



Report Title: Chief Executive Report

Report of: Emma Dagnes OBE, Chief Executive Alexandra Park & Palace

Purpose: To inform Trustee Board of Alexandr Park and Palace Charitable Trust progress

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 – NA

## 1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To note the content of this report and acknowledge that due to unforeseen circumstances, the Advisory and Consultative Committee meeting did not take place in January. The next SAC CC meetings will be on 17th March, where the committees will be provided with the update within this report, alongside other matters.
- 1.2 To note that a presentation and film will be shown under our Goal: "Provide Great Entertainment and Culture for All."
- 1.3 To note that a planning and listed building consent application has been prepared for a temporary Victorian-inspired Helter Skelter as a visitor attraction on the south terrace for the summer
- 1.4 To note that a repair scheme has been submitted for Haringey Listed Building Consent approval for the North Yard Bridge (to the side of CUFOS).
- 1.5 To note that the grounds maintenance contract will be re-tendered, the procurement process will be supported by Haringey Council and brought to Board for approval

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report aligns with the Trust's Vision to **"Create a Sustainable Home for All That We Do."** The Goals highlighted have been selected based on progress made since the last Board report. The Vision and Goals can be found in Appendix 1.

3. **Provide Great Entertainment and Culture for All** *Accessible and welcoming, we will continue to challenge ourselves to gain better understanding of our current and future audiences and their needs, ensuring our Cultural and Entertainment programme reflects the tastes and innovations of the time. We will support and develop opportunities for artists to showcase their talents and reach new and diverse audiences.*
- 3.1 **Year-End Film:** Due to the volume of events and activities, this report cannot capture everything that has taken place since the last Board meeting. Instead, a year-end film and presentation will be shown to illustrate all that Ally Pally has to offer. The film will be available online for those who wish to watch it.
- 3.2 **Victorian-Inspired Helter Skelter:** A planning and listed building consent application is being prepared for temporary Victorian-inspired Helter Skelter as a visitor attraction. This non-intrusive, free-standing installation will activate The Beach (the space outside the pub on the south terrace) during the summer months, offering a new and exciting experience while contributing to the charity's revenue generation.
4. **Build Climate Change Resilience** *Actively responding to the climate change emergency, we will strive and challenge ourselves to take the Palace off grid within a generation, lessening our impact on the environment, reducing our energy consumption and harnessing the parkland to build climate resilience.*
- 4.1 **Environmental Improvements:** Over the past 12 months, several environmental improvements have been made across the Park and Palace. An Infographic (Appendix 2) highlights key initiatives across catering, events, marketing, and the ice rink. A detailed report will be presented at the April meeting as part of the financial year-end summary.
- 4.2 **Net Zero Strategy & Funding Applications** Discussions with the Greater London Authority (GLA) continue on our approach to net zero. We have applied for two support schemes:
- Zero Carbon Accelerator Scheme: Offers consultancy support to refine project ideas, funding routes, and project timelines.
  - Green Finance Fund: Provides capital project loans to reduce carbon emissions. The focus is on replacing low-voltage switchgear with modern equipment incorporating voltage optimisation and power factor correction.
- 4.3 **Energy Efficiency** LED Terrace Lighting Replacement the LED terrace lighting project has been successfully completed, enhancing aesthetics, functionality, and sustainability while maintaining previous light levels. Haringey Council's Carbon Fund Initiative partially funded this project.

- 4.4 **Heating Pump Replacement** on 10th August, work began to replace outdated belt-driven heating pumps in the boiler room with advanced inverter-driven pumps. These new pumps adjust speed based on demand, significantly reducing energy consumption, operational costs, and improving system reliability.
5. **Protect Our Heritage Assets** *Reverse the decline in the heritage asset by raising the funds needed to tackle the backlog of conservation and infrastructure repair and maintenance across the estate. We commit to utilising innovative sustainable materials and methods at every opportunity.*
- 5.1 **North East Office Building (NEOB) Repair Project:** Emergency repairs are completed. The building now requires time to naturally dry out. A formal event to thank Historic England is planned for April.
- 5.2 **North Bridge Structural Remedial Works:** Extensive surveys have been conducted, and a repair scheme has been submitted for Haringey Listed Building Consent approval.
- 5.3 **Johnson Servery Refurbishment:** This space has undergone a significant refurbishment due to flooding from degrading toilets above. The refurbishment ensures a modern, adaptable space ready for long-term use.
- 5.4 **Security Team Facilities Refurbishment:** A small but impactful refurbishment was undertaken to address water damage. This improvement restores functionality and creates a more professional working environment for the security team.
- 5.5 **East Court Entrance Improvements Refurbishments** included repainting doors, installing new kick plates, replacing bird netting, and restoring York Stone paving to enhance the entrance's appearance and functionality.
- 5.6 **Water Main Replacement:** The water main has been successfully replaced with a durable polyurethane pipe, ensuring long-term reliability.
- 5.7 **Distribution Board Upgrades** Ongoing electrical infrastructure modernisation continues, improving safety, energy efficiency, and reliability.
- 5.8 **Recognition of Brick Mason:** Michael, our new brick mason, has made a remarkable impact, restoring walls and replacing moisture-trapping cement render with breathable lime mortar to preserve the Palace's historic structure. Photos of his work will be shown during the meeting

