure that the WSCT was also given "statutory consultee" status.

To enhance members' understanding of the Local Plan, Osama El-Amin proposed liaising with the OPDC to arrange a workshop to acknowledge how the environment around the Scrubs could be affected and how any public realm improvements could impact the ecology of the open space.

The Chair said that the 250-page document was very compact with a lot of details, it would be useful for members to gain a better understanding of the Local Plan through the workshop. Councillors Bora Kwon and Dominic Stanton agreed. Expressing her agreement too, Miriam Shea added that the Local Plan had been on discussion for a long time with a number of proposals being raised in the process.

The Committee approved undertaking a workshop with the OPDC to discuss the Local Plan.

ACTION: Osama El-Amin

Improvements to Entrances

Vicki Abel (Trust Development Manager) briefed members on the proposed improvements to the three entrances and clarified that the entrances were 1. Braybrook Street/Wulfstan Street; 2. Old Oak Community Centre/Braybrook Street; and 3. Scrubs Lane. She confirmed that the same contractor had provided two quotations. The lower quotation (Option 2) at £73,554 was based on the exact specification provided by the Council's Highway Department. The higher quotation (Option 1) at £129,255 included a deeper subbase of 100 mm for Sites 2 and 3 and included wooden (timber) edging beside the pathways. While LBHF's Highway Officer considered Option 2 viable as paths of similar specification had been provided across the borough, she said officers at the Scrubs considered Option 1 a long-term solution as the inclusion of timber edging would help retain the aggregate, as well as providing a level along the length of path to help reduce pooling. It would vegetate over in time to produce a soft aesthetic appearance.

While agreeing with the Chair that it was worth spending money upfront than saving money down the line, Councillor Dominic Stanton sought information on the lifespan and future maintenance costs of both options. Vicki Abel said the requested information was not available, she however understood that it was a low maintenance surface that could easily be repaired.

Stephen Waley-Cohen referred to his discussion with the Project Manager and a colleague on improvements to entrances which would meet some of the LDT's recommendations made earlier regarding better entrances, more picnic tables and seating. The Friends of Wormwood Scrubs favoured that approach. Echoing his view, Miriam Shea expressed positive support to the proposed improvements as they provided better access, helped reduce crime and enhanced the feeling of safety near the playground.

Councillor Bora Kwon asked whether any sites in the borough had used similar material so that she might take a look to ascertain whether the elevated proposal was a better long-term solution. Steve Hollingworth confirmed that it had been used in Bishops Park and South Park.

The Committee approved Option 1 at a total cost of £129,255, to be met by the funding of £110,000 from the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund and supplemented by £20,000 from WSCT's own resources to secure a long-term solution.

ACTION: Vicki Abel/Osama El-Amin

Events

Emma Jerrard (Senior Events Manager) advised members that the Secret Cinema organisation wished to hold events at the Scrubs next summer.

Secret Cinema

Brittany Woodham (Producer of Secret Cinema) introduced her colleagues: Amy O'Brien (Producer), Kath Tomlin (Community Manager), Carly Morrell (Production and Location Director) and Rob Haworth (Planning and Licensing).

Brittany Woodham outlined the background of Secret Cinema, and the previous productions, including Dirty Dancing at Kellerman's Resort in 2022, and Romeo & Juliet at Gunnersbury Park in 2018. The Secret Cinema proposed to bring two outdoor shows at the Wormwood Scrubs in summer 2023.

Kath Tomlin shared with members the objectives of community engagement, immersive learning (e.g. production workshops for aged 12 to 25) and training (shadowing employment for aged 18 to 25), immersive production of the shows adapted for local school students and paid employment for those with the required skills in production, operations, food and beverage.

Kath Tomlin continued that there was dedicated fundraising for each show, for local charities named by local residents and stakeholders through consultation. Fundraising was made through donations for previews and guest list by incorporating into the pre-narrative in-world webpages. She remarked that Secret Cinema had raised over £60,000 for charities since 2018.

The Chair asked about the site preparation and recovery before and after the shows. Brittany Woodham detailed the infrastructure to be put in place including marquees and scaffoldings, and truck traffic involved with special emphasis not to endanger the ecology of the Scrubs nor reduce its use by local residents and users

during the period. She assured members that 24/7 security would be arranged for the entire period.

