

LOWER CENTRAL GARDENS TRUST BOARD

MONDAY, 26TH JANUARY, 2026

Present: Councillor Matthew Gillett in the Chair

Councillors Cllr J Martin (Vice-Chair), Cllr B Nanovo
and Cllr L Williams

73 **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

74 **Declarations of Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

75 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2025 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

76 **Financial Statements 2024-25**

Stephen White, Company Accountant, presented the Financial Statements for 2024/25 together with the Letter of Representation, Audit Findings Report and Comfort Letter. It was a statutory requirement to agree the annual financial statements for the Lower Central Gardens Trust and submit them to the Charity Commission by 31 January each year. The Board was asked to review and approve the financial statements and the Letter of Representation prior to them being signed off by the Cabinet Member for Climate Response, Environment and Energy.

The Board was given summary of the four appendices accompanying the report was also provided. The Letter of Representation was described as a standard audit requirement. The Audit Findings Report confirmed an unmodified (green) audit opinion, with three audit observations relating to ledger extraction, VAT arrangements and a delay in recharging electricity costs, all of which were addressed by officers. The Comfort Letter confirmed the Council's continued financial support for at least 12 months following the approval of the accounts. **ACTION**

In response to a written question from Cllr Bartlett regarding income associated with the Pavilion, the Board was advised that the Pavilion is leased by the Trust to the Council at nil consideration, and therefore any income derived through BH Live does not form part of the Trust's accounts. Officers agreed to confirm the length of the lease and report back.

RESOLVED that the Board approve the financial statements and the Letter of Representation for the financial year 2024-25.

77 **Future Meeting Dates and Work**

The Board received an update on items proposed for future meetings. It was noted that a report outlining the process for appointing new Co-opted Members would be brought to the next meeting, together with a briefing on the Council's Nature Recovery Strategy and Urban Forest Strategy and how these relate to the Lower Central Gardens.

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Members raised matters relating to lighting, accessibility and tree management, and it was agreed that these would be considered as part of the forthcoming report. The Board also discussed opportunities for additional summer events, and it was agreed that an informal meeting with Board Members would take place to explore potential options. An update was provided confirming that a repayment plan had been agreed in relation to outstanding rent arrears.

Officers confirmed that a further review of lighting would be undertaken and that an update would be reported back to the Board. It was agreed that the May meeting would be brought forward to March in order to receive an update report, and it was noted that an extra meeting between May and January would be considered if an update was required before January 2027. It was confirmed that the March meeting would be arranged and confirmed outside the meeting.

The Board also noted that future meetings were scheduled for 18 May 2026 and 25 January 2027, although it was confirmed that the May meeting would be brought forward to March.

Duration of the meeting: 10.00 - 10.30 am

Chairman at the meeting on
Monday, 26 January 2026