

Wormwood Scrubs Charitable Trust Committee Minutes

Wednesday 6 March 2024

PRESENT

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

Co-opted members: Faye Thomas and Stephen Waley-Cohen

Advisors to the Trust: Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager), Victoria Abel, Simon Ingyon, Mark Raisbeck, Nicholas Falcone and Carmen Lomotey

Clerk: Amrita White

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Bora Kwon provided apologies for lateness.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Matters arising:

Wormwood Scrubs Meadow – Local Nature Reserve

Osama El-Amin (Trust Manager) noted that before beginning the consultation process with Natural England for the Local Nature Reserve (LNR), a few outstanding issues needed to be addressed. Firstly, influencing behaviour change of professional dog walking companies within the meadow area.

Secondly, officers were working with the grounds maintenance contractor to create a forward work plan for addressing performance issues across the site. Part of those issues relate to managing vegetation across the site, which would need to be rectified before we proceed with the LNR designation.

Faye Thomas (Co-opted Member) enquired about the timeline for proceeding with the consultation. Osama El-Amin noted that the LNR consultation is likely to take place in autumn 2024.

The Chair conveyed her support for this initiative and emphasised the importance of fostering positive behaviour change among dog walkers before this area could operate as a nature reserve. However, she acknowledged that implementing such changes might take some time and the capacity of the grounds maintenance contractor to improve their performance is imperative to the success of establishing this LNR.

Trust bank account

Nick Falcone provided an update, noting that a letter, signed by the Chair of this Committee was submitted to NatWest a month ago. A formal complaint was lodged with NatWest on 5th March 2024 due to the extended delay in opening the Trust bank account. NatWest had acknowledged the complaint, and a response would be provided in 4 working days. Nick Falcone to monitor this response and feed back to the Trust Manager and Chair.

Action: Nicholas Falcone / Osama El-Amin

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. MANAGER'S REPORT

Trust Finances Q.4 2023/24 performance and FY 2024/25 Budget

Carmen Lomotey (Advisor to the Trust) provided an overview and noted the budget for 2023/24 was agreed with an anticipated net income outturn of £329,465. The current forecast at Q4 was a net income outturn of £564,843; a favourable movement from Q3 of net £235,378 compared to budget.

The Chair asked for further clarification to be provided on the impact on the actor strike on the income and expenditure. Carmen Lomotey explained the impact this had on the forecasted figure for filming and events noting that this had reduced by £5k.

The Committee noted the update.

Financial Year 2024/25 Budget

Carmen Lomotey summarised the proposed budget for 2024/25 along with details of movements and assumptions. She noted that the proposal for a 2024/25 net expenditure budget of £69,228. Although, income was budgeted at £88,507 higher than the current 2023/24 budget, expenditure was significantly higher, by £487,200, mainly due to the proposed investments.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) asked if an analysis had been conducted on utilising the grounds maintenance depot on the Scrubs and its use by the other contract LOT's within the Council, along with the costs associated with this. In response the Chair noted that this was work in progress, and a further update would be provided at a future meeting once the Linford Christie capital programme is underway.

The Committee approved the 2024/25 budget.

Trust's Reserve Policy and Objective FY 2023/24

Nick Falcone noted as recommended by the Trust's auditors (MHA) during the 2022-23 audit of the financial statements, the Trust Manager was now proposing a new reserves policy for the Trust which included a target range for the level of 'free' reserves. These reserves would help the charity in covering 6-12 months of core operating expenditure if the Trust were to restructure its operations and seek to reduce costs and / or increase income due to a loss of commercial income. The policy would be reviewed annually as part of the Trustee's annual report. The Committee was asked to approve this reserve's policy.

The Committee approved the Trust's Financial Reserves policy.

Outdoor Learning Initiative – Wormwood Scrubs

Osama El-Amin noted that he was working with local parents to develop an outdoor learning offer on the Scrubs. The Committee was asked to approve a £10,000 budget to run a pilot outdoor learning programme in summer/autumn 2024. A 6–8-week programme delivered via local providers in collaboration with local primary schools would aim to see how this programme could be incorporated into the learning objectives of existing educational frameworks.

