



## **ALEXANDRA PARK AND PALACE CHARITABLE TRUST BOARD**

**26 JANUARY 2021**

**Report Title:** CEO's Report

**Report of:** Louise Stewart, Chief Executive Officer

**Purpose:** This report updates the Board of Trustees on current issues and projects at Alexandra Park and Palace. It also provides additional information on the events programme and a range of activities of the Charitable Trust.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:** N/A

### **1. Recommendation**

To note the content of this report.

### **2. Covid update – Palace and Road Closures**

#### **2.1 Building Closed**

The Palace was closed to the public on 16 December and remains largely closed with limited staff onsite. The change from Tier 4 restrictions in place at the end of 2020 to the stricter Lockdown announced at the start of January 2021 did not have a significant additional impact on the organisation. However, we are regularly revising our on-site working practices and supporting staff who have been at home for 10 months.

#### **2.2 Road Closure**

2.2.1 The Board and Advisory and Consultative Committees were informed by email of plans to close Alexandra Palace Way on New Year's Eve, as we have in previous years. However, we also notified stakeholders that the road might be closed overnight at short notice if high levels of antisocial behaviour were experienced, as we had done during the summer and early November.

2.2.2 Following a rise in antisocial behaviour including crowds gathering and failing to observe social distancing, dangerous driving and illegal and dangerous parking the road was closed overnight from Friday 18 December to Sunday 20 December (reopening at 0500hrs on Monday 21

December) with access given to the W3 bus and emergency vehicles during these hours.

## 2.3 New Year's Eve

2.3.1 As in previous years, Alexandra Palace Way was closed from 2100 hrs on 31 December until 0200hrs on New Year's Day to all vehicles except buses, emergency vehicles and blue badge holders to prevent antisocial behaviour and potential disturbance. We communicated the closure in advance through our social media channels and notices on the road and in the car parks.

2.3.2 The Park was busy on New Year's Eve with many incidents of paper lanterns, fireworks and crowds of youths gathering. Our estate guarding team received 2 calls in relation to fireworks being set off and one call about crowds gathering. However, with the road closure and support of the Police the evening was largely incident free.

## 2.4 Antisocial behaviour

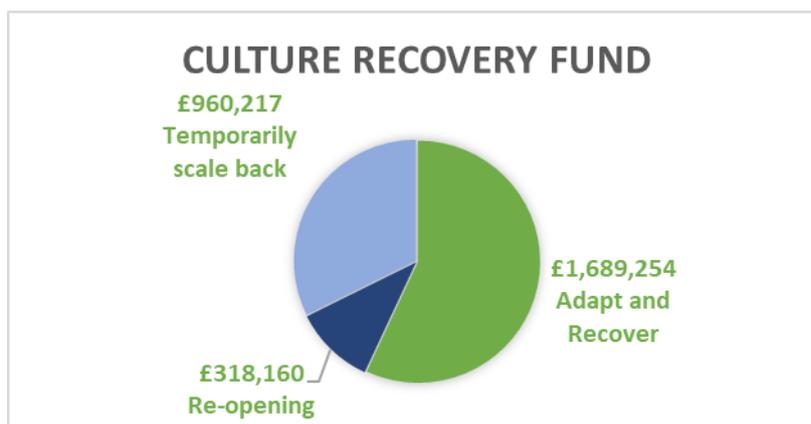
We continue to work with the local police and local authority teams to manage antisocial behaviour onsite and encourage anyone who has difficulty getting through to the Visitor Service Team by telephone at the current time to use the 'Contact Us' form on our website: <https://www.alexandrapalace.com/contact/get-in-touch/#:~:text=Should%20you%20have%20any%20concerns,2121>.

If illegal or anti-social behaviour is witnessed, we remind local residents and park users to call 101 or in an emergency 999 as well as the local authority's dedicated ASB Team (Tel 020 8489 1335).

## 2.5 Culture Recovery Fund

2.5.1 The Trust was successful in its application for the Culture Recovery Fund and the award of £2.9m was announced by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England and Department for Culture, Media and Sport in December 2020.

2.5.2 The fund is crucial in the Charity's recovery and fits into the grant scheme's criteria as follows:



- 2.5.3 Adapt and recover – includes salary costs, utilities and investment to improve and automate processes and systems to make us more efficient.
- 2.5.4 Temporarily scale back – will be spent mostly on park maintenance, ongoing building repairs and site security.
- 2.5.5 Re-opening - additional cleaning costs, COVID-secure measures and support to help us diversify income.

