

# MINUTES OF THE ALEXANDRA PALACE AND PARK CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2008

## In attendance;

Councillors: \*Cooke, \*Egan, \*Beacham, \*Dogus,\*Hare, \*Peacock and \*Williams

## Nominated Members:

Alexandra Palace Allotments Association	*	Mr S. Ballard
Alexandra Palace Amateur Ice Skating Club	*	Mr M. Tarpey
Alexandra Palace Angling Association	*	Mr K. Pestell
Alexandra Palace Organ Appeal		Mr J. Apperley
Alexandra Palace Television Society		Mr S. Vaughan
Alexandra Palace Television Group		Mr J. Thompson
Alexandra Residents' Association	*	Ms C. Hayter
Bounds Green and District Residents' Association	*	Mr K. Ranson
Friends of Alexandra Park		Mr G. Hutchinson (Ms Gort deputising)
Friends of the Alexandra Palace Theatre		Mr N. Wilmott (Mr Richelle deputising)
Hornsey Historical Society	*	Mr J. O'Callaghan
Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association	*	Ms D Feeney
Muswell Hill Metro Group	*	Mr J. Boshier
New River Action Group		Mr F.W.Clark
Palace View Residents' Association	*	Ms V. Paley
Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians		Mr J. McCue
Warner Estate Residents' Association	*	Prof. R. Hudson

\*Members present.

## Also In Attendance:

David Loudfoot - General Manager, Alexandra Palace

Mark Evison – Park Manager, Alexandra Palace

Clifford Hart – Clerk to the Committee – Committees Manager – LB Haringey

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
<b>APCC44.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Gordan Hutchinson, for whom Monica Gort was substituting, and from John Thompson.  <b>NOTED</b>	
<b>APCC45.</b>	<b>URGENT BUSINESS</b>	

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	<p>There were no items of urgent business.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>
<b>APCC46.</b>	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>
<b>APCC47.</b>	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>(i) <b>ALEXANDRA PALACE AND PARK CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE – 15 JULY 2008</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>That the minutes of the Alexandra Palace and Park Consultative Committee held on 15 July 2008 be agreed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.</p> <p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>i. Ms Hayter referred to page 10 of the minutes and reference thereto of the lease and thought that she had requested that members be forwarded a copy.</p> <p>In response, the General Manager advised that this was possible and that this could be emailed or sent in hard form via the Clerk.</p> <p>ii. Mr O’Callaghan referred to reporting of comments of the Consultative Committee to the Board, similar to that of the Advisory Committee and whether the Board had any issue with this. The Chair responded that the Board had no issue at all with such practices.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p> <p>(ii) <b>ALEXANDRA PALACE AND PARK BOARD – 22 JULY 2008</b></p> <p>Mr O’Callaghan referred to the transfer of banking arrangements from the Co-op Bank to RBS by the Council and whether the Palace had also transferred its banking arrangements, or whether it was a separate account.</p> <p>The General Manager – Mr Loudfoot advised that the Palace’s banking arrangements were separate and that the palace was in the process of moving to another bank. Councillor Hare commented that electronic transferring was easier when transferring monies then different banks,</p>

