

Report Title: **Park Management Update**

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

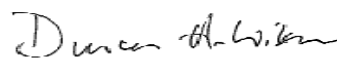
**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To update the Board regarding issues in the Park
- 1.2 To obtain the Board's approval for a new Park Furniture Design Guide

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Board notes the contents of the report.
- 2.2 That the Board considers and approves the Park Furniture Design Guide subject to any advice from the Advisory and Consultative Committees.

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



Contact Officer: **Mark Evison, Park Manager, Alexandra Palace & Park,  
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**3. Executive Summary**

- 3.1 There are a number of events programmed in the Park over the coming year. The most significant at this stage are the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Event and the Red Bull Soap Box Derby. The calendar of small events is a healthy as ever thanks to the input from the Friends of the Park and other groups.
- 3.2 A new Park Furniture Design Guide has been written by the Park Manager. This document is intended to help improve the quality and consistency of Park furniture. An early draft of the document was sent to relevant interest groups for input and comments. The Advisory and Consultative Committees will consider the document at their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May.
- 3.3 The report includes an update on dog control orders, gate closures and security.
- 3.4 The report also includes some notable sightings by local wildlife experts.

**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 Events during 2013**

- 6.1 There are a number of Park Events programmed during the coming year, the most significant at this stage are the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and the Red Bull Soap Box Derby. Details on the management of these events will be covered elsewhere on the agenda.
- 6.2 The Friends of the Park will continue to facilitate many of these as they have done in the past. Their programme includes educational walks (on the topics of bats, birds, trees and history), talks and opening of the Park Information Centre. The Saturday morning Parkrun and Sunday conservation tasks will continue throughout the year. The volunteers involved in these activities clocked up a very impressive 1,000 hours.

## **7. 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Alexandra Park**

- 7.1 The celebration event will be discussed in more detail elsewhere at this meeting. In general, activities and exhibitions will be taking place to showcase the whole Park. Jugglers, musicians and stilt-walkers together with a team of stewards will encourage visitors to explore the activities around the whole Park and find areas they may not have visited previously.
- 7.2 The rose garden 'legacy project' is well underway. Some of the hedges have been reduced and shrubberies have been replanted with scented and textured plants. The steps and handrails were refurbished last year and repairs to the fountain are planned.

## **8. Design Guide for Park Furniture**

- 8.1 The Park contains a wide range of furniture of various style, age and condition. Some is modern, installed during the Lottery project. Other items were installed during the 1980s development and more still pre-dates that. Currently there are six types of Park bench and seven styles of litter bin. There is also a plethora of bollards, railings, lamp columns and signs. During the Lottery project many old and damaged benches and bins were replaced.
- 8.2 Production of a furniture design guide was a special condition of the Heritage Lottery Fund development project (2002-07). A basic design guide for Park furniture was created in 2007 to fit the styles of Park furniture installed. The case officer has been consulted on the new scheme and as it dovetails with the original maintenance plan no formal approval is required from the HLF.
- 8.3 A recently re-discovered design guide dating from the mid-1980s represents an earlier attempt at such a scheme. This guide followed the brown, cream and blue colour scheme still evident in some items of furniture and signs.
- 8.4 This 1980's guide divided the Park into four design zones:
- Palace and environs - areas of Victorian influence
  - Traffic areas
  - General Park areas
  - Pavilion (a short term listing during the lifetime of the temporary events pavilion)
- 8.5 The result of these two approaches is a somewhat confusing mixture of styles. A more consistent style across the whole Park would now be more appropriate now. Areas such as the Terrace adjacent to the Palace should be consistent with this new approach too.
- 8.6 The *Friends of Alexandra Park*, the *Hornsey Historical Society* and the *Alexandra Park and Palace Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)* were consulted on the first draft of the document and their comments were incorporated.

8.7 The document will be considered by the Advisory-Consultative Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013. A verbal update of their advice will be presented to the Board.