Once the pilot was completed, evaluation data would be gathered and used to inform a procurement process to license this activity to a community partner.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) asked for further clarification to be provided around the location of this initiative. Osama El-Amin noted that the designated location for the proposed Forest School was around the back of Old Oak Community Centre.

Faye Thomas (Co-opted Member) asked if this area would be dog free for the whole duration of the pilot programme. Osama El-Amin noted that the current PSPO for dog walking notified that certain designated areas were off-limits for dog walking during times when Forest Schools were in session.

Councillor Bora Kwon enquired about the rationale behind conducting the initial pilot during the summer months. Osama El-Amin explained that this timing was selected due to the earliest available opportunity. He expressed intent to explore extending outdoor learning into the wetter seasons once the master plan works were completed.

Councillor Bora Kwon asked about the funding source for subsequent future programmes if the pilot proved successful. Osama El-Amin noted that once the pilot was completed, evaluation data would be gathered and used to inform the development of funding bids to support this work in the future.

Faye Thomas (Co-opted Member) asked about the age of the participants of the Forest School. She also requested that a map be circulated outlining the exact location of the proposed Forest School. Osama El-Amin noted this pilot was looking to support the age group between 7-15 years old.

Action: Osama El-Amin

Councillor Dominic Stanton asked if the outdoor learning would take place during normal school term time. Osama El-Amin explained that this would commence in the early summer term and could be extended into the autumn term.

The Committee approved a £10,000 budget to develop an outdoor learning pilot programme on the Scrubs.

HS2/BBVS – Works within the LLAU (Limit of Land to be Required and Used)

Osama El-Amin provided an update, noting on 26th February 2024, BBVS (HS2 Ltd. Contractor) carried out vegetation clearance works within land vested by HS2, for the purpose of preparing the land for future utility diversions. Prior to completion, Trust officers met with BBVS to discuss the boundaries of vegetation clearance to be completed before UK Power Networks (UKPN) could begin to re-route their utilities from Old Oak Common Lane into the UTX (Under Track Crossing) site.

Prior to works taking place, officers received results of an ecological survey. The site consists of vegetation, a hard standing path with a wooden post and metal bar fence, blackthorn scrub, modified grassland, and a single lime tree. No evidence of bat roosts or reptiles were recorded in this location. CLD (green mesh) fencing had been constructed along this route and was expected to remain in situ until UKPN had completed their work in April 2024.

Faye Thomas (Co-opted Member) asked for further clarification to be provided on the date to fell the willow tree. Osama El-Amin noted that he didn't have the exact date to provide, however this would be circulated to the Committee and the Friends once BBVS have given clarity on the work programme.

The Committee noted the update.

HS2 – Future of the UTX Site

Osama El-Amin noted that officers await a response to the letter sent to HS2 before reporting back to this Committee. The Trust and Council maintain their desire to see the land handed back nil premium, in lieu of a compensation claim once the area was deemed surplus to HS2 requirements.

The Committee noted the update.

Alternative Ecological Mitigation (AEM) Masterplan Programme Update

Vicki Abel, Advisor to the Trust noted that the supporting documents for the masterplan planning application had been reviewed and submitted. These documents included a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, and several Ecological and Biodiversity net gain documents.

The planning application and the supporting documents would be available for the public to view as part of the public consultation element of the planning process which was likely to commence 3-4 weeks after the planning application was submitted however the exact dates were to be confirmed by OPDC and would be shared with the Committee once ready. The next steps would depend on the outcome of the planning process. A decision on the planning application was due 13 weeks after submission.

Faye Thomas (Co-opted Member) asked when the application would go live on the OPDC website. Vicki Abel noted that this would happen during the public consultation phase which was 3-4 weeks following submission.

Stephen Waley-Cohen (Co-opted Member) commended the officers in their efforts in submitting the documents for the planning process. He requested additional clarification regarding the proposed location of the pond, as he believed it might not be in a suitable location. In response Vicki Abel, confirmed that the location of the pond was unchanged and offered a brief summary outlining the reasons behind this decision.

Action: Victoria Abel / Osama El-Amin

The Committee noted the update.