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	<p>therefore it made sense for both to be with the same banker.</p> <p>In response to comments of Mr Richelle, regarding the likely revenue from a hotel development Mr Loudfoot advised that if a lease was granted for a proposed hotel site the only monies the palace would receive were in respect of ground rent and that the Trust would not profit from a hotel on the site.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>That the minutes of Alexandra Palace and Park Board held on 22 July 2008 be noted.</p>
<p><b>APCC48.</b></p>	<p><b>PARK ACTIVITIES UPDATE</b></p> <p>The Chair asked for a brief introduction of the report.</p> <p>In a succinct introduction to the circulated report the Park Manager – Mr Evison gave a brief update of recent activities carried out in Alexandra Park and answered points of clarification.</p> <p>The Committee then briefly raised the following points;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pitch and putt course is an excellent facility but members felt operator's hut suffered with poor ventilation;</li> <li>• Difficulties with erosion of the Lower Road and water drainage, and the possible putting in of soakaways to balance off the drainage problem. The Park Manager informed the Committee that some preliminary drainage works would be starting on the 16 October. The success of this work would inform future drainage projects.</li> <li>• Possibility of wood sculptures to tree stumps</li> <li>• Whether a tree audit could be produced in leaflet form</li> <li>• Difficulties with pedestrian crossing at the west side of the Palace and response that a review would be carried out of the location as to the feasibility of a zebra crossing being placed there</li> <li>• Concerns at poor lighting around the Grove Car Park , and safety issues in the area between Alexandra Park Way and the Dukes Avenue exit, under the railway arch, and whether CCTV could be located there as a deterrent and the response from the General Manager that it was hoped to expand CCTV in other parts of the park, and lighting upgrading was being looked into.</li> <li>• Possible signage at Park entrances now that gantries were removed and speed restriction notices, and also concerns of the large number of sign posts in a round the park area which were distracting</li> <li>• Clarification as to the car parking arrangements in the park and the increase parking up the road to the palace now that the paddock parking area was closed. The General Manager responded that the paddock was only used at weekends and on show days and that had always been the practice</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the pitch and putt signs were poor quality, the General Manager agreed to raise the issue with the operator of the pitch and putt course</li> </ul> <p>There being no further discussions it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>
<p><b>APCC49.</b></p>	<p><b>FORTHCOMING EVENTS</b></p> <p>In a brief introduction of the report the General Manager – Mr Loudfoot outlined the confirmed and provisional bookings for the Palace to April 2009. In particular the Fireworks event on 8 November, the Ice Rink panto, and Antiques Fare in December, and the Slamin Vinyl event in April 2009.</p> <p>The Committee briefly discussed the forthcoming Fireworks event on 8 November and the concerns previously expressed by Advisory and Consultative Committees regarding entrance closures and crowd control, and the need to ensure clear and visual information as to exist closures. The General Manager commented that the prime concern was always public safety and as such the security staff would have to close gates if the crowd density was too great. He also commented that the problem was difficult to manage as many of the local residents wanted to arrive at the very last moment which naturally coincided with the need to encourage the crowd to the lower areas of the park.</p> <p>In response to concerns as to whether bookings were down Mr Loudfoot advised that the events list was based on information compiled and was as up to date as possible. He was unable to give a comparison on previous year's events/bookings.</p> <p>Mr O'Callaghan referred to the recent 'Friends of Amma' event which he had visited after the Board meeting on 26 September and commented that it had been a most enlightening and interesting occasion, and would recommend the event.</p> <p>In conclusion the Chair asked that the General Manager note the concerns regarding crowd control and entrance closure in terms of the finalising of arrangements for the event on 8 November 2008.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that the report be noted; and</li> <li>that the General Manager Alexandra Palace be asked to note the concerns regarding crowd control and entrance closure in terms of the finalising of arrangements for the Firework event on 8 November 2008.</li> </ol>
<p><b>APCC50.</b></p>	<p><b>FUTURE OF THE ASSET - UPDATE (REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER)</b></p>

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The Chair referred to recent events in respect of the future of the Palace and the fact that the preferred bidder and partner – the Firoka Group had, on 18 August 2008, withdrawn its interest in the development of Alexandra Palace.

The Chair further informed the Committee that the Board, on 26 September 2008, had considered an independent review of the licence entered into with the Firoka Group – the Walklate report, which was readily available on the Council's web. The Board had endorsed the recommendation/findings of the review, as well as an action plan arising from the review in respect to governance arrangements. Copies of that report were available on the Council's web, and copies should have been available at this meeting but were not, and would be circulated to the Consultative Committee for their information.

With regard to the future of the Palace the Chair commented on the opportunity now open to the Board, given the history of the Palace over the past 25 years, to look at the pure potential of the Palace and he felt that there was an exciting prospect for the Board during the next 6 months, in conjunction with the Local community, residents, statutory bodies and interested groups, to look at a whole range of issues in respect of the future of the Palace. The Chair also commented that by having an open and frank dialogue this would not preclude any idea or proposal and he was confident that this process would be a positive and successful one. The structure of the existing trusteeship could be looked at, and whether there were options to be explored for the transfer of trusteeship in the future, and recognising what was the best interest of the Palace.

