

Alexandra Palace & Park Board

on 24th July 2012

Report Title: **Park Update**

Report of: **Mark Evison, Park Manager, Alexandra Palace Charitable Trust**

1. Purpose


1.1 To consider proposals to close two Park gates overnight and to consider the updated proposals for the cricket ground.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Board notes the outcome of the Green Flag Award application.

2.2 That the Board considers the proposal to begin overnight closures of two Park entrances and agrees to a trial, subject to the advice of the Advisory and Consultative Committees.

2.3 That the Board considers the updates for the irrigation tank at the cricket ground and confirms agreement to the final proposal.

Report Authorised by: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive**.....

Contact Officer: **Mark Evison, Park Manager, Alexandra Palace & Park,
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3. Executive Summary

3.1 The report sets out a proposal to close two of the Park entrances at night as a way to tackle anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

3.2 An update of the Cricket Ground improvement project is set out following discussions and a site visit by members of the Advisory and Consultative Committees.

4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

4.1 N/A

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

5.1 N/A

6. Green Flag Award

- 6.1 The results of the Green Flag and Green Heritage Awards are due to be released on 17th July. There will be a verbal update of the results at the meeting.

7. Closure of Gates

- 7.1 Over recent years there has been a number of incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour around the Park. In particular there have been repeated problems in the Grove and the Redston Field. A number of local residents and Park tenants have made requests for the entrances to those areas to be closed after dark, especially during the summer months.
- 7.2 Regarding the Grove, there are often fires, vandalism to fencing, litter and broken glass associated with visitors using the Muswell Hill pedestrian entrance. There is currently no gate on this entrance so a new gate will be required at an estimated cost of around three thousand pounds.
- 7.3 In Redston Field there are regular gatherings of large groups of youths who start fires, drop litter, break glass and cause disturbance to the neighbours on Redston Road and Park Avenue North. Alexandra Palace security officers do attend when informed, but the youths usually flee and return 20 or 30 minutes later. Occasionally the Police will attend if the groups get particularly rowdy.
- 7.4 Although each incident is minor, the overall impact on neighbours and tenants is distressing. The litter and broken glass can be a hazard to visitors and animals. The large volumes of litter also slow down the team when they are clearing it up.

Risks

- 7.5 When this matter was discussed around ten years ago, the request for closure was rejected because of the risk of entrapment as the remainder of the Park and the road will remain open. Adequate signage and marketing before the change occurs, coupled with a deployment of high visibility staff at the outset, should reduce this risk.

Resources

- 7.6 Alexandra Palace security officers would carry out the locking and unlocking on their normal patrols. The timing could initially be from 10.00pm to 6.30am, but this could be flexible according to feedback and results.
- 7.7 There would be initial costs for signs, marketing and staffing at the outset, these costs will be in the region of a few thousand pounds and can be funded from the existing Park budget.
- 7.8 There should be a decrease in vandalism, litter and noise disturbance in the two areas.

Consultation

- 7.9 Tenants in the Grove (Garden Centre, Little Dinosaurs, 345 preschool and Grove Café) were consulted and all responded very positively in favour.
- 7.10 There have been a large number of complaints and inquiries about this matter of the past few years. A review of the records shows that 45 incidents in the Grove were *recorded* by the security team over nine months in 2011. The Grove Café fencing vandalism has been reported to police at least five times over the last year.

7.11 The Board could approve the proposal subject to advice from the Advisory and Consultative Committees.

8. Cricket club and grounds improvement project

8.1 The Board will recall previous discussions about this project, the most recent was at the meeting on 29th November 2011.

8.2 At that meeting it was RESOLVED that: the *Building Schools for the Future* proposals relating to a new sewer pipe across Newland Field and a water irrigation system be supported in principle, subject to more detail including satisfactory drawings and designs ... and the advice of the Statutory Advisory Committee. The "in principle" agreement was also subject to an agreed method statement and full indemnity.

8.3 Due to a number of concerns raised by the members of the Joint Informal Advisory and Consultative Committee at meetings in March and May 2012, a site visit was arranged so the Project Manager could discuss the work in detail.

8.4 At the site visit, three options were outlined for BSF to follow up:

- Use the Thames Water reservoirs as an irrigation supply. This option is not viable within the required timescales. A multi-party legal agreement would be required and this alone could take many months to complete.
- Bury the irrigation tank below ground level. This option will increase capital costs. An underground tank will also have increased maintenance costs that the Club will be required to meet in perpetuity. New funding may be available via planning gain (section 106), but this is uncertain at the time of writing.
- Locate the tank to the north-west of the club house in the scrub area adjacent to the car park. The site will have to be carefully chosen to avoid it affecting future plans for improving the facilities. The increased distance will add some extra costs to the installation.

8.5 The matter is due to be discussed at the Joint Committee meeting on 17 July 2012. Due to timescales the draft resolutions will be circulated to Board members following that meeting.

8.6 For clarity, the Board has previously agreed to Phase 1 of the works (drainage improvements and alterations to the club house) as well as a new lease to permit the club to be sub-let to the Heartlands High School.

8.7 In addition to this, the Board is now being asked to confirm their agreement to the final proposal for the irrigation system and storage tank, taking the Advisory and Consultative Committee's advice into account.

9. Recommendations

9.1 That the Board notes the outcome of the Green Flag Award application.

9.2 That the Board considers the proposal to begin overnight closure of two Park entrances and agrees to a trial, subject to the advice of the Advisory and Consultative Committees.

9.3 That the Board considers the updates for the irrigation tank at the cricket ground and confirms agreement to the final proposal.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. The Council's Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and has no comments, save in relation to the recommendation on the closure of the two Park Gates.

- 10.2. In view of the fact that this is a local issue, when combined with the terms of reference for the Consultative Committee, the Head of Legal Services would support the recommendation as set out in paragraph 9.2 of the report.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 The LBH Chief Financial Officer's notes the contents of this report.

- 11.2 The costs for initiating the gate closure can be met from the existing Park budget.

12. Use of Appendices/Tables/Photographs

- 12.1 Appendix 1: Photo of vandalised fence at Grove Café
- 12.2 Appendix 2: Plan of Park

Appendix 1

