

## LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES 29 FEBRUARY 2024

Members Present:     John Bevan (Chairman)                             Mike Garnett  
                           Ken Ayling   Marshall Vance  
                           Janet Burgess   Terry Wheeler

Apologies Received From: Steven Heather, Calvin Horner, John Wyllie

Officers Present:     Beryl Foster                     - Deputy Chief Executive  
                           Jon Carney                     - Corporate Director for Parklands  
                           Dan Buck                       - Corporate Director for Sport & Leisure  
                           Victoria Yates               - Head of Human Resources  
                           Michael Sterry               - Senior Accountant  
                           Jessica Whitehead           - Volunteers Officer  
                           Julie Smith                   - Head of Legal  
                           Lindsey Johnson             - Committee Services Officer

#### Part I

An email summary of a meeting regarding Greenwich Leisure Ltd's response on volunteering and minutes from the last Volunteers meeting was tabled.

#### 214    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 215    MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

**THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 be approved and signed.**

#### 216    PUBLIC SPEAKING

No requests from the public to speak or present petitions had been received for this meeting.

#### 217    REVIEW OF VOLUNTEERING

Paper S/67/24

The Chairman directed Members to paragraph 5 of the report, which sets out Phase 1 areas for review. The first two bullet points regarding exploring ways to achieve closer contact and involvement with volunteers and Members and raising awareness of volunteering activities with Members has already been achieved via an email which is sent with reports which has a link to view volunteering opportunities.

Members were keen to hear more about the volunteer led walks. The Volunteers Officer explained that all walks were available for the public, with some walks more targeted to specific groups, such as sensory walks or those with disabilities. These walks are

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advertised on the website, a TV screen at the Wildlife Discovery Centre and noticeboards across the Park.

The Chairman directed Members to the third bullet point regarding removing volunteers from the database who have not made recent contact. The Volunteers Officer informed Members that since new 'access' categories had been made to the database it was now easier to confirm which volunteers were still active. The Head of Legal commented that a review would be taking place to determine what data we hold in order to comply with Data Protection legislation. The Chairman asked for an update on this at the next meeting.

The fourth bullet point related to ways to encourage volunteers and partner organisations to report volunteering hours and demographic data. The Volunteers Officer informed Members that she regularly checks with staff and partner organisations to obtain volunteering data. The Corporate Director for Sport & Leisure added that Greenwich Leisure Ltd are contracted to have volunteers. The Volunteers Officer added that the email regarding Greenwich Leisure Ltd's response on volunteering covers their whole organisation countrywide, not just the venues they manage for us. The meeting with them was positive and gave us ideas on how we might be able to better promote volunteering and reaching out to people. Members commented that it would be interesting to have separate figures on volunteering for the Authority and Greenwich Leisure Ltd. The Corporate Director for Sport & Leisure added that events at venues can skew volunteer figures as international events generated a rise in volunteer numbers.

A Member queried why we didn't have many volunteers under the age of 16. The Volunteers Officer responded stating that we don't have the staff to manage that age group. The Head of HR added that is it something we would like to do, but restrictions over Health & Safety cause barriers.

The Chairman asked about our Investing in Volunteers accreditation. The Volunteers Officer responded stating that our next assessment is due later this year and that Greenwich Leisure Ltd figures would be included with our figures as they are all inputted on our database.

A Member queried why 3/4 of volunteers are white British, especially when we have so many sites in London. The Volunteers Officer responded that our percentages of ethnicity in volunteers is in-line with Hertfordshire, however, we have always struggled to get more ethnically diverse volunteers from London. The Head of HR added that we will be looking into this in more depth in the next phase of the volunteers review process, in particular looking at how Greenwich Leisure Ltd, London Legacy Development Corporation and other riparian boroughs reach out to more diverse groups. The Volunteers Officer added that a new online means of accessing volunteers services has been launched called 'Simply Connect', where we can advertise volunteering opportunities. It is still in the early stages. The Chairman asked to be updated on this at the next meeting.

A Member asked if it might be possible to for the next report to highlight what value volunteers bring to the Authority. The Corporate Director for Parklands responded stating that in monetary terms this is reported yearly. The Head of HR also responded stating that we would report on the work we would not be able to do without their help and the benefits to volunteers themselves in terms of mental health. The Volunteers Officer added that it

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was important to note that we do not wish to replace staff with volunteers as volunteers do not wish to feel pressure to attend and do not want responsibility.

The Chairman asked if some volunteers might be able to meet Members at venues for the next Members Tour. The Corporate Director for Sport & Leisure responded stating that it might also be beneficial for our Health Officer, who helps organise many of the volunteers walks, to attend as well.

- (1) the update on Phase 1 of the review of volunteering was noted; and**
- (2) the next report to update Members on the review of any Data Protection issues surrounding the volunteers database; separate figures for Authority volunteers and Greenwich Leisure Ltd volunteers; update on 'Simply Connect' website; and report on the value that volunteers bring to the Authority was approved.**

218 SCRUTINY SCORECARD 2023/24 Q3

Paper S/68/24

The report was introduced by the Corporate Director for Sport & Leisure who informed Members that this report is profiled against the target for quarter 3. The Research Officer will attend the next meeting in order to explain the new usage counter data and how we collect visitor numbers. Greenwich Leisure Ltd have been included as well as the Authority. The main risks relate to the Health & Safety audits, due to a new contractor starting.

A Member queried when formal complaints were resolved. The Corporate Director for Sport & Leisure responded stating that we have a tracker system with a live database, where issues can be responded to quickly. There is also a formal monthly meeting to discuss complaints.

A Member asked about car parking and if parking tickets were transferable to other Lee Valley car parks. The Corporate Director for Parklands responded that it was one ticket per car park, but an annual permit can be purchased for £85.

- (1) the report was noted.**

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Chairman

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Date

The meeting started at 2.20pm and ended at 3.10pm