The General Manager – Mr Loudfoot also commented on the matter of the Firoka Group giving formal notice of withdrawing its interest as preferred bidder for the future development of the asset on 18 August 2008. The Board, at a special meeting on 26 September 2008, considered a number of matters relating to the future of the asset, including an independent review of the Licence arrangements entered into with the Firoka Group (a copy of that review was available for any Member at this meeting), and the resultant recommendations arising from that review recommendations regarding the future governance arrangements relating to the palace had been endorsed by the Board. Mr Loudfoot further advised that the Board had also discussed, and had agreed that an away day be arranged to discuss the future of the asset, and the way forward in the next 6/12 months.

Ms Hayter referred to the Independent report of which she had a copy, and commented that in her view it was evident that the advice of the Council's legal service should have been sought in terms of the entered into licence arrangements in order to have a balanced view, but this evidently had not been done. In seeking clarification as to the advice sought by Trustees Ms Hayter added that it was the case that the Board had undergone a number of membership changes over recent years and therefore there was not a large historical level of experience.

In response to the comments of Ms Hayter, the Chair advised that there were evident and recognised issues regarding the potential for Board of Trustees roles conflicting with those of a Councillor, and the fact that the trust was a charitable organisation. The Independent review did indeed address this issue and

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recommended a number of actions in relation to the governance arrangements to assist the Board, and that the action plan was designed to ensure that the Board never found itself in this position again in the future.

Mr O'Callaghan to the comments of the Chair in relation to difficulties and tensions/conflicts of trustees/Councillors and welcomed the assessment/review of roles. He particularly referred to the details of the entered into licence and that in his view this licence had been drawn up by the then General Manager – Mr Holder at the behest/bidding of Mr Kassam. It was the case that such events surrounding this were astounding and that both the Board and the Council had neither been aware of the terms of the licence or consequences of such an agreement. In his view, there were evident fraudulent actions that needed to be addressed.

The Chair responded that whilst it was the case that the actions of individuals were unclear and contradictory, as referred to in the independent report, with regard to the reference to possible fraudulent actions he stressed the need for caution in expressions specifically about individuals. In terms of the role of the former consultant/advisor, the Chair reminded the Committee that investigations were not as yet complete.

Councillor Hare commented that the Board had indeed agreed to have a further special meeting to look at the legal advice given in relation to the licence arrangements.

In response to clarification from Prof Hudson in relation to the future development of the asset and whether the holistic approach would still be pursued both the Chair and Mr Loudfoot commented that the whole development of the Palace over a 25 year history would be examined in order to assess and move forward and in doing so start with a blank canvass, engaging with community groups, interested parties etc to work together in forming ideas and concepts. It would indeed be a grave mistake to not learn from the difficulties of the past 25 years.

Councillor Egan also commented on the difficulties referred to in terms of the conflicts of Trustees in acting as Trustees as opposed to elected Councillors. It was the case that politics had evidently come into play on both sides of the political spectrum and that there had to be a non political approach and a frank and open dialogue in the future.

Mr Ballard referred to the consequences of the independent review and its finding and that in his view it seemed evident that the Trustees had not been asked to seek the view of either the Trust Solicitor or any other person. It was not a case of any incompetence but a fact that no such opinion had been sought. It was also the case that a number of the actions alluded to had indeed not been before the Trustees. In his view, the holistic approach was probably not a runner now and the whole future of the asset needed to be re-examined. He also felt it was appropriate, given the evident conflicts of trustees, to examine the Trusteeship of the Board and consider enhancing/widening participation.

The Chair reiterated his earlier comments in respect of future governance arrangements and the review of the role of the Trustees.

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Councillor Hare commented on the extraordinary and positive performance of APTL since the Firoka Licence had been terminated in January 2008. Given the level of decline in business during the period of the former licence arrangement, the question of why such a licence was allowed to operate for the time period needed clarification together with the actions of the then General Manager and Chair and the lack of consultation with the Board in terms of those actions.

