



## Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust Board Meeting

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> March

Report Title: Non Exempt Chief Executive Report

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

Purpose: To inform the Trustee Board of Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust on progress in the financial year 25/26

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 – NA

### 1. Recommendations

1.1 To note the contents of this report.

### 2. Executive Summary

2.1 This report summarises progress to date in FY 2025/26, aligned to the Trust's Vision to **"Create a Sustainable Home for All That We Do."** Updates under each strategic goal highlight the most material delivery milestones, issues, and achievements since the previous report.

3. **Extraordinary Recognition:** At Prime Minister's Questions on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026 Alexandra Park and Palace was given national recognition. Referring to the People's Palace, Keir Starmer highlighted our importance as an iconic British venue and a vital part of our nation's cultural life, in response to a question from our local MP Catherine West on the need for sustained investment to secure our future for the next 100 years.

It was a significant moment for the Charitable Trust where on a national stage it was recognised that all income generated through our world class events and activities goes to directly funding our mission to care for our Grade II listed Park and Palace, for the public forever.

It is important to note that we are more than a single venue. Set within 196 acres of award-winning public parkland, we welcome over 4 million visitors each year and in 2024/25 generated £108m in economic impact for London with £79m captured within the Borough of Haringey, who we are proud to have as our Corporate Trustee.

We were able to share this significant moment with all our colleagues at the staff meeting the following day. It was a chance to reflect on what their hard work delivers not just locally but nationally.

We are looking forward to the future of working with all our Stakeholders, funders and supporters to ensure the People's Palace continues to deliver lasting social, cultural and economic benefit for all.

4. ***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.***

4.1 Delivery remains strong across the commercial and cultural programme, with a varied schedule of concerts, theatre, sport and exhibitions. A number of high-profile concerts and residencies have performed well and supported national profile, including significant critical recognition for the Fred Again.. residency. The Theatre programme has continued to attract audiences through a combination of touring product, residencies and one-off performances, alongside screen production activity.

Highlights in the Great Hall include Solomon, Lorna Shore, Fatboy Slim, Pawsa, Motionless in White. Highlights from the Theatre was a major production of Sunny Afternoon The Kinks musical, which received excellent feedback from audiences. Other high profile theatre events included Kyla Cobbler, Whitney Queen of the Night and Steward Lee Vs The Man-Wulf who had a highly successful two-week residency.

January saw the return of the highly acclaimed Fresh Art Fair with increased visitors as well as galleries and artists exhibiting.

4.2 Leisure and ancillary offers have continued to contribute to the year-round visitor experience. The Ice Rink has sustained strong performance across public skating and courses, following its most successful festive period to date. Food and beverage outlets have continued to maximise trade linked to event footfall.

The Boat House continues to receive positive feedback since opening in December. Opening times are 0900 – 16:00. Extended opening times will be announced in the Spring, in line with the reopening of the boating lake in April.

- 4.3 The Summit rooftop experience opened with extensive media coverage on 14 February 2026 with sessions sold out across the opening weekend, demonstrating strong demand and providing an additional year-round visitor offer.
- 4.4 Alexandra Palace has been shortlisted as a finalist for Venue of the Year at the Music Week Awards 2026.
- 5. **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.*
  - 5.1 Listed Building Consent has been secured for secondary glazing at the former station building (CUFOS), funded through the Haringey Community Carbon Fund. The project will improve thermal performance and occupant comfort.
  - 5.2 A planning application has been submitted for solar PV at the Boat House. Once installed, the system is projected to generate in excess of 8,000kWh per annum, supporting the Trust's energy resilience objectives.
- 6. **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.*
  - 6.1 Conservation-led masonry works continue in East Court as part of the rolling repair and maintenance programme. The works are removing inappropriate historic cement repairs that have contributed to trapped moisture and accelerated decay, replacing them with breathable materials consistent with best-practice conservation methodology.
- 7. **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.*
  - 7.1 The Park Maintenance Team have been undertaking winter jobs including gritting icy surfaces, clearing shrub beds of dead vegetation and fallen leaves. They've been painting over graffiti around the site and disposing of around 30 tonnes of rubbish.
  - 7.2 Safety work to remove dead, dying and dangerous trees has been ongoing across the Park. Around 40 trees were felled and another 60 were pruned, pollarded or had dangerous branches removed. The issues are caused by many factors,

including increasing numbers of pests and diseases and stress from more extreme weather conditions that occur due to climate change.