6. **Safeguard Our Green Lung for London** *We will implement new technology and innovation to help local habitats and species thrive in our 196-acre park, whilst encouraging diverse audiences, new visitors and new communities to engage with and benefit from our unique environment through outdoor interpretation, events and activities.*

- 6.1 **Wetlands Project:** Started in mid-January, the contractors worked in very wet conditions to excavate new drainage channels, install sleeper bridges, install a new pipe to the conservation pond and create three new wildlife ponds.

Trees have been removed to open the canopy and increase the light reaching the ponds and woodland floor. The area is now drying out and will be monitored for a few months. If further works are required for localised issues the contractors will return.

The Friends of the Park will carry out some guided walks of the project and conservation volunteers will install leaky-dams and dead hedges to increase the habitat quality.

- 6.2 **Grounds Maintenance:** The Park Team have been carrying out winter maintenance tasks. Litter collection continues, alongside gritting in icy weather, mulching shrub beds and clearing moss growth on hard surfaces. Over 130 tonnes of rubbish and litter were cleared from the Park in 2024.

This is 20 tonnes less than the post-lockdown average, and is probably due to the wet, cold conditions in winter and spring. The Grounds Maintenance contract expires in 2026. A procurement process for a new contract will be undertaken over the next 12 months with support from Haringey Council's procurement team.

- 6.3 **Park Visitor Numbers:** The estimate for Park visitor numbers is 3,529,000 for 2024. This is lower than the post-lockdown average (3.7m) probable due again to the wet, cold conditions in winter and spring.

- 6.4 **Additional Park Projects**

- French drain installed on south slope
- New sleeper bridge in Grove Spinney
- Swales added along lower road for water management
- Bay tree reduction in the Rose Garden

7. **Protect Our Archives And Share Our Stories In Innovative Way** *Celebrating our heritage and growing our reputation in the sector, we will provide environmentally sustainable facilities for the care of our valuable collections and archives to tell our stories and enable access to a wider range of people.*

This period has been highly productive, with significant developments in collections, research, partnerships, and public engagement, further strengthening the Palace's historical and cultural legacy. Examples of work and projects undertaken are as follows.

- 7.1 **Networking & Collaborative Curation:** Continued engagement with archive and heritage networks, including research into movements such as Rock Against Racism and activism at Hornsey College of Art.

Content creation achieved for digital platforms, including the website, blogs, and social media, supporting projects such as Wetlands, NEOB, Boating Lake, The Meadow (Deer Enclosure), the London Festival of Architecture, Sherlock, Art Spectrum, and academic collaborations (e.g., AHRC-funded Belgian project Asylum: Refugees and Mental Health).

- 7.2 **Events & Exhibitions:** Hosted a reunion of architects involved in the Palace's 1980s rebuilding, originally led by the late Peter Smith, and established links with his family, who have offered items for the archive.

- 7.3 Facilitated the transfer of a temporary exhibition kit from the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, to the Palace in December 2024, repurposing components from the RNLi display.

- 7.4 Researched and interpreted the history of the Sinclair C5 launch at AP Pavilion, supporting Communications for the 40th Anniversary gathering (January 10, 2025), which attracted national press and TV coverage.

- 7.5 Supported the Birdsong theatre production, including a history tour of the Palace basements for cast and crew, contributing to Communications.

- 7.6 **Research & Publications Grand Willis Organ:** Kirsten Forrest and archive volunteer Pauline Green researched the organ's history and contributed to the AP Organ Appeal.

