



MINUTES OF THE BARHAM PARK TRUST COMMITTEE
Held as an online meeting on Tuesday 1 September 2020 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT (in remote attendance): Councillor McLennan (Chair), Krupa Sheth (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Agha, Farah and M Patel.

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor Mili Patel declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 7 (General Update Report) as a trustee of the Young Brent Foundation.

Councillor Patel left the meeting for this item and took no part in the discussion or decision made in respect of the recommendations contained within the report.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 3 September 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

4. Matters arising (if any)

None.

5. Tenant Organisations (Verbal Update)

At the invitation of the Chair, representatives of the following tenant organisations for the Barham Park buildings complex provided updates on the activities of their respective organisations:

Friends of Barham Park Library

Paul Lorber supported by Councillor Lloyd speaking on behalf of the Friends of Barham Library began by advising the Committee how they had needed to adhere to Government guidelines and close the library during lockdown. During closure repairs, decoration and stock checks had been undertaken. After detailed assessments, the library had recently reopened but was operating under limited hours with four activity groups currently having resumed albeit operating in accordance with the relevant social distancing requirements. The groups operating were Memory Lounge; the Dementia Support Group; Art classes and evening Yoga sessions. The children's library remained closed along with the toilet and kitchen facilities. The Trust were advised that the Friends of Barham Park Library continued to monitor and assess safety measures to ensure activities could still take place. In addition, whilst the shop at Sudbury Town Underground station was now reopened sales were limited due to the reduction in commuters using public transport during the pandemic. Financial support was being provided by London Underground in terms of rent reductions with additional grant funding also provided,

however ongoing concern remained in relation to the repair of the library as a listed building.

Tmu Samaji UK

Baburam Gurung speaking on behalf of Tmu Samaj (Nepalese cultural group) reminded the Trust of their status as a charitable organisation focused on the elderly and young people in the community. The group had been involved in providing various community activities but was currently not able to operate due to the pandemic. It was hoped they would be able to reopen shortly with the organisation looking at various measures, including the receipt of grant funding to generate income in order to support their activities and ongoing overheads. During lockdown, the organisation had continued to visit their elderly members in order to provide support and assistance.

Members commended the tenant organisations for their ongoing efforts, dedication and hard work in continuing to support their local communities during such challenging times.

6. Annual Report & Accounts 2019-2020

Jekaterina Popova (Senior Financial Analyst) presented the Annual Report and Annual Accounts for 2019-20. It was noted that the Trust had incurred expenditure of £86,320 on maintenance of the building complex and the park, and generated £100,674 receipts from rental income and interest earned. This had led to the cash balance held by the Trust increasing by £14,354 to £502,651. Out of this £389,052 consisted of restricted funds and £113,600 unrestricted funds. There was also a total of £27,313 of expenditure from the Trust's restricted funds in the 2019/20 financial year up to 31 March 2020. General expenditure on the running and maintenance of the park and buildings had decreased by £17,838 compared to 2018/19 with income having decreased by £660.

The Committee's attention was also drawn to the Independent Examiners report, attached as Appendix C to the report. Whilst this had confirmed that there were no issues regarding the accounts which needed to be brought to the Committee's attention, members were advised of a minor adjustment that may be required to the accounts in relation of the Payments under Premises – Utility. In previous years the accounts had included a payment for utilities, however no payments had been included within the 2019/20 accounts. Further review was being undertaken by the Finance Team and depending on the outcome the Committee was advised there may be a need for a minor adjustment to be made to the final accounts.

Members were also advised of the potential impact of the proposals included for consideration within the General Update report in relation to rent abatement and/or deferrals given the proportion of income generated through the Trusts rental income account, which it was noted would require review on a case by case basis.

Having considered the report it was **RESOLVED**

- (1) To approve the annual report and the Barham Park Trust's Accounts for 2019/20 and authorise officers to file the report with the Charity Commission.

- (2) To approve the Barham Park Trust's accounts for 2019/20 and delegate authority to the Operational Director for Environmental Services to make any minor adjustments to the accounts arising from the query on expenditure on utilities as identified by the Independent Examiner and to file the accounts, for 2019/20 with the Charity Commission.
- (3) To note the Independent Examiner's Review of the Barham Park Trust's Accounts for 2019/20.