- 7.3 Contractors have undertaken repairs and maintenance around site including footpaths repairs, replacement of damaged gate posts and bollards. The boating lake outflow pipe was partially blocked and has been cleared to prevent the water levels getting too high.
- 7.4 More volunteer activity has been taking place in the Park including the gardening volunteers pruning the plants in the rose garden, the TCV cutting back bramble and scrub near Redston Field and the Friends of the Park giving the orchards in the Grove some TLC.
- 7.5 Thames Water are undertaking a project in the Park from late February through to early May. This project involves seven trial holes along the Lower Road that will determine the location and size of their two trunk mains. This work will require a welfare and storage compound near the pétanque area, plus working compounds for the seven trial holes. These will be excavated sequentially, so there will be no more than two holes open at a time. Some tree work is required to facilitate work including lifting the canopy of the trees along the lower road and removal of two lime trees near the Hornsey Gate. Any trees removed will be replaced. This is preparatory work ahead of a much bigger project to slip line the pipe to reduce leakage.
- 7.6 The Alexandra Park Sports Club are intending to install a new sign near the junction of the lower road and Alexandra Palace Way. This will improve the club's visibility and make wayfinding easier for visitors not familiar with the site. The Club are working towards an application for advertising consent.
- 8. **Protect Our Archives and Share Our Stories In Innovative Ways: 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.**
- 8.1 In January the BAC funded project archivist completed his survey of the Park and Palace's records in the SE Pavilion. This room houses approx. 100 linear metres or 300 to 400 archive boxes, mainly containing the AP Development Team plans and documentation from 1980 – 89. Items identified for disposal as confidential waste include HR documents and finance records.  
In February, Borough archivist Julie Melrose led a popular, well-attended archive workshop at Bruce Castle Museum for AP volunteers.

Focus of the project for end of March 2026: to complete the high-level catalogue descriptions and upload these to The National Archives' Discovery; reduce the

volume of records weeding out personal data, copies or papers not relevant to the AP archive; institute a basic location system; update retention schedules.

Next steps for the archive are to repackage and move to new shelving in a more accessible East wing ground floor room.

- 8.2 Archive images and historical information were provided for Summit staff, to enhance the visitor experience and bring AP&P heritage to a new audience.
- 8.3 Planning for the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BBC television at the Palace began. Volunteer and community curators will be working with our partners at BBC, BFI, NSMM, APTS, AP Television Group and universities over the next 6 months, to create temporary displays in the East Court and Studio A, complementing a wide-ranging public engagement programme of activity.
- 8.4 Behind the scenes tour of the BBC wing for AIFS led by the Curator with Media students from Baltimore, USA. Another tour was provided for the company of “Sunny Afternoon” the Kinks story. For the second year, history students from UCL visited as part of their Civil Internment project, to see the First World War archive and AP internment camp areas. Heritage tours conducted in this quarter were for Enfield National Trust Association, and U3A groups from Cheshunt, Croydon and Northwood.
- 8.5 AP contributed to the centenary celebrations of John Logie Baird’s first public demonstration of television to the Royal Institution on 26 January 1926, with an interview recorded in Studio B and transmitted as part of the ITN news coverage.
9. **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.**
  - 9.1 Members of the Young Creative Network are progressing through a three- month artistic development programme. The programme concludes in summer 2026, with participants focusing on music- video production, brand identity development, and the launch of a record label. Network members have also taken part in podcasting training sessions in March
  - 9.2 Café Palais relaunched in January 2026, offering monthly creative and social activities for older residents. Recent sessions included Drag Bingo with Crystal Bollacks and candle- painting workshops, both of which received positive participant feedback

- 9.3 AP Sounds will return in March 2026 with a new focus on engaging older residents, including members of the Purple Parade Collective and groups from sheltered housing. Participants will learn skills in radio broadcasting and produce their own documentary recordings before mounting a live broadcast – date tbc.
- 9.4 Delivery continues for Palace Uncovered, supporting secondary school pupils studying history or performing arts through curriculum- linked workshops and site-based learning. New resources have been created for the project by sound artists Jessica Sammut recording leading academics working on the history of the Belgum refugee crisis
- 9.5 Regular volunteering opportunities remain active across gardening, archives, guided tours and theatre stewarding.
- 9.6 Seventeen volunteers received specialist training at Bruce Castle Museum, led by archivist Julie Melrose.
- 9.7 Volunteer- led public tours are scheduled for 10 March as part of National Lottery Heritage Open Week
- 9.8 Volunteers recently delivered tours for secondary school pupils from the Into University education charity, highlighting career pathways in the heritage and creative sectors.
- 9.9 Baroness Louise Casey visited Alexandra Palace to attend a partner event with the Alzheimer's Society, held in the Creativity Pavilion.
- 10. **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.**
- 10.1 We end this quarter with promotion for our full range of individual giving opportunities, including new onsite poster and leaflets and online promotions. This campaign also marks the launch of our regular donors' programme, **Ally Pally Supporters**, supporting the Park and Palace from £5 a month. Our founding **Ally Pally Patrons** enjoyed a founders talk at Fresh Art Fair in January and were the first customers to experience new roof walk Summit in February.