### **3. Car Park Charging Implementation**

- 3.1 Following the Board's approval in September to implement a car park charging scheme we provided an update report at the last meeting, which can be viewed at the link below.  
<https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s120196/9.%20Car%20Park%20Charging%20V2.pdf>
- 3.2 We have confirmed with the Trust's auditors that the car parking is an ancillary activity and that the income generated can be collected by the Trust and does not need to be ring-fenced in a trading subsidiary with operating profits paid as gift aid to the Trust. Although depending on the relationship with a third party provider (of services to support the Trust to operate car park charging) the establishment of a trading subsidiary remains an option.
- 3.3 We expect to start the procurement process in January 2021 and, although it is tight, it remains possible to implement in April 2021. An update will be provided at the March Board meeting. However, the timing of the contract award may mean there is a need for an additional Board meeting in April.

### **4. Repairs & Maintenance - Glazing and Roof Repairs**

- 4.1 The 1980's Georgian wired panes in the East and Palm Courts have been leaking for many years. The situation has been monitored through routine inspections, repairs and planned maintenance work. However, following accelerated dereliction due to variable weather conditions and severe weather events. The condition of the roof has deteriorated and after additional inspections the programme for roofing and glazing repairs has been brought forward as urgent.
- 4.2 Therefore repairs to Palm Court will take place throughout January and will resume in April on the dome and other external areas. The East Court repairs will take place on 31 March and resume in May.
- 4.3 The Great Hall external spaceframes have not been redecorated since installation in the late 1980's and are badly degraded. This work will be conducted during April and, in May, renewal of defective glazing and areas of persistent leaks and a full external service will take place.

- 4.4 The works will require a significant financial investment. We are redirecting resources from other priorities. However, these repairs have been prioritised as they need to be undertaken before we reopen so that we are able to operate and recover from the pandemic financially.

## **5. Park**

- 5.1 Visitor numbers spiked during the first lockdown and we reached our usual annual visitor number of 3m by mid-July. However, whilst the public benefit of the park increased, so did the litter, with a total of 186 tonnes collected from the Park in 2020.
- 5.2 The impact on our heritage site and the experience for visitors was devastating. However well over 100 local people rallied to help, possibly double that. Volunteers organised themselves in family groups, neighbourhood street groups, groups of friends, some on their own schedule, some as part of sessions quickly arranged to coordinate efforts in a covid secure way, by the Friends of the Park.
- 5.3 The efforts of the volunteers were critical in supporting the Park team, keeping the parkland safe and clean for everyone to enjoy, because of their dedication, frequency, regularity and in particular the months long duration of their efforts. Without them there would have been a huge backlog of waste. We have nominated the litter volunteers for an award because we are so grateful for their efforts in helping us this year to take care of the park. An update will be provided at the meeting.

## **6. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)**

The Charity's EDI Committee have drafted an EDI Action Plan ready to share with Trustees for input, shaping and discussion. It is not an in depth strategy but a plan of what actions we will take. There are data and information gaps that will need to be filled but our approach is to fill these as we progress and not to use this as an excuse not to address the lack of representation in some areas of our organisation's activity and within the organisation itself.

If Board members have time it would be useful to have a combined workshop with the APTL Board on the plan. We would have preferred this to be face to face but current restrictions will mean it will be a virtual discussion.

## **7. Creative Learning**

The Creative Learning Team have had to adapt the delivery of programmes quickly and, from having no digital assets, now have 40 online activity packs and 24 online films. More information will be provided during a PowerPoint presentation at item 9 on this agenda.

Thanks also go to the volunteers who have supported the team this year and remain engaged with our activities even though most are unable to directly participate.

## **8. Events highlights of 2020**

- 8.1 One session of the PDC Darts Championship was held with an audience, before tighter restrictions were imposed and the remainder of the competition took place behind closed doors.
- 8.2 Drive in Opera with the English National Opera's (ENO) La Boheme received universal acclaim and rave reviews, including a breath-taking screening on Sky Arts.
- 8.3 World-renowned photographer and artist Spencer Tunick chose the Park and Palace as the backdrop for his work, titled Everyone Together, in partnership with Sky Arts. Featuring 220 volunteer models, the image was used as the main visual to announce that the Sky Arts TV channel is now on Freeview.
- 8.4 A series of films will be screened in theatre, including the online stream of Nick Cave that was filmed earlier in the year in the West Hall. Dates to be confirmed.
- 8.5 We launched our Christmas programme including 47 performances of the Gruffalo's child, Christmas films, ice skating & Santa's grotto. Like all of our events at the moment, our teams have worked hard to create a covid secure, socially distanced environment for people to enjoy live performances.
- 8.6 However the tighter restrictions meant that event organisers took further measures to reduce risks and due to the need to reduce the transportation of players, and accommodate on site to retain a safer 'bubble' neither the Snooker nor the Ping Pong will take place at Alexandra Palace in January 2021.

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1 The Council's Interim Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted on this report and has no comments.

## **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1 The Council's Chief Financial Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and has no comments.

## **11. Appendices**

None