In response to points raised by Councillor Hare, the Chair advised that actions taken had been disputed by the 2 individuals concerned which would be the subject of further clarification. Councillor Williams reminded the Chair that three other individuals as detailed in the report had also confirmed that this was the case.

Councillor Hare commented that in terms of the commissioned report and its findings it was clear that there were wider ramifications in terms of the detail of the licence and the decision reached by the Board in April 2007 and the resolutions of that meeting had no way given approval to entering into the agreement that had resulted in the licence with the Firoka Group. Councillor Hare commented that he had written, together with Councillor Williams, to the Chief Executive of the LB Haringey who had advised that they make a Freedom of Information request (Fol) to their own Board – Alexandra Palace to obtain details of the licence agreement. Councillor Hare advised that the commissioned report was remarkable in its findings but that the point should be made that it was a report commissioned by the Local Authority, and not Councillors.

Mr O'Callaghan commented on the issue of Mr Kassam's possible claims to sue the trustees and that in his view there was no basis for such a claim for loss of money. He added that the claim would never reach the Court of Chancery/High Court. However the Save Ally Pally Group would be more than happy to assist the Trustees in fighting any such claim against beneficiaries.

In response to Mr O'Callaghan and clarification by Ms Hayter Mr Loudfoot advised that the only suggestion of a claim had been at the point of Firoka's formal letter of withdrawal in August and that it should be noted that nothing further regarding a claim had been received since that time. The Chair added that the statements in the press – in the Evening Standard it had been quoted that Mr Kassam had said that had commented that the Palace would be hearing from his Lawyers. To date nothing had been received and any further rumour was.

In clarification to points from Mr Ballard as to why the process had finally failed, Mr Loudfoot advised that it was viewed that the Firoka Group had grown tired of waiting in terms of the further issues to be resolved and had therefore walked away.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked the Committee for its contribution to the debate.

**RESOLVED**

That the update be noted.

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<b>APCC51.</b>	<p><b>ITEMS REQUESTED BY NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVES</b></p> <p><b><i>ITEMS RAISED BY J. O'CALLAGHAN ON BEHALF OF HORNSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY</i></b></p> <p>1. Road through the Park:</p> <p>(a) please could the General Manager explain why there are no longer signs at the entrances warning that the private road through the park is closed to all commercial vehicles (other than for access and buses)</p> <p>(b) If the trustees no longer wish to enforce this ban, have funds been made available to cover the extra repairs to the road this will entail?</p> <p>Mr O'Callaghan, in stating his questions (a) &amp; (b), gave a brief history of the Park road in that up until the Second World War there had been no through road between Muswell Hill and Wood Green. There was no justification or requirement of the Palace to up keep the road in terms of commercial vehicle usage and there the act also did not make such provision. Therefore, as the road was in fact a private road the only vehicles using the road should be private vehicles. The palace should be seeking funding externally for its up keep given that commercial vehicles use the road.</p> <p>In response, the General Manager – Mr Loudfoot, advised that in terms of the history it was a fact that the road at each end of the palace had been joined for the use of buses following the demise of trams.</p> <p>In terms of signage, this had been updated following the removal of the gantries and there was permanent signage now. There were no other funding streams open to the Palace for funding and maintaining the road. The budget allocation for roads and paths within the park was in the region of £50K annually.</p> <p>In response to further points of clarification the Chair asked officers to report back further to the Committee, but given the nature of the issue this would not be a matter to be discussed at the away day.</p> <p>Mr Tucker gave a resume of issues relating to Crystal Palace and the development issues, which in his view had a parallel to Alexandra Palace. The Chair thanked Mr Tucker for his contribution.</p> <p>In response to clarification from Prof. Hudson as to the overall running costs for maintaining the palace the General Manager advised that this was in the region of £750K per annum. The General Manager clarified that this was in relation to the cost of the governance of the Charity, and maintenance of the Park, which had been estimated at £750k per annum.</p> <p>The Chair also responded to the points of clarification in terms of the away day attendance by advising that in the first instance the session would be for trustees</p>



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only, but that further sessions would possibly involve representatives from both the Consultative, and Advisory Committees.