AEM Masterplan – Funding applications submitted: pathways, signage and SUD's

Vicki Abel provided an update, noting that the AEM agreement between HS2 and LBHF/WSCT sets the conditions upon which the Masterplan programme and associated project elements were to be funded.

Throughout the consultation process, consultees had recommended several inclusions that were not covered by the AEM agreement. These included the network of footpaths and sustainable urban drainage features, along with accessible signage. HS2 had agreed to consider the costs of these additional features once tender submission had been received. To ensure that these crucial projects elements were covered, officers had sought additional funding. A summary of submissions to date, with more prospect research and applications were provided.

Stephen Waley Cohen (Co-opted Member) requested that the Scrubs manager be notified in advance of any future delivery of benches to the Scrubs. Osama El-Amin noted that this feedback was taken on board.

The Committee noted the update.

Procuring a coffee van operator at Linford Christie Stadium car park

Osama El-Amin provided an update, noting that a consultation exercise undertaken in 2022 saw the establishment of a café space as a key service improvement for the Trust. Considering the facility maintenance issues at the Linford Christie Stadium and subsequent capital programme underway, the option to develop a café space at that location was currently limited. As a commitment of this Committee's intention to honour the insights generated from that consultation process, this Committee was asked to approve a competitive tender process to establish a coffee van operator for a 6-month trial period on the estate.

Stephen Waley Cohen (Co-opted Member) welcomed the plan and suggested that one of the conditions applied should related to litter management. He also proposed that the license period be extended to 12 months from 6 months to provide the operator with a good chance to get established across the seasons.

Action: Osama El-Amin

The Committed approve a process to procure a coffee van operator at the Linford Christie Car Park.

Linford Christie Capital Programme – changing room replacement and running track re-surfacing project.

Simon Ingyon, Advisor to the Trust provided an update on the changing rooms demolition. The project was being led by the Council's corporate property team. The colleague who was responsible for this work stream had unfortunately left the Council. The service was working to deploy temporary resource to begin the contract tendering process. A further update would be reported to the Committee in June.

Track re-surfacing – A purchase order had been raised for the first phase of this project. This involved developing the feasibility study, conducting site surveys, structural engineering calculations and developing an LED lighting design. Once this phase was complete, officers would have cost confidence leading into the tender submission phase.

The Committee noted the update.

Linford Christie Capital Improvements - Kensington Dragon's FC Pitch re-surfacing project

Simon Ingyon provided an update on the cost proposals received by four contractors for this project. All four bids came in the range of total cost of between £1.8M - £2.5M. This increase was due to an approx. 25% inflationary increase to the price of building construction since 2020.

WSCT had a funding agreement in place with KDFC to cover £250K of the total costs based on the original cost assessment for the development scheme. KDFC had requested an additional £250K from LBHF/WSCT towards a revised scheme costing a total of £1.5M, effectively splitting the additional capital cost 50/50 between the Football Club and the Council and Trust. Upon consulting with the Chair, officers would work with KDFC to review the potential effects of value engineering the development scheme, with the aim of reducing overall costs and maintaining the terms of the agreement with KDFC. A further update would be provided to this Committee in June.

Action: Simon Ingyon

The Committee noted the update and agreed to delegate approval for urgent decisions regarding the Kensington dragon's pitch re-surfacing/extension project to the Assistant Director Parks and Leisure in consultation with the Chair.

Priority Grounds Maintenance tasks to be completed: March – June 2024

Osama El-Amin provided a summary of the grounds maintenance activities users could expect to see on-site until June 2024.

Officers were working to ensure a forward work programme was established with Idverde to schedule the rectification items. This Committee could expect a proportion of those items to be completed by June. Levels of service delivery had maintained since the previous Committee with the contractor demonstrating a

commitment to ensuring that standards were improved for the remaining contract term.

In response to a question asked by Stephen Waley Cohen, Osama El-Amin provided a summary of the plans for the scrub and bramble management work with Idverde, which were likely to take place in the autumn. These works would be developed in consultation with the on-site ecologist and LBHF Ecology lead.

The Committee noted the update.