- 10.2 We prepared engagement with trust and government funders ahead of the launch of new Strategic Plan for the organisation this Spring.
- 10.3 At the start of the calendar year Alexandra Palace and Wood Green were announced as a [Neighbourhood](#) and will take part in the [2026 edition](#) of the London Festival of Architecture. This is the third year in a row that the teams have joined together for the Festival. Running throughout the month of June, the Festival provides a capital-wide platform to showcase the work and activity both the Council and the Charity are doing. This year's theme is Belonging, and the teams will be finalising the programme of activity in the coming weeks.
- 10.4 IT resilience improvements continue, including network planning, bedding-in of core systems, cloud migration, and internal communications development.
- 10.5 Cyber security improvements remain a priority, the organisation is working towards Cyber Essentials accreditation, with timing dependent on managing complexity and avoiding operational disruption.
- 11. ***Restore Derelict Spaces: Adopting an adaptive reuse approach to restoration, we will bring currently underused, inaccessible or derelict spaces back into use, unlocking potential and enabling us to welcome everyone through our doors with a wider range of activities, entertainment and experiences.***
- 11.1 The Boating Lake Café project has completed installation of new branded awnings, improving presentation and supporting seasonal trading through shade provision.
- 11.2 We are pleased to confirm that we have formally instructed a Main Contractor for the delivery of the new Panorama Room at Alexandra Palace. Following a thorough procurement process, the contractor has now taken responsibility for progressing the scheme under a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA).

We are proposing a modern, replacement semi-permanent structure, which will sit on the footprint of the existing Panorama Room. The use will remain the same (events space/ ancillary events space for VIP, banqueting, conferences etc.) and we are looking to maximise the footprint by going up to a second storey. There will be minimal interventions into the listed fabric above, and there will be conservation repairs and strengthening belowground level in the basements.

We are currently in the PCSA design stage, working collaboratively to refine and develop the final layout and technical design of the space. This stage has allowed us to carefully shape how the new Panorama Room will function operationally while respecting the historic fabric of the building. The proposed design has now been established and provides clarity on how the space will look and operate once complete.

A pre-application meeting with the Local Planning Authority is taking place in late February, with a view to submit planning and Listed Building Consent applications for both works above ground and below (in the basements) to be submitted shortly after. We are engaging positively through the planning process and look forward to progressing this exciting project to the next stage, with the ambition of delivering a transformative new event space for the Palace.

- 11.3 The Security Room reconfiguration has progressed to tender stage and will repurpose adjacent underused space to provide a more resilient and scalable control environment for major events.
- 11.4 Creative Campus Project (Phase One North East Office Building): Development work continues on the Creative Campus project, with designs, budgets and activity planning nearing completion. A draft has been shared with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with an Expression of Interest planned for submission in Q1 2026/27, subject to feedback.
- 12. **Establish new, Exciting Partnerships: Amplifying our purpose of enriching lives, we will strive to form stand-out partnerships with universities, colleges and creative institutes and employers to support skills development and career opportunities for people of all ages.**
  - 12.1 Alongside our active programme of conservation repair works, we are continuing strategic conversations with a range of leading heritage organisations including the National Trust, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), Cathedral Workshop Fellowship and Historic England to strengthen our long-term ambition of embedding learning within the repair of the Palace.
  - 12.2 These discussions are focused on how Alexandra Palace can act not only as a canvas for conservation-led repair, but also as a place of active skills transfer creating opportunities for apprenticeships, workshops and live learning environments that support traditional and increasingly rare heritage trades.
  - 12.3 Through these partnerships, we are working toward a model where the careful repair of the building fabric directly supports sector-wide skills development, helping to safeguard knowledge in trades that are at risk of decline while ensuring the Palace continues to be maintained using appropriate, conservation-led techniques.
- 13. **Create A Great Place to Work: An inclusive environment where staff are happy and proud to work and feel like they belong. A culture that listens, recognises, and empowers its staff and lives by its Values and Behaviours. We will support our staff to grow and develop to achieve their potential.**

- 13.1 We continue to embed the People Strategy and deliver on Year 1 objectives of the three-year implementation plan focussing on 4 pillars: Attract, Recruit and Select Talent, Engage and Inspire our Employees, Develop and Grow our Employees and Retain Our Employees. Everything we do is underpinned by our Values: We are Collaborative, We are Passionate & Fun, We are Resourceful, We are Open & Genuine, We are Bold.
- 13.2 Our 2025 survey results showed that we have improved our BCI score and we are accredited as Ones to Watch which means good levels of engagement. We are now listed in the top 100 employers and top 20 companies in Leisure and Hospitality. Executive and Heads of Levels have received briefing on results and we will now provide full details to individual team managers. Feedback from the survey is fed into our People Strategy Workplan for the year.

#### **14. Legal Implications**

The Council's Director of Legal and Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no comment

#### **15. Financial Implications**

The Council's Chief Financial Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no comment

#### **16. Use of Appendices**

#### **16. Background Papers**

None.