

Report Title: **PARK ACTIVITIES UPDATE**

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: **Andrew Gill, Interim General 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.

**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**

- 6.1 The park has been busy with activities over recent months. The Moscow State Circus and funfair have been operating and the ever popular farmers' market continues. Other repeat events include the YMCA fun run and the annual Lakeside Art Exhibition, now in its third year.
- 6.2 The Springwatch Wild Day Out took place on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2010. The event comprised a free family nature festival and a bioblitz and approximately 8,000 people attended, the BBC, Natural History Museum and Haringey Council are partners with the Trust for this event.
- 6.3 A bioblitz is a 24-hour race to identify as many different species on the site. This was the first major bioblitz in London or a large urban park. Initial estimates suggest over 500 different species were identified on the day. Including a rare heath grass that is not known anywhere else in London.
- 6.4 Volunteer activity in the park includes the monthly conservation tasks carried out by the BTCV. The volunteers have been replacing bridges and fencing and cutting back overgrown hedges.
- 6.5 The Friends of Alexandra Park have also been volunteering, including operating the information centre and organising the bird watching walk. Behind the scenes, the Friends have been developing a new park walk leaflet which should be ready in late summer.
- 6.6 The play area has benefited from three new small items of equipment, talking flowers, a land rover and a play panel.
- 6.7 The deer enclosure fencing has been extended, and the deer were moved to the new larger enclosure on 18<sup>th</sup> May.
- 6.8 The Park was entered again for the prestigious Green Flag Award. Also this year a submission was made for the Green Heritage Award. Judges will look at the extent to which applicants understand, acknowledge and share the heritage value of the site, and conserve, enhance and help people enjoy the heritage value of the site. The results of both competitions are expected in July.
- 6.9 The Haringey Council Biodiversity Action Plan has a target to declare a Local Nature Reserve at Alexandra Park. This designation recognises the importance of the site and is a possible lever to obtain grant funding. Talks between the Council and the Trust are in the early stage.
- 6.10 Tree work adjacent to the boundary with the Hornsey Reservoirs was carried out following a grant awarded to the Alexandra Palace Ornithological Group. The original scheme was to coppice and pollard the trees to improve the habitat structure.
- 6.11 Due to concerns with the defects in the trees, more were coppiced than originally planned. Willow trees are notorious for their fragility, there were many hazard-beam cracks visible. Due to the unstable condition of the trees they had to be coppiced to ground level.
- 6.12 Four multi-stemmed trees remain and the remaining coppice stools will re-shoot very quickly. At the southern end of the willow bank is a tree which collapsed around five years ago, this has regrown in this time to form a dense canopy.

- 6.13 A very positive result of the works is that the bird box on the perimeter of the reservoirs is now in use for the first time in twenty years. A family of Kestrels nested successfully this spring.
- 6.14 Concerns were raised by three individuals and in particular the APPCAAC has written a paper on the subject. This paper expresses concern over the reduced screening caused by the loss of trees, and the process for working on trees in a conservation area.
- 6.15 The paper suggested three guidelines for the future which are answered in turn below.
- 6.15.1 **Projects like this should be fully thought-through as part of the Park's tree inspection/ management regime, and the risks properly assessed prior to any commitment to carry out the work.**

Response: The park has a zoned and prioritised tree inspection regime for Health and Safety defects. The zone containing the trees in question is not due to be surveyed until 2011, so the full condition of the trees was not known when the project was proposed. After a visual survey it was decided the general scheme would be to coppice (to ground level) the trees with most obvious defects. The time spent planning and costing works like these has to be balanced against other competing priorities. However, once the contractors were on site, the full extent of the defects became clear.

- 6.15.2 **Due procedures with the Council's Arboriculture Officers and the Planning Department should be complied with in advance of tree work.**

Response: Regular correspondence with the Council's Tree Officer takes place. All relevant details are passed to the LBH Planning Officer by the Tree Officer (with his advice). This is not a procedure open to public scrutiny. The local planning authority needs only to be notified of proposals and then has six weeks to object by placing a TPO on a tree if it disagrees.

- 6.15.3 **Where there are possible conflicting priorities between different interest groups (as there might have been in this instance) then these should be discussed openly and if necessary resolved through the Consultative Committee.**

Response: Information sent out to interested parties can be improved in future, in fact the Friends of the Park are usually emailed as a courtesy where tree or other works are deemed likely to cause a flurry of interest from their members. However it is not practical, with a team of one person, to enter into consultation over routine work items. It is possible to inform a wider group over major works not programmed or outlined in the park management plan.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 That the Committee notes the report.

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The Trust's solicitor has been sent a copy of this report.
- 8.2 The LBH Head of Legal Services has been sent a copy of this report.

## **9. Financial Implications**

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