

Report Title: **Park Update**

Report of: **Mark Evison, Park Manager, Alexandra Palace Charitable Trust**


1. Purpose

1.1 To advise the Board of the latest position regarding park issues and to consider a proposal to install a new sewer pipe across the park.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Board notes the content of the report

2.2 That the Board considers the proposal from the *Building Schools for the Future* team relating to a new sewer pipe across Newland Field and grants permission for the work subject to an agreed method statement and full indemnity

Report Authorised by: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive**.....

Contact Officer: **Mark Evison, Park Manager, Alexandra Palace & Park,
Alexandra Palace Way, Wood Green N22 7AY Tel No. 020 8365 2121**

3. Executive Summary

3.1 The Park Management Plan is currently being updated and members of the consultative and advisory committees have been asked to provide input as appropriate

3.2 Phase 1 of the cricket club improvement works will start imminently and should be completed in the New Year. A new proposal to install a sewer pipe from the clubhouse to Newland Field has been submitted for consideration.

3.3 Conservation volunteers have carried out monthly tasks in the Park and these are summarised in the report

3.4 The customer survey was reopened after the poor original response. The response this time was much better and the feed back was generally good.

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 N/A

6. Park Management Plan

- 6.1 The Park Management Plan is under review as part of the annual cycle for the Green Flag Award application, the deadline for which is January 2012. Members of the advisory and consultative committees were encouraged to consult their groups and associations about the current and future management of the Park and then feedback to the Park Manager.
- 6.2 This is an important time to input into the plan as it will contribute to the regeneration project.
- 6.3 A summary of the current park management plan is available on the park's pages of the website, www.alexandrapalace.com

7. Cricket club and grounds

- 7.1 The improvements to the drainage of the cricket ground (phase 1) should be underway in late November. Practical completion is due in the New Year.
- 7.2 The Board will recall the works involve installing a new drainage system to the football pitches to enable the facility to be sub-let to Heartlands High School.
- 7.3 The project will also entail alterations to the boundary ditch and connections across the park to main drains. This kind of work inevitably leaves muddy scars across grassed areas, but the Council's contractor has a twelve-month maintenance period once the works are complete.
- 7.4 An additional request was received from the *Building Schools for the Future (BSF)* team on 13 November in relation to disposal of foul water from the club house. The current septic tank is not adequate for the future use and the out-flow could contaminate the new drainage system. BSF has requested permission to connect the clubhouse to the main foul sewer system.
- 7.5 An outline description has been submitted that shows the pipe-run from the club house in a southerly direction to Newlands Road, further details have been sought. There are risks to the existing land-drains and trees on Newland Field and an expectation that at least part of the new foul pipe work will be maintained by the Trust once it is completed. The benefits are that mains drainage will reduce the potential for contamination.
- 7.6 It is recommended that a 'second opinion' is obtained as the Trust has no expertise in this type of civil engineering. The BSF team will be requested to cover the cost of this second opinion which will be added to the other professional fees they are already required to fund.
- 7.7 The project has a proposed second phase to install an all-weather practice area. Some proposals have been made previously and the Board noted in May 2011 that BSF will carry out further consultation with local residents and undertake appropriate wildlife and habitat surveys before requesting formal permission. A habitat survey has been carried out and submitted to the Park Manager.
- 7.8 The Board will be advised once further, more detailed proposals have been received.

8. Nature Conservation

8.1 52 volunteers completed 107 volunteer workdays for BTCV at Alexandra Palace in ten monthly sessions between January and October 2011. Their activities are summarised in the table below:

January & February	Cleared areas of the cricket scrub to maintain the open areas we had created previously and clear the footpath and removed saplings from a strip of scrubby grassland to regenerate it as a wildflower meadow.
March	Clearing of overgrowth from the remains of the old Lido foundations which can now be seen from the footpath alongside the reservoir.
April & May	Work on fencing enclosing the pond in the conservation area which has been routinely vandalised and also widened the nearby footbridge.
Summer months	Five stag-beetle loggeries were constructed in and around the old Blandford Hall woodland area and two <i>habitat towers</i> for insects were constructed against the old wall close to the Conservation Hut at the Bedford Road entrance.
October	Conservation pond: clearing sedge and cutting back the bankside vegetation to open up the view of the pond from the footpath.

9. Friends of Alexandra Park

9.1 The Friends of the Park are a successful and active group. They have their own website promoting the park which attracts around 600 hits per month. This details their activities and other events taking place in the park. The address for the website is www.friendsofalexandrapark.org

9.2 They also co-ordinate a varied programme of activities throughout the year to attract visitors and promote the wildlife and heritage of the park. Topics include history, fungi, birds, trees and bats. Each of their ten walks attracts around 30-40 participants.

9.3 Volunteers from the Friends group have also staffed the park information centre every Sunday since July. Park visitors can drop in and find out about the park, activities and even ask directions. Over 300 visitors attended over the summer period.

10. Park Customer Survey

10.1 Members will recall that there was a very low response to the customer survey organised by the grounds maintenance contractor, John O'Conner Ltd. The survey was reopened and this time there were 65 respondents. The "top answer" to the nine questions about the quality of maintenance was either Good or Very Good. Individual comments and responses have not yet been fully analysed, but any specific problems will get an appropriate response, in due course.

11. Recommendations

11.1 That the Board notes the content of this report.

11.2 That the Board considers the proposal from the *Building Schools for the Future* team relating to a new sewer pipe across Newland Field and grants permission for the work subject to an agreed method statement and full indemnity.

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1 The Council's Acting Head of Legal Services has no comments on this report.
- 12.2 The Trust Solicitor has been sent a copy of this report.

13. Financial Implications

- 13.1 The LBH Chief Financial Officer notes the contents of this report.
- 13.2 The works on the cricket clubhouse and grounds is being funded by the Council's *Building Schools for the Future* programme. The other activities outlined are funded from the existing Park budget

14. Use of Appendices/Tables/Photographs

- 14.1 N/A