

MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE ALEXANDRA PARK & PALACE STATUTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE ALEXANDRA PALACE AND PARK CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 15TH MARCH, 2021, 7.30 - 9.00 PM

PRESENT:

Statutory Advisory Committee Members:

Councillors Patrick Berryman, James Chiriyankandath, Josh Dixon, Scott Emery, and Elin Weston.

John Crompton (Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Residents' Association), Kevin Stanfield (Palace Gates Residents' Association), Elizabeth Richardson (Palace View Residents' Association), David Frith (The Rookfield Association), Jason Beazley (Chair, Three Avenues Residents' Association), and Jim Jenks (Vice-Chair, Warner Estate Residents' Association).

Consultative Committee Members:

Councillor Mike Hakata (Chair), Councillor Elin Weston (Vice-Chair), and Councillors Dana Carlin, Eldridge Culverwell, Nick da Costa (from item 9), and Bob Hare.

John Wilkinson (Alexandra Palace Allotments Association), Jacob O'Callaghan (Alexandra Park and Palace Conservation Area Advisory Committee), Gordon Hutchinson (Friends of Alexandra Park), Nigel Willmott (Friends of the Alexandra Palace Theatre), Duncan Neill (Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association), Jason Beazley (Three Avenues Residents' Association), and Richard Hudson (Warner Estate Residents' Association)

1. ELECTION OF A CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

RESOLVED

To elect Jim Jenks as the Chair for the meeting.

2. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the notice of filming at meetings and this information was noted.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Statutory Advisory Committee – Councillor Lucia das Neves and Councillor Khaled Moyeed (due to a conflicting meeting).

Consultative Committee – apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Nick Da Costa.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED

1. To approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Statutory Advisory and Consultative Committees held on 5 November 2020 as a correct record.
2. To note the draft minutes of the Statutory Advisory Committee meeting held on 5 November 2020.
3. To note the draft minutes of the Alexandra Palace and Park Board meeting held on 14 December 2020 and 26 January 2021.

7. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) UPDATE

Louise Stewart, Chief Executive Officer, introduced the report which provided a general update on matters relating to Alexandra Park and Palace. It was noted that the Trust and Trading Subsidiary would face continued financial challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic for several years. It was added that there would be continued fundraising and that two crowdfunding projects were currently in progress. It was also explained that car park charging had been expected to be implemented in April but was now expected to be implemented by the end of June; the donate to park scheme would remain in place until charging was active.

It was enquired whether there had been any developments in relation to Alexandra Park Railway Bridge near Dukes Avenue. The Chief Executive noted that there was no further information at present. It was explained that there were several bridges involved in the Department for Transport's proposals and that a number of challenges had been made by special interest groups around the country.

It was noted that there had been several lightings of the Mast, as set out in section 9.2 of the report, and it was enquired whether the Mast could be lit up in green in honour of Grenfell Tower. The Chief Executive noted that this had been done previously and that requests to light the mast could be made through the application process; Natalie Layton, Executive Assistant and Charity Secretary, could be contacted for further details.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

8. TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT ON ALEXANDRA PALACE WAY

The Chief Executive noted that the traffic enforcement proposals had been informally circulated in advance of the meeting. She thanked the Statutory Advisory Committee and Consultative Committee groups that had responded and noted that the comments received had been supportive. The Chief Executive also thanked the Police for their support in dealing with this issue, particularly when their own resources had been stretched.

One member noted that the Trustees could enforce the Park and Palace bylaws, instead of the traffic enforcement proposals, and they felt that this would be a cheaper and better method; they added that they would be writing to the Council's Head of Legal in relation to this issue. The Chief Executive stated that all options had been considered and that the current proposals would not have been chosen if there was a cheaper, more effective option. It was explained that the bylaws were difficult to enforce and the fines were limited to £50. In addition, it was noted that the bylaws would require a similar approach in relation to the use of enforcement officers due to the nature of the individuals who were wilfully obstructing the highway.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

9. PARK LICENCE VARIATION

The Chief Executive introduced the item which sought to consult on proposed variations to the park licence. It was explained that the variation was not intended to increase the number of large scale events that were already permitted but aimed to bring smaller events under the same framework to ensure consistency. It was noted that it was proposed to increase the number of events at a slightly higher sound level but that the maximum permitted sound level was not being increased.