- 7.7 **AP Theatre Stage Machinery:** Roger Hancock and Kirsten Forrest collaborated on a second article for the Hornsey Historical Society Bulletin (Issue 66).

- 7.8 **Dolly Shepherd Talk:** A presentation for the Enfield Society led to a new archive donation, two additional speaking invitations, and a planned Palace tour for the Enfield National Trust Association in summer 2025.

- 7.9 **Significant archive donation** received from a local resident and former GLAA publicist, covering the Art Spectrum exhibition (which featured Yoko Ono and John Lennon) and the establishment of Jackson's Lane Arts Centre 50 years ago.
  - 7.10 Established contact with the widow of Clive Wolfe, founder of the AP Action Group (1973), which fought GLC plans to demolish the Palace. Archive materials from Pat Wolfe are expected to be scanned or donated in 2025.
  - 7.11 Facilitated UCL history department students' research into Civilian Internment at AP during WWI.
  - 7.12 Engaged in community discussions on Harringay Online, gathering personal stories and recollections of the Palace's history.
  - 7.13 **Collections & Future Initiatives** Acquired 68 historic music event posters for conservation and scanning.
  - 7.14 Have started exploring a potential partnership with the EMI Archive Trust and the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society to mark the centenary of commercial electric recording.
  - 7.15 Proposed anniversary displays for the Organ and Theatre to FAPT and APOA for a summer exhibition in the East Court.
8. **Inspire And Engage Our Communities** *Taking inspiration from our eclectic history and inspiring cultural assets, we will collaborate with our communities and partners providing a range of creative and engaging events and workshops, to help people of all ages and backgrounds gain skills, explore their creativity and improve their well-being whilst cultivating warm and affectionate attachments to everything we do.*
- 8.1 **Young Creatives Network (YCN):** End of 3-Year Funding: In February 2025, Creative Learning marked the end of three years of funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to support the Young Creatives Network (YCN) programme. This programme helps young people advance their careers in the creative sector, while working on projects that contribute to regeneration, placemaking, and city-making in their local area. The end-of-programme event included a showcase featuring local DJs, a Black collective offering Zine-making workshops, and a community radio broadcast by AP Sounds, where young people interviewed key figures like Councillor Ruth Gordon and Joint Directors of Culture Yamin Choudury and Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp.
  - 8.2 **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation:** In January 2025, Creative Learning, Fundraising and Strategic Projects teams met with our relationship manager from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to discuss our initial Expression of Interest (EOI) proposal for

onward funding. The discussion was positive, and we expect to hear by late February whether we've been invited to submit a full proposal.

8.3 We also submitted a three-year evaluation report to Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Some key highlights include:

- 400 young people are currently enrolled in the programme.
- In 2024, the YCN created 96 opportunities for young people to engage with the programme including events, gigs, performances, workshops, exhibitions and more
  - Since February 2024, approximately 908 local residents have attended events designed and delivered by the YCN
  - 70 YCN members (17.5%) self-identity as disabled and/or SEND
  - 41 opportunities for YCN members with disabilities to lead on programming over three years
  - 295 opportunities for YCN members to engage with the programme over three years
  - Since February 2022, 549 young people took up the offer of free tickets equating to £21,960 and enabled Network members to see: Ed Sheeran, 'Later with Jools Holland', Michael Kiwanuka, Metronomy, Bloc Party, Mogwai, Parkway Drive, Cass McCombs, Franz Ferdinand, Sum 41, Aitch, Paolo Nutini, Tom Odell, Manic Street Preachers, Fontaines DC, Idles, Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds, Suede, and Jaime XX

8.4. **Biblio-Buzz 2025:** Around 800 young people from 27 Haringey schools have sign up to attend this year's ceremony. The ceremony will be hosted by author Jack Meggitt-Phillips and Radio 1Xtra broadcaster Fee Mac. Special performances will include former Queen's Laureate John Agard reciting poems from his Windrush collection. Approximately 60 copies of books from publishers have been donated to the Haringey Library Service. The ceremony will also be supported by independent Haringey bookstores, Pickled Pepper and The Children's Bookshop London, Muswell Hill.