8.8 In summary the guide proposes the following standard items:

- Eastgate Park bench
- Manchester metal bollard or square wooden bollard
- Round cast-iron litter bin
- Wooden finger posts
- Wooden fencing or metal railings
- Wooden Park notice boards

8.9 If the document is approved, the old-style furniture would be gradually phased out as items reached the end of their life and were replaced by the new styles. At this stage there is no specific budget available to make large scale changes to the Park furniture. Replacements will be installed as opportunities arise.

8.10 However, the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year offers the chance to run a donation scheme for benches. A marketing campaign could encourage local people and interested groups to donate new benches to replace the old styles.

8.11 The Board are asked to approve the Park Furniture Design Guide and endorse the bench donation scheme.

## **9. Dog Control Orders – update from Board meeting 7<sup>th</sup> February**

9.1 Unfortunately there is nothing to report on this subject as no response has been received.

## **10. Closure of Park Entrances & security**

10.1 The Board will recall that two Park entrances have been subject to overnight closures since 21<sup>st</sup> January 2013.

10.2 There has not been much feedback to date, other than a couple of requests to close the entrance to the Grove earlier than 11 o'clock.

10.3 The chain-link fencing at the Redston Field Entrance from Park Avenue North has been cut once and subsequently repaired by the grounds team. This situation will be monitored.

10.4 On the subject of security there have been three break-ins around the Park in the last two months. The Alexandra Park Club, Lakeside Café and Grove Café have all been broken into.

10.5 The Police have been carrying out investigations and high visibility patrols, but there is nothing further to report at this stage.

## **11. Wildlife report**

11.1 There are many groups and individuals interested in the wildlife of the Park and they spend many hours investigating and recording on site.

11.2 The Alexandra Park Ornithological Group recently released their figures for 2012. A very good total of 108 species was recorded. This is the same as last year and the fourth highest total on record. No new species were added to the Park's list, for the first time in some years. Therefore, the overall species total for the Study Area remains at 174. In the absence of a new species, bird of the year was a juvenile Kittiwake, seen by people on an organised bird watching walk. Unfortunately, no local birders saw it as by the time news got out the bird had gone.

- 11.3 Other notable species included Honey Buzzard, Whimbrel, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper and Common Crossbill, all of which, have until this year been recorded less than a dozen times respectively. Common Redstart, Firecrest, and Mealy Redpoll also put in appearances. And after last year's absence Ring Ouzel, Brambling and Wood warbler, were also recorded, with the latter being recorded three times. Little Egret and Common Buzzard continued to be seen regularly during the year. Red Kite was seen on four dates, up on 2011's two sightings.
- 11.4 On the subject of birds, I am delighted to report that a Peregrine Falcon has been a regular visitor to the Park and Palace! Seen by the Rose Window frequently since January 2013 the bird stirred up great excitement amongst birders and the Friends of the Park. The ring on his leg identified him as the sole male offspring hatched in 2012 by the breeding pair at the Tate Modern.
- 11.5 The local mycologist discovered a fungus that is affecting the ornamental Hellebores planted near the boating lake. The pattern of growth on the leaves exactly resembles that of *Microsphaeropsis hellebore*. There are 29 records of the pest but none in Middlesex, so this is a first for the vice county.

## **12. Recommendations**

- 12.1 That the Board notes the contents of the report.
- 12.2 That the Board considers and approves the Park Furniture Design Guide subject to any advice from the Advisory and Consultative Committees.

## **13. Legal Implications**

- 13.1 The Council's Head of Legal Services has no comments on this report.

## **14. Financial Implications**

- 14.1 There is no specific funding for implementing the Park Furniture Design Guide, replacements will be made within existing budgets. If the donation scheme goes ahead it will be cost neutral to the Trust.
- 14.2 The Council's Chief Financial Officer has noted the contents of this report and has nothing to highlight.

## **15. Use of Appendices/Tables/Photograph**

- 15.1 Draft Alexandra Park Furniture Design Guide