A member stated that some residents from Springfield Avenue were concerned about noise issues; it was enquired whether this had been considered and whether more could be done. The Chief Executive stated that she was not aware of any outstanding noise issues in 2019. It was explained that all events with amplified sound had independent noise monitors on site and, if a call was received about noise, they would visit the address(es) to check the sound levels and, if the noise level had been breached, would instruct the sound engineers to reduce the levels. It was noted that there was one incident where a specialist attended an address and made a recording but the resident did not see this; the Chief Executive could not recall whether this was an address on Springfield Avenue. The Chief Executive added that the concerns of local residents were understood but highlighted that the licence variation was not seeking to increase the existing number of large scale events. It was noted that there

would be a maximum noise level of 65-70 decibels for a few, additional, small scale events and that not all events would have amplified sound.

Gordon Hutchinson, Friends of Alexandra Park, noted that there had been 50 responses to the licence proposals from the Friends. These recognised the need for the Trust to generate income but highlighted the importance of finding a balance between income and the protection of the park. There was also a general consensus that the inclusion of Pitch & Putt Golf Course in the licence was reasonable but there were concerns about how much this facility would be closed for corporate events. It was added that the Friends welcomed the introduction of small events with up to 600 attendees but objected to the proposal for an unlimited number of these events, which would include corporate events. It was considered that this would result in disturbances to park users and wildlife and it was suggested that some 'no go' areas should be agreed to protect certain areas of the park. It was added that a recovery period was required between events, particularly given the intensive usage of the park during the Covid-19 pandemic, and it was suggested that some quiet days should be programmed where there would be no vehicles or construction. It was also proposed that the number of small event days should be amended to 40 per year with an impact assessment undertaken after one year.

It was noted that some of the responses from the Friends expressed concerns about increased noise levels and about moving events to the Pavilion Car Park which was closer to residential housing. It was also noted that there would be an increased catering offer which included alcohol and there were concerns that this would encourage late night drinking and anti-social behaviour which had been an issue in the summer of 2020. It was explained that the Friends would object more strongly to the provision of alcohol without any increase to the provision of proper toilets; it was stated that there was often a need to remove human waste from the woodland within the park. It was suggested that the provision of toilets should be a condition of the increased catering and sale of alcohol offer and that litter clearance needed to be in operation beyond the opening hours of any catering businesses.

The Chief Executive noted that a cap of 40 small event days could be used very quickly; for example, it could be reached by a run of theatre performances within a few weeks. It was explained that the reason for seeking an unlimited number of events in the licensing application was to provide varied options and some adaptability. The Chief Executive noted that a responsible approach would be taken and it was hoped that the track record for the approach since the park licence had been granted would give confidence and reassurance to the local community and the Friends. It was added that there would be rest days and that smaller events did not involve as much disturbance in terms of installation or removal. It was also noted that the Trust was working to install discrete infrastructure for events which, over time, could remove the need for generators and reduce emissions; it was possible that some infrastructure would be funded through the £1.7 million Adapt and Recover Culture Recovery Fund.

It was noted that there were five million visits to the park last year but that there had been little or no income to the Charity from these visits; it was explained that the proposed food and drink offer would generate some income. It was also noted that the catering units were not mass volume alcohol outlets and there would be a variety of food and drink options. The Chief Executive added that the Trust wanted to provide

more toilet facilities but that any permanent facilities would cost tens of thousands of pounds; it was added that the team was looking into the provision of temporary facilities. The suggestion to include litter collection after the catering units had closed was noted and would be considered further. It was confirmed that the food and drink outlets might also be considered in the future but that this would depend on the monitoring of the current proposal, including any impact on wildlife and consideration of whether the income was sufficient to fund toilet facilities and litter collection.

John Wilkinson, Alexandra Palace Allotments Association, reported that there had been 23 responses from the Association, with three broadly in favour and 20 which expressed concerns about noise, security, wildlife, and access. Regarding noise, it was felt that music should be broadcast at lower levels as the park should be a place for nature rather than a commercial venture. There were also some concerns that speeding traffic would increase, particularly where plot holders crossed the road to access the allotments. Regarding security, it was reported that there had been a number of break ins at the allotments recently. It was acknowledged that the culprits were not connected to events at Alexandra Palace but there were concerns that people might be tempted to access the allotments if there were increased events. Regarding wildlife, it was feared that additional noise and footfall could affect bird and animal activity and nesting to the detriment of local residents and plot holders. Regarding access, it was noted that the top access gate was sometimes closed when an event was taking place and there were concerns that plot holders would be required to seek alternative access to the allotments more frequently. In addition, plot holders wanted assurance that the W3 bus would be maintained during events.

The Chief Executive stated that the Trust had an excellent track record for managing noise, responding to complaints, and balancing competing interests within the park. In relation to the traffic issues, these were expected to reduce following the changes to enforcement and car parking. It was highlighted that the proposals were not seeking to increase the number of large scale events. In relation to wildlife, it was explained that there were surveys and monitoring in place and this would continue; it was added that the lighting and timing of events was sometimes altered following specialist advice from wildlife consultants. In relation to the W3 bus service, it was noted that the Trust always aimed to limit the impact on the service but that, sometimes, Transport for London (TfL) made the decision to divert the service.

