

Report Title: **Park Update**

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

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Committee regarding various events in the Park and the 150th Anniversary projects.
- 1.2 To obtain the Committee's advice regarding a new Park Furniture Design Guide.
- 1.3 To update the Committee on recent wildlife sightings

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers the Park Furniture Design Guide and provides appropriate advice for the Board

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

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3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 There are a number of events programmed in the Park over the coming year. The most significant at this stage are the 150th Anniversary Celebration and the Red Bull Soap Box Derby. The calendar of small events is as healthy as ever thanks to the input from the Friends of the Park and other groups.
- 3.2 A new Park Furniture Design Guide has been written by the Park Manager. This document is intended to help improve the quality and consistency of Park furniture. An early draft of the document was sent to relevant interest groups for input and comments. The committee is asked for advice before the document is put to the Board.
- 3.3 The report also includes some notable sightings by local wildlife experts.

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. Park Events during 2013

- 6.1 There are a number of Park Events programmed during the coming year, the most significant at this stage are the 150th Anniversary Celebration and the Red Bull Soap Box Derby. Details on the management of these events will be covered elsewhere on the agenda.
- 6.2 The Friends of the Park will continue facilitate many of these as they have done in the past. Their programme includes educational walks (on the topics of bats, birds, trees and history), talks and opening of the Park Information Centre. The Saturday morning Parkrun and Sunday conservation tasks will continue throughout the year. Between them the volunteers involved in these activities clocked up a very impressive 1,000 hours.
- 6.3 Theatre group Teatro Vivo have proposed a promenade performance of The Tempest in a number of London Parks. This will take place in July over three nights. The group recruit local people to as crew and choir members through workshops and the rehearsals take place in public in the Park.

7. 150th Anniversary of Alexandra Park

- 7.1 The celebration event will be discussed in more detail elsewhere at this meeting. In general, activities and exhibitions will be taking place to showcase the whole Park. Jugglers, musicians and stilt-walkers together with a team of stewards will encourage visitors to explore the activities around the whole Park and find areas they may not have visited previously.
- 7.2 The rose garden 'legacy project' is well underway. Some of the hedges have been reduced and shrubberies have been replanted with scented and textured plants. The steps and handrails were refurbished last year and repairs to the fountain are planned.

8. Design Guide for Park Furniture

- 8.1 The Park contains a wide range of furniture of various style, age and condition. Some is modern, installed during the Lottery project. Other items were installed during the 1980s development and more still pre-dates that. Currently there are six types of Park bench and seven styles of litter bin. There is also a plethora of bollards, railings, lamp columns and signs. During the lottery project many old and damaged benches and bins were replaced.
- 8.2 Production of a furniture design guide was a special condition of the Heritage Lottery Fund development project (2002-07). A basic design guide for Park furniture was created in 2007 to fit the styles of Park furniture installed.
- 8.3 A design guide dating from the mid-1980s represents an earlier attempt at such a scheme. This guide followed the brown, cream and blue colour scheme still evident in some items of furniture and signs.
- 8.4 This 1980's guide divided the Park into four design zones:
- Palace and environs - areas of Victorian influence
 - Traffic areas
 - General Park areas
 - Pavilion (a short term listing during the lifetime of the temporary events pavilion)
- 8.5 The result of these two approaches is a somewhat confusing mixture of styles, modern and "Victorian". A more consistent style across the whole Park would now be more appropriate now.
- 8.6 Areas such as the Terrace adjacent to the Palace should be consistent with this new approach too.

8.7 The *Friends of Alexandra Park*, the *Hornsey Historical Society* and the *Alexandra Park and Palace Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)* have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated into this version of the document.

8.8 In summary the guide proposes the following standard items:

- Eastgate Park bench
- Manchester metal bollard or square wooden bollard
- Round cast-iron litter bin
- Wooden finger posts
- Wooden fencing or metal railings
- Wooden Park notice boards

8.9 The committee are asked to consider the document and provide comments and advice before it is presented to the Board. The old-style furniture would be gradually phased out as items reached the end of their life and were replaced by the new styles.

9. Wildlife report

9.1 There are many groups and individuals interested in the wildlife of the Park and they spend many hours investigating and recording on site.

9.2 The Alexandra Park Ornithological Group recently released their figures for 2012. A very good total of 108 species was recorded. This is the same as last year and the fourth highest total on record. No new species were added to the Park's list, for the first time in some years. Therefore, the overall species total for the Study Area remains at 174. In the absence of a new species, bird of the year was a juvenile Kittiwake, seen by people on an organised bird watching walk. Unfortunately, no local birders saw it as by the time news got out the bird had gone.

9.3 Other notable species included Honey Buzzard, Whimbrel, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper and Common Crossbill, all of which, have until this year been recorded less than a dozen times respectively. Common Redstart, Firecrest, and Mealy Redpoll also put in appearances. And after last year's absence Ring Ouzel, Brambling and Wood warbler, were also recorded, with the latter being recorded three times. Little Egret and Common Buzzard continued to be seen regularly during the year. Red Kite was seen on four dates, up on 2011's two sightings.

9.4 On the subject of birds, I am delighted to report that a Peregrine Falcon has been a regular visitor to the Park and Palace! Seen by the Rose Window frequently since January 2013 the bird stirred up great excitement amongst birders and the Friends of the Park. The ring on his leg identified him as the sole male offspring hatched in 2012 by the breeding pair at the Tate Modern.

9.5 The local mycologist discovered a fungus that is affecting the ornamental Hellebores planted near the boating lake. The pattern of growth on the leaves exactly resembles that of *Microsphaeropsis hellebore*. There are 29 records of the pest but none in Middlesex, so this is a first for the vice county.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Committee notes the report.

11. Legal Implications

11.1 The Council's Head of Legal Services has no comments on this report.

12. Financial Implications

12.1 The Council's Chief Financial Officer notes the report and has no specific comments to add.

13. Use of Appendices/Tables/Photograph

13.1 Draft Alexandra Park Furniture Design Guide