In reply to the Chair's further enquiries, Kath Tomlin advised that subject to availability, the event might provide around 10 to 20 jobs for local people with the right skills. There would be a special screening of adapted immersive production for up to 500 students from secondary schools and sixth form cohorts. More screenings might be arranged on demand, subject to venue availability and budget. She further advised that each workshop would be attended by about 30 people, and there would be around 4 to 5 workshops for a 3-week show.

The Chair raised concern about light and noise nuisances caused by the shows. Brittany Woodham said that the light would be kept at the required level to ensure proper security screening of the site. Rob Haworth added that light sensors would be used so that unnecessary lighting would be off to minimise the impact.

In this regard, Stephen Waley-Cohen expressed concern about the inevitable light nuisance during screening and dispersal of some 5,000 audience in the dark, and noise nuisance from in-situ loudspeakers, both of which would be an intrusion to the local natural reserve. In response, Rob Haworth referred to the oversight of the local authority in respect of noise mitigation. He also detailed the mitigation measures to be taken by the sound designer and lighting engineer having regard to the concerns of the in-house ecology consultant.

Councillor Bora Kwon asked about audience make-up. Brittany Woodham said it varied depending on the nature of the shows. The Secret Cinema was currently securing the broadcasting rights of the show for summer 2023 which aimed at audience aged 12+/16+ and expected a lot of young families would join the shows. In terms of crime concern raised by Councillor Bora Kwon, Rob Haworth remarked that the Secret Cinema had encountered only a few security issues since 2006. He said that the control team with highly experienced security staff would use different elements and activities to direct and control the movement of the crowds from their arrival to dispersal. In reply to Councillor Bora Kwon's further concerns on vehicular flow and parking, Rob Haworth said that as the actual venue was kept secret, the audience would take public transport to the designated tube stations. Arrangements would be in place for taxi and vehicle pick-up after the shows.

Councillor Bora Kwon asked about the Secret Cinema's previous experience, if any, in hosting outdoor events at a venue like the Wormwood Scrubs which was wild, not easily accessible and lack of facilities. Rob Haworth referred to the various venues they had worked across London some of which were similarly remote. Such venues did not cause much concern as ultimately the Secret Cinema would work out the event layout to accommodate different needs. He assured members that the Secret Cinema's in-house ecology consultant was mindful of the need to preserve the local species during venue set up and down.

In response to Osama El-Amin's question about sewage treatment, Rob Haworth said that well-respected contractor would be engaged to remove the sewage in an environmental-friendly approach by moving the sewage around the site to designated waste carrier.

Responding to the Chair's concern about littering, Brittany Woodham advised that litter pickers would follow the audience from the tube stations as they might drop litter along the route, whereas the cleaning team would constantly pick up litter during the entire event until after the audience had left the venue. The litter would be recycled as far as possible.

As regards Osama El-Amin's further concern on the use of the improved entrances, Rob Haworth said the trucking contractor understood the importance of protecting the grassland and its neighbourhood, and the need to meet the conditions specified under the relevant licence for the event. In reply to Stephen Waley-Cohen's enquiry about the truck route, Brittany Woodham said that there were two options. During their recent site visit, they had accessed the site via the Scrubs Lane entrance. The Secret Cinema would discuss the best route to use with the Trust. In this connection, Miriam Shea referred to the Committee's previous discussion about improving access to the hospital by large vehicles and the Secret Cinema might draw reference from their experience.

Councillor Dominic Stanton was concerned about the longer-term effect of the presence of the show at the Scrubs. Brittany Woodham highlighted that expertise from the Secret Cinema could discuss with the Trust the details of the infrastructure and how they would be installed. In setting down the venue, the Secret Cinema would remove all infrastructures including the temporary road for truck access and leave no debris on the grassland.

As regards the financial involvement of the WSCT raised by Stephen Waley-Cohen, Emma Jerrard advised that subject to members' agreement to the initial proposal, the Secret Cinema would proceed to apply for the required licences when consultation with quotes would be carried out in parallel.