7. General Update Report

Leslie Williams (Project Officer) introduced the report updating the Trust on operational issues at Barham Park along with current progress on a range of projects.

Members were provided with updates in relation to the following issues:

- Security and anti-social behaviour for the period 1 April 19 – 31 March 20, as detailed within section 3.2 of the report. The increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour reported within the park were noted along with the increased level of outreach and Safer Neighbourhood Patrols as a means of tackling the issues alongside the introduction of a Public Space Protection Order covering all parks and open spaces which could be used to assist in enforcement activity.
- Rough sleeping within the park: members noted the work being undertaken with St Mungo's to support the three rough sleepers identified using the park during the year. Whilst all had been offered support and accommodation at the start of the pandemic two had been identified as subsequently returning to sleep at or near the park with St Mungo's continuing to assist where possible.
- General Operational Works – Members noted that operational grounds maintenance work continued to be undertaken by the Council's main contractor Veolia. Recent work had included making safe and opening a gap in an internal fence between the Events Field and Queen Elizabeth II Gardens to allow easier access. The Committee also congratulated Veolia and other officers involved for their efforts in being awarded a London in Bloom Walled Garden Silver Gilt award for their maintenance of the Walled Garden.
- Grass and meadows: Members noted the continued improvement to the range of grasslands and associated wildlife within the park, as detailed within section 3.7 of the report.
- Maintenance of Barham Park Building: Members noted the ongoing operational maintenance works and discussions regarding repairs to the units occupied by the Veterans Club and Friends of Barham Park Library. The expenditure had been sourced from the Trusts unrestricted funds and included in the accounts from 2018/19.
- Fire security system: Members noted the briefings being provided for tenant representatives at the Occupier's Meetings regarding operation of the system for Barham Park and ability for each organisation to re-brief their own members as required.
- Barham Park building Unit 7: Members noted the update provided by Chris Whyte (Operational Director, Environmental Services) regarding the ongoing negotiations with the lead tender applicant (the Friends of Barham Library)

and their proposed partner organisation the Memory Lounge for provision of a Dementia Centre at Unit 7, with further clarification having also been sought on the partnership arrangements in terms of operation of the lease. Members noted that the property comprised of two distinct areas, the Mess Room and a Store Room, with both areas requiring investment given their current condition, on which details were currently under discussion. In support of these refurbishment costs confirmation was provided that Friends of Barham Park had been successful in securing funding through the Council's Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy fund.

- Barham Park building Unit 8: Chris Whyte then moved on to inform the Committee of plans for Unit 8 and the approval being sought for its underletting to the Young Brent Foundation (YBF), subject to satisfactory clearance of financial checks with Brent Council's Children and Young People Service remaining as leaseholder. As additional background, members were reminded that the Unit had been let by the Trust since 2016 to Brent Council's Children and Young People service as a Children's Centre. The Centre had been managed by Barnardos but due to reorganisation and other changes it was now proposed to under let to a different voluntary sector provider (YBF), although still for use as a Children's Centre. Council staff would continue to be involved in delivering and facilitating services with the YBF also facilitating community and voluntary sector workshops and development. Members noted this would not involve any change to the conditions of the lease between the Trust and Brent Council or to the annual rent but would require a licence to underlet between the Trust and Council involving the Trust consenting to the Council for the underlet in respect of the Unit to YBF. Members indicated their support for the approach outlined noting its link to the overall development of the Family Hub proposals.
- The challenges being experienced by tenants during the pandemic, which the Committee were advised had resulted in two of the Trust's leaseholders having submitted applications for either rent abatement or for deferment, which required consideration. The applications had been received in relation to:
 - Unit 2 (Veterans Club), which members noted had been closed since the start of the lockdown in March 2020. Given their reliance on membership fees for rental payments which had been severely restricted during the pandemic a request had been submitted for a rent abatement and deferrals over the second and third quarters of 2020. Members also noted the significant risk that membership may not return by September 2020, which may also impact on the collection of the fourth quarter rent and could therefore result in additional requests for rent abatement during the 2020/2021 financial year and beyond; and
 - Units 3, 5, 6, 9 & 10 (ACAVA) who members noted relied on rents collected from their artists' studios, the operation of which had been severely restricted during the pandemic. Whilst the final position needed to be clarified with ACAVA a rent abatement and deferral request had been raised for consideration for the second and third quarter 2020. In considering the issue members were reminded of the organisations substantial rental contribution to the Trust, which it would be important to work to sustain over the longer term. It was also noted that given the ongoing uncertainty around the pandemic additional requests for rent abatement and deferrals may need to be submitted during the

2020/2021 financial year and beyond. In balancing the considerations needing to be taken into account Members also noted the potential impact which the loss of income would have on the Trust along with the risk that other occupiers may also submit similar requests.