8.5 **Young Actors Company (YAC):** The current Young Actors Company are working with director Jonny Siddal. (Jonny's career in theatre began at the RSC Barbican Theatre and Bush Theatre. Before setting up the Education Department at Hampstead Theatre.) On a devised performance called A View from The Top, which examines the lure of London as a place where young people can fill their dreams. Performances take on 7th, 8th March at 20:00

Next, YAC will embark on rehearsals for Scene for 30 Actors in a Time of War. Written by Kay Adshead and commissioned by LAMDA. The show is about the buildup to a future nuclear war. (Kay Adshead has written over 25 plays, and has been published by Methuen, Faber and Faber, and Oberon, with commissions or productions at the Royal National Theatre, the Royal Court, the Young Vic, The

Lyric Hammersmith (main House) The Cockpit, the Bush, the Arcola, Soho Theatre, and many more). Performances take place in Theatre on 3rd, 4th July, time tbc.

The Young Actors Company is currently supported by The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust and the John Thaw Foundation. Evaluation reports for both funders were due in February 2025 and have been completed and submitted. New funding bids will be submitted in the Summer 2025.

- 8.4. **Volunteering:** Training for Volunteers: 15 volunteers received training from the Oral History Society to help capture people's living memories of the palace.

9. **Strengthen Our Overall Resilience** *Safeguarding the assets for future generations, we will fortify our governance and raise funds through diversifying our revenue streams. This will include introducing a donor programme, building our corporate partnerships in line with our Values and attracting visitors all year round to the Park and Palace, creating a dynamic and sustainable future for the charity.*

- 9.1 **IT & Technology** The Technology Forum continues to meet monthly, monitoring, coordinating and advising technology projects from inception through development to completion. It focusses on the IT, networks and other technology used to run Alexandra Palace. This period we also began reviewing technology service.

Key areas of focus have been:

- HALO – Alexandra Palaces safety/operational checking and issues management system. Has now been rolled out to most functions providing a standard approach to operational readiness and more effective responses to reported issues.
- Homebase – a system for rostering staff and recording hours to pay has been successfully implemented with good feedback from the casual workforce and managers. Its automatic notifications and reminders using multiple methods of communication have been particularly effective.
- A collection of Buildings and Estate Management projects have been progressing well. The includes the Backbone project which is providing a long-term improvement to the way network infrastructure is routed across the palace to ensure cables are provided in a safe and well managed way to the right locations to flexibly support the Palaces varied needs for connectivity.
- Cyber Security – planning and implementing the essential improvements need to achieve Cyber Security accreditation from the governments National Cyber Security Centre. Penetration testing has been carried out from an approved supplier with good results. Many changes have been made, with more to do in



this area where guidelines are constantly changing to keep ahead of cyber threats.

10. **Fundraising:** Fundraised income from individuals, trusts and statutory funders is due to reach over £700,000 in the 2024-5 financial year, exceeding our target of £540,000. Key factors in exceeding targets include an exceptional legacy gift of almost £100,000 and emergency grant income from Historic England, exceeding £375,000. We have also seen sustained growth in low level individual donations, exceeding £40,000 for the first time, supported by a campaign of increased charity messaging across site and online.
- 10.1 **Individual Giving:** Increased donations from individuals are central to the fundraising strategy commission from Nicole Newman Fundraising in 2023. This financial year has seen a review of all individual fundraising opportunities from new touchpoints for ad hoc donations to the relaunch of our Name a Seat offer in the Theatre. New and refreshed opportunities will be launched publicly through a campaign in summer/autumn 2025.
- 10.2 **Patrons Scheme** February saw the soft launch of the Palace's first Patrons scheme to existing supporters. The scheme offers higher level supporters special opportunities to find out more about our programme and restoration, supporting Ally Pally with donations of more than £500 annually.
- 10.3 **Trusts and Statutory Grants:** as mentioned above, fundraising are supporting renewed multi-year bids to major Creative Learning Funders Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, in addition to Matchroom Charitable Trust, aiming to secure funding for the team from the new financial year onwards. We are also working to build relationships with new potential trust supporters through dedicated events and impact reports this Spring.
- 10.4 **Capital Fundraising:** the Fundraising Team are working with Strategic Projects and Planning to define the scope and case for support for a new capital appeal, focused on impact for our community and on the climate.

## 11. Legal Implications

The Council's Assistant Director for Legal & Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report and.....

## 12. Financial Implications

The Council's Chief Financial Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report and

13. **Use of Appendices** – 1. APP Vision & Goals (see separate document)  
2. Environmental Infographic (included below)

14. **Background Papers** – None

Appendix 1: APP Vision & Goals – See separate document

Appendix 2: Environmental Infographic