The Committee agreed to explore the matter further and invited the Secret Cinema to provide more detailed information for the Committee's consideration at a later meeting.

ACTION: Emma Jerrard

Baseline Audit of Flora and Fauna

Osama El-Amin briefed members that the Committee had sought a quotation from Idverde, in conjunction with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to undertake a comprehensive review of the existing plants and animals on the Scrubs. The costs of the project should be forthcoming in September 2022. Separately, HogWatch – a programme delivered by the Zoological Society of London to monitor London's hedgehog population – had noted hedgehog activities on Old Oak Estate and offered to deploy camera traps on-site to monitor their activities on the Scrubs.

Osama El-Amin said he would advise the timescale and quotation of the monitoring project at the next meeting. Stephen Waley-Cohen suggested, and members agreed that the Chair would approve the expenditure if the amount fell within her delegated authority.

ACTION: Osama El-Amin

Grounds Maintenance and site management update

Osama El-Amin updated members that delivery of sandy loam for footpath surfacing was underway. With reference to findings of the LDT consultation, a wider discussion on concepts and co-design of more robust meadow signage would soon proceed. Moreover, the installation of new benches near the play area on Braybrook Street to replace the burnt ones would take place after the construction of the new play equipment there.

Stephen Waley-Cohen stated that in terms of maintenance, there was a big improvement in litter picking and clearance at the start of the new contract. However, the contractor's performance was now less satisfactory than that in March. In response, Osama El-Amin said that the LTD's recommendation echoed the member's observation, and it was necessary to review this work stream. He undertook to follow up with the contractor accordingly.

ACTION: Osama El-Amin

Weekend parking charges

Steve Hollingworth advised that the new parking charges had come into force on Saturday 20 August 2022. Members noted that so far, there was no complaint about displacement of parking into residential streets.

Recruitment

The Chair welcomed the Trust Manager, Osama El-Amin and the Development Manager, Victoria Abel who had reported duty on 1st and 8th August 2022 respectively.

Law Enforcement Team (LET) Update

On behalf of the LET, Steve Hollingworth updated members that since 1 June 2022, LET officers had reported 458 various interactions, including patrolling the area/footpath from the car park leading to Braybrook Street at the rear of the WWS Prison. There were also 150 public engagements among the pedestrian/ cyclists/ dog walkers/ e-scooters as well as 140 high visibility reassurance patrols.

Councillor Dominic Stanton asked for an update on the reports of poison being placed near Braybrook Street. The Chair said she understood there were no further report of similar incident. Notwithstanding this, Stephen Waley-Cohen noted that many walkers remained cautious. Councillor Dominic Stanton found non-recurrence reassuring.

Financial Forecast 2022/2023

Nicholas Falcone (Senior Corporate Accountant) reported that the current forecast for 2022/2023 at £254,696 was slightly better than the budget with an anticipated net income outturn of £250,697. The decreased income had almost been fully

offset by decreased costs. The decreased income of around £15,000 was due to a general decline in parking income by £21,004 which was partly offset by the increased income of £6,000 from Kensington Aldridge Academy.

In terms of expenditure, Nicholas Falcone advised that there was £19,000 less spending due to the decreased in staff costs of about £14,000 and decrease in other expenditure of around £5,000.

Nicholas Falcone further said that subject to the meeting with the Trust's auditors scheduled for the following week, the audit of the 2021-22 accounts would be completed and the audit report would be prepared for the consideration of the Committee at the December meeting.

ACTION: Nicholas Falcone

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed to:

1. Consider the draft agreement for a grant of £40,000 towards the development of the TVH Clubhouse for use by the wider community.
2. Consider the LDT recommendations in relation to the proposed Master Plan.
3. Approve undertaking a workshop with the OPDC to discuss the 'Local Plan'.
4. Approve Option 1 for site entrance improvements.
5. Explore further the shows to be hosted by the Secret Cinema at the Scrubs in summer 2023.
6. Authorise the Chair to approve the cost of the HogWatch project if the amount fell within her delegated authority.
7. Note all other matters in the report.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the next meeting would be held on 14 December 2022.

Meeting started: 6.30 pm

Meeting ended: 8.53 pm

Chair

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