Members noted that any requests for rent abatement and rent deferral would need to be considered having taken account of the potential impact on the Trust's financial position, in particular its unrestricted funds and whether these would be in the Trust's best interest. As a result it was recommended delegate authority was provided to the Operational Director for Environmental Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Trust Committee to consider and make any final decision on individual applications for rent abatement and deferral received during 2020/21 in respect of any units in the Barham Park Building. As part of this process, members noted that the guidance provided from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Charity Commission (as detailed within section 3.15 of the report) would also be taken into account.

- Works – Restricted Funding: Members noted the agreed funding (£177,000) and progress summary on expenditure to date from the Trust's restricted fund, as detailed within section 3.17 of the report. This included works in relation to Trees (as detailed in section 3.18 of the report), the existing windows, doors, frames and other exterior structures of the Barham Park building (as detailed in sections 3.19 – 3.20 of the report) and Events field drainage survey, design and works (as detailed in sections 3.21 – 3.23 of the report). The works to the exterior of the Building had received planning approval, however, given the professional estimates for funding required to cover the full cost of works there would now be a need to secure the necessary funding from grant or other sources. In terms of the Event Field drainage works members noted the work currently being undertaken to progress the procurement of a contractor to carry out the works.
- Works being undertaken through other funding: Members noted the updates provided in relation to the replacement of the Oak tree at the west side of the Park, which following a delay due to the pandemic was now scheduled for completion in autumn/winter 2020/21; the restoration of the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Garden in the west side courtyard and reasons for the technical delay and repair works to the walled garden pond, which were planned for autumn 2020.
- The proposed installation of cycling information and safety signs (as detailed within section 3.27 – 3.28 of the report and Appendix A of the report, for which the Committee's approval was being sought.

Following on from the update, Members were keen to recognise the important role which the park had played during the ongoing pandemic in terms of providing an outdoor facility for use by the local community and thanked everyone involved for their efforts, dedication and hard work during such challenging times to ensure the park and its facilities were managed and maintained and had remained available for use by the local community.

Having considered the updates provided it was **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the issues set out in this report.

- (2) To note and agree the proposal to underlet Unit 8 of the Barham Park Building (The Children's Centre) by Brent Council's Children and Young People Service to a voluntary sector provider, namely the Young Brent Foundation, on the same rental terms pursuant to the lease in respect of Unit 8 between the Barham Park Trust and Brent Council and subject to the satisfactory clearance of financial checks.
- (3) To delegate authority to the Operational Director for Environmental Services in consultation with the Chair of the Trust Committee to decide upon the proposal for rent abatement and deferrals from:
 - (a) the Veterans in respect of quarters 2 and 3 for the year 2020/21 in respect of Unit 2 of the Barham Park Building, the details of which needed to be finalised; and
 - (b) ACAVA in respect of quarters 2 and 3 for the year 2020/21 in respect of Units 3, 5, 6, 9 and 10 of the Barham Park Building;

and note that such decisions would take into account the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government Guidance and the Charity Commission Guidance as set out in paragraph 3.15 of this report.

- (4) To delegate authority to consider and decide upon any further requests for rent abatement or deferral in respect of the Units at the Barham Park Building that arose from the Covid-19 pandemic to the Operational Director for Environmental Services in consultation with the Chair of the Trust Committee and note that such decisions would take into account the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government Guidance and also the Charity Commission Guidance as set out in paragraph 3.15 of this report.
- (5) To note and agree to the proposal to approval the installation of signs in Barham Park to inform and facilitate cycling.

Having left the meeting for the duration of this item, Councillor M.Patel re-joined the meeting at this stage for the remainder of the proceedings.

8. Any other urgent business

No items of urgency business were raised at the meeting.

The meeting was declared closed at 7.00 pm

COUNCILLOR MARGARET MCLENNAN
Chair