

Report Title: **PARK UPDATE (ACTIVITIES)**

Report of: **Mark Evison, Park Manager**

1. Purpose

1.1 To inform the Committee of the recent activities carried out in Alexandra Park

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee notes the report.

Report Authorised by: **Mark Evison, Park Manager:** 

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3. Executive Summary

3.1 This report details the activities and projects that have recently taken place in the park.

3.2 Haringey's Park's Constabulary will be disbanded on 31 March 2009. Alternative, more flexible security provision will be made within the park utilising the main security contractor.

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 No specific background papers were used in compiling this report.

6. Description

Updated items from 14 October 2008

6.1 In light of the comments made in the previous Advisory Committee the various items can now be updated:

- Erosion footpath to North View Road. Work to replace the soft gravel surface of this path/cycle route is booked. The path will be laid initially to a tarmac surface to prevent a repeat of the erosion problem.
- Commuter parking along Alexandra Palace Way has been assessed. The maximum number of vehicles parked during a weekday is 25.
- Warner Estate Residents Association have made proposal for a new hard-surfaced path across Redston Field and the old race course. This proposal will be discussed under a separate agenda item at this meeting.
- Audit of signs along Alexandra Palace Way. There are currently over 100 signs along the road through the park. These range from warning signs for drivers and information for visitors. A number of these are outdated and will be removed. The 'visitor information signs' will be updated with input from Alexandra Palace Trading Limited as they provide information to exhibitors and the public visiting shows and exhibitions.

Park Events

- 6.2 The Conservation Tasks are continuing over the winter. The overgrown vegetation around Redston Pond has been cleared. Weed species were removed and native species were coppiced so they regrow as a shrub layer.
- 6.3 In the conservation area itself, overgrown drainage ditches have been dug out and encroaching vegetation has been cut back from footpaths. Five footbridges have also been repaired.
- 6.4 A new hedgerow is due to be planted along the boundary of the pitch and putt course. Native species such as hawthorn, hazel and field maple will be planted and will provide new nesting and foraging opportunities for birds and insects.
- 6.5 The Lakeside Café will be hosting a free outdoor art exhibition in May 2009. This follows the successful event last year and provides a great opportunity for park users to experience site-specific art created by local artists.

Park Concessions

- 6.6 Following a number of inquiries, the Workshop building in the Grove has been advertised to let. An operator is being sought to refurbish the facility for community or leisure use.
- 6.7 Winter maintenance has been carried out on the pitch and putt course. The operator has proposed installing a new drainage system at his cost, this will improve playing conditions and possibly extend the operating period. A youth coaching scheme will start in the spring when the course re-opens.

Green Flag Award

- 6.8 The application for the 2009-2010 Green Flag Award has been made. Judging takes place in May and the results are announced in July. The contribution made by volunteers and community groups is greatly appreciated and forms a large part of our submission.

Grounds Maintenance

- 6.9 Winter maintenance works are underway around the park. Overgrown shrubs and hedges have been cut back by the boating lake and grove café. Gaps in the rose beds have been replanted with matching varieties sources from a specialist grower in Hertfordshire. Aromatic and colourful shrubs have been planted in the rose garden shrub beds.
- 6.10 Replacement lime trees have been planted in the avenue outside the ice rink and the avenue in the Grove. Other trees, such as flowering cherries have been planted in various locations including the Grove and South Front. All young trees are mulched annually to suppress weeds and reduce competition for water and nutrients.
- 6.11 John O'Conner (Grounds Maintenance) has been successful in their bid for the ISO international standards for Environmental, Health & Safety and Quality Management Systems. The company was also announced as Employer of the Year by the Landscape Institute.
- 6.12 The Deer Manager has recommended a further extension to the fenced area to improve conditions for the fallow deer. Currently the deer rely heavily on supplementary feed in the form of pellets, haylage and fresh vegetables.
- 6.13 It is proposed an area approximately 40x40m be added to the southern end of the southern compound. The installation of chainlink fencing to match will be subject to a planning application. Feedback on this proposal is welcome.

Park Security

- 6.14 Haringey Council have recently announced the disbanding of the Parks Constabulary. The service level agreement between Alexandra Palace and the Parks Constabulary will cease on 31 March 2009.
- 6.15 The Parks Police Officers usually patrol the park for 19 hours per week. However, they were replaced in September 2008 by a security guard from an external security contractor. Since then, the Parks Police Officers have still attended site, but at a greatly reduced level.
- 6.16 The loss of the Parks Constabulary will be compensated by alternative provision from the palace security contractor on a more flexible basis. This will allow a greater security presence during peak times such as school holidays and summer evenings.
- 6.17 The Alexandra ward Police Safer Neighbourhood Team will continue with their high-visibility patrols and work closely with the Park Manager and Security Manager to react to reported issues.
- 6.18 The existing presence of staff in the park (grounds maintenance, security officers, cafés and volunteer groups) is wide ranging and provides reassurance for park users and has close similarities with the Parkforce model recently adopted by Haringey Council.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That the Committee note the report.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 The Trust's Solicitor has been sent copies of this report.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 The budget figure for the construction of a new footpath across Redston Field is around £30,000. This figure is additional to the Trust's planned expenditure

9.2 The extension to the deer compound is expected to cost around £8,900, and will be funded from the existing budget.

9.3 The disbanding of the Park's Constabulary and provision of alternative security guards will have a neutral effect on the park security budget.

9.4 The LBH Chief Financial Officer has been sent a copy of this report.