Safety improvements – Braybrook Street play area, low-level fencing

Osama El-Amin provided an update, noting that the consultation to install low-level fencing around the new play equipment concluded on 7 February. In line with the feedback received, officers would engage with the children of Old Oak Primary School and the Old Oak Community Centre (soon to become a family hub) to discuss potential new playground equipment to be installed in the playground to increase play value. Officers would also engage a consultant in drawing up wider plans for the whole area, including a comprehensive re-configuration of both play areas and fencing. As a more detailed design of the space was worked up, this would be shared with the Committee for feedback and cost approval.

Action: Osama El-Amin

The Committee noted the update.

Traffic Management System – Project completion

Osama El-Amin noted that officers were pleased to confirm that the traffic management system on the Woodman's Mews access road is now almost operational. The total cost of this project was £150,482.53. The system required one more step to become fully operational, with a metered connection to be installed in due course. The total cost of the project has risen by £20k. The two factors that contributed to this cost increase were the installation of the feeding pillar and discovery of asbestos while excavating, which required isolation and removal. This information came to light after the publication of the agenda.

The Trust Manager was working with stakeholders to distribute access key fobs and maintain a log of key access requests.

The Committee noted the update.

Community Safety Report – Law Enforcement Team (LET)

Osama El-Amin provided an update and outlined the works undertaken by the LET officers around Wormwood Scrubs from 28 November 2023 – 21 February 2024. Officers had reported 282 various interactions over this period. They had also engaged with residents, visitors, dog walkers, hospital workers, event organisers, public gym users, stakeholders, and facility users.

Faye Thomas (Co-opted Member) asked for further clarification to be provided on the fly tipping incidents. Osama El-Amin noted that he would follow up on any recent recorded data from fly tipping and report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED

The Committee:

1. Noted the Trust's financial performance in Quarter 4. Financial Year 2023/24 and approved the 2024/25 budget.
2. Approved the Trust's Financial Reserves policy.
3. Approved a £10,000 budget to develop an outdoor learning pilot programme on the Scrubs.
4. Noted utility diversion preparation works within the HS2 (High Speed 2) Ltd. - LLAU (Limit of Land to be Required and Used).
5. Noted an update on progress towards ensuring the UTX site is handed back to WSCT/LBHF.
6. Received an update on the AEM (Alternative Ecological Mitigation) Masterplan programme of work and next steps, post submission of the planning application.
7. Noted an update on applications to external funders for additional works to those covered in the AEM agreement. (UCTF, CEF, National Flood Management Fund).
8. Approved a process to procure a coffee van operator at the Linford Christie Car Park.
9. Noted an update on track resurfacing work and changing room upgrades at the Linford Christie Stadium.
10. Noted the update and agreed to delegate approval for urgent decisions regarding the Kensington dragon's pitch re-surfacing/extension project to the Assistant Director Parks and Leisure in consultation with the Chair.
11. Noted an update on Grounds Maintenance work to be undertaken between March – June 2024.
12. Noted on the next steps towards installing safety improvements around play and exercise equipment near Braybrook Street.
13. Noted an update on the Traffic Management System.
14. Noted an update on Community Safety across the estate.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair provided an update on the possible closure of Old Oak Common Lane for up to 4 years as proposed by HS2.

Mark Raisbeck noted that this news came as quite a surprise, and the communication of the proposal to the Council was not very clear. HS2 had stated in their announcement that they were exploring various options, one of which could involve the closure of Old Oak Common Lane for up to four years. This had raised significant concerns among officers. They were actively seeking to engage with HS2 to gain a clearer understanding of the situation. If needed,

legal advice would be sought to determine what measures the Council could take to encourage HS2 to collaborate more effectively.

Faye Thomas (Co-opted Member) enquired if officers could investigate the motive behind HS2 removing the vehicular access point width restriction on Wulfstan Street. Mark Raisbeck said that these were plans that he was not aware of, however he would look into this and report back to the Committee.

Action: Mark Raisbeck

Stephen Waley Cohen (Co-opted Member) provided details of the third annual dog show to take place at the end of July 2024. Osama El-Amin would explore options on how the Trust could support this event.

Action: Osama El-Amin

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting scheduled to be held on 19th June 2024.

Meeting started: 7pm
Meeting ended: 8:50pm

Chair

Clerk: Amrita White
E-mail: amrita.gill@lbhf.gov.uk