**NOTED**

2. The report into the licence to Firoka (available on the council's website):

Will the trustees consider that one lesson from these events is that most ordinary Haringey councillors appointed to the Board are out of their depth (and it is unreasonable to expect them not to be) in dealing with and trying to monitor negotiations with a company such as Firoka?

3. Will the councillor/trustees consider that the governance of the charity, whose beneficiaries are the people of London, accept that trusteeship should now revert to reflecting this?

If not will they at least accept that an historic building and a local park needs regular grants, which should no longer be dressed up as "losses"?

The Chair responded that the questions asked had been answered during discussions during the meeting.

**NOTED**

***ITEMS RAISED BY V.PALEY ON BEHALF OF THE PALACE VIEW RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION***

**ALEXANDRA PALACE ICE RINK**

1. Estimate of how much longer it will stay open before major work expenditure forces closure;
2. A vague recollection of mention, some time ago of EU regulations which require replacement of the cooling system due to carbon omissions or some sort of pollution? Was the deadline 2010?
3. Invitation to the Save Ally Pally Group to present their proposals for keeping the ice rink open following on from (i) & (ii) above.

The General Manager – Mr Loudfoot advised in response, that the plant cooling system was now hugely out of date and now had approx 2 years of life left.

Under the current EU regulations it was a fact that the existing plant would be ruled obsolete and that after 2012 it was probable that even recycled gas would no longer be available and then it would be the case that a new cooling plant system would be required.

Mr Loudfoot also referred to the floor of the rink having moved and explained that it was not possible to say how long before a new floor would be needed but that it would make sense to change the plant and the floor as one package.

Mr Loudfoot and Mr Tarpey referred to the existing and possible commercial usage of the ice rink and that this was and would continue to be explored by

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	<p>APTL who now had the management of the rink. It was a recognised fact that the Ice Rink was of huge importance to local people and it had made a considerable contribution to the Palace. There was a possibility of relocating the Ice-rink to the pavilion car park area on a temporary basis when and if the existing rink was to be closed for a lengthy repair but Mr Loudfoot had not as yet calculated the financial implications of this option.</p> <p>In terms of asking for any group to give a view as to the future running of the Ice Rink it was felt by the Chair, and Mr Loudfoot that at this stage it would be premature for any organisation or individual to give a presentation.</p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>
<p><b>APCC52.</b></p>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>i. TV Studios</p> <p>Mr Tucker commented on the need for the Away day to also discuss the future of the former BBC Studios given the occupation of the BBC from 1936 to 1981, and that the new Governing Body of the BBC should now be prevailed upon to given financial contribution thereto.. The BBC was now governed by a Trust and that it would be appropriate for this Trust to write and seek some level of support, and making good the overall damage and alterations made to the SE wing during the BBC's occupation. There had been some vocal support by the current Director- General – Mark Thompson to the development of a museum and therefore such support should be encouraged. Mr O'Callaghan commented that he thought that the SE wing should be developed as an exhibition centre.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Tucker and Mr O'Callaghan for their comments and advised that the suggestions would be taken into account by the Board when assessing the way forward for the future of the Palace.</p> <p>ii. Fishing issues</p> <p>Mr Pestell referred to issues relating to the lake. The original lottery bid included a proposal to remove wooden boards from the lake and Mr Pestell was worried that this had been paid for, but not carried out. He also report that new shrubs around the fishing area have been stolen.</p> <p>The Parks Manager Mr Evison gave an undertaking to look into the issues, the General Manager reminded the committee that some of the refurbishment items had been altered as the scheme progressed and he was sure that if an item was charged then it would have been completed. He thought it was likely in this instance that the work had been deleted from the programme.</p>

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<b>APCC53.</b>	<b>TO NOTE THE FOLLOWING REMAINING DATE OF THE CONSULTATIVE COM FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2008/09I</b> 17 February 2009.

COUNCILLOR MATT COOKE

Chair