One member noted that they had complete faith in Alexandra Palace but that some people were more cautious and it was suggested that more formal communications with residents and local groups would be useful. The Chief Executive noted that there was regular contact in response to queries and that she would be happy to attend any group meetings to answer questions where possible.

It was enquired whether a list of event types and locations could be provided for residents to see in advance. The Chief Executive noted that some events were permitted to take place at short notice and that it could be difficult and resource intensive to produce a regular and comprehensive list. Residents were advised to visit the website which was regularly updated; there was also an option to join the mailing list for more regular communications.

RESOLVED

1. To note the report.
2. The Joint Statutory Advisory Committee and Consultative Committee accepted the need to generate income for the Trust but felt that this should be balanced with the impact of the increased number of events on the park and its neighbours and provided the following issues for the consideration of the Alexandra Park and Palace Board:
 - Potential for noise disturbance from increased outdoor events.
 - Security of and access to the Allotments.
 - A longer recovery period between events to reduce the impact on the Park.
 - Placing restrictions on vehicles driving on grassed areas after events.
 - Designating some areas as 'no-go'.
 - Additional catering units may exacerbate litter and anti-social behaviour.
 - Minimal impact on the W3 Bus Route.
 - The Committees did not fully support the sale of alcohol from the increase in catering units in the Park and felt this should be permitted on the condition that toilet facilities be installed in the Park. The Committees were supportive of having litter collections beyond the closing time of any catering units.
 - The Committees asked to be kept informed of the planning and programming of outdoor events in advance and that the Friends of the Park and the Park Manager be involved in the planning of all outdoor events.

10. APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING, LISTED BUILDING, AND ADVERTISEMENT CONSENTS

The Chief Executive introduced the item which sought to consult on proposals for upgrading external signage in the Park and on Alexandra Palace Way, additional improvements to the outdoor beer garden, an outdoor toilet in the Old Deer Enclosure, and external space frames redecoration.

In relation to upgrading external signage, some members suggested that the proposed notice boards should also provide more information about the Park or the charitable objectives. It was added that the proposed message 'Forever Yours' sounded a bit morbid and it was suggested that 'Forever Ours' might be more appropriate. The Chief Executive noted this and explained that the message tried to convey the fact that the park belonged to everyone; it was added that some testing could be carried out in relation to this message.

It was commented that the map and information within the boards were shown as examples and this could be updated. It was explained that the new boards would be updated more easily and more often. It was noted that the Friends of the Park had also been invited to update their notice board.

In relation to the outdoor toilet, it was confirmed that this would be a compostable toilet and would include hand sanitisation facilities. It was noted that the toilet would only be used by those attending Creative Learning Team projects because, based on research into other parks, the facilities would struggle with any additional volume. It

was added that there would also be a solar powered fan to assist with evaporation. Some members suggested ensuring a soakaway for any handwashing facilities in order to reduce the demand on composting. John Wilkinson, Alexandra Palace Allotments Association, noted that he had previous experience with similar outdoor toilets and would be happy to discuss this project. It was also asked whether a compostable toilet could be installed in the Campsbourne area which had been particularly affected last year with people toileting in the park. The Chief Executive noted that there was a longer term project to improve facilities in this area.

It was enquired whether it would be possible to address the drainage at the bottom of the hill within the park, and whether solar panels could be installed on Alexandra Palace to increase self-sufficiency. The Chief Executive explained that there was widespread awareness of the drainage issues but that extensive funding was required. It was noted that numerous options were being investigated, including Community Infrastructure Levy and Mayor of London funding, and the Council was aware. In relation to solar panels, it was noted that this had been investigated during the design of the East Wing project but it had been determined that the roof was incapable of holding the necessary weight in many places.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

11. NON-VOTING BOARD MEMBERS FEEDBACK

Nigel Willmott, Friends of the Alexandra Palace Theatre, noted that the Board had been recently considering governance issues and car parking. It was explained that the Alexandra Palace team had been looking to maximise revenue as much as possible during the Covid-19 pandemic, including new activities such as streamed theatre events. It was noted that the team was working exceptionally hard and that a lot of work was going on behind the scenes to make sure that activities could take place as soon as government regulations permitted.

12. ITEMS RAISED BY INTERESTED GROUPS

There were no additional items raised by interested groups.

13. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no new items of urgent business.

14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To note that the dates of future meetings would be confirmed at the Council meeting in May 2021.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date