

Report Title: **Chief Executive Officer's Report**

Report of: Louise Stewart, Chief Executive Officer, Alexandra Park and Palace

**1. Purpose**

To advise inform and update the Committees on current matters relating to Alexandra Park and Palace.

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 To note the contents of this report and advise the main Board where appropriate.

Report Authorised by: Louise Stewart, Chief Executive Officer, Alexandra Park and Palace

Contact Officer: Natalie Layton, Executive Assistant, Alexandra Park and Palace  
Email: Natalie.layton@alexandrapalace.com  
Telephone: 020 8365 4335

**3. Executive Summary**

This report updates on issues including:

- Governance
- Strategic Vision
- Events (including 2015 Fireworks)
- Park Activities
- Learning & Community

**4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)**

N/A

**5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

## **6. Governance**

- 6.1 At the November meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Chief Executive outlined the need to review the Governance of Alexandra Park and Palace. There is a need to clarify and codify the existing governance arrangements to ensure they are able to be clearly communicated and understood. The review will also look at how the processes in place for good governance can be improved and modernised to increase their effectiveness and efficiency.
- 6.3 Consultation and engagement with stakeholders will be undertaken to inform the work.

## **7. Strategic Vision**

- 7.1 At the November meeting of the Board of Trustees, the CEO outlined the need to develop a long term vision for the charitable assets. The Park and Palace have a forever purpose but there is no long term vision in place to guide future decision making and development.
- 7.2 The intention is to develop a Strategic Vision and development plan for the assets, which will include a review of the previous masterplanning work. A review of previous consultation exercises will also be undertaken, to inform the method and content of the consultation plan for the Vision.
- 7.3 Both of these pieces of work (Governance and Strategic Vision) will be undertaken taking into account the overall purpose of the assets outlined in the Act of Parliament, but not the detail, so that the work and creative processes are not constrained. However both pieces of work will be analysed throughout the process against the Acts and Orders to see where there may be conflict and if there are any changes to the Act that should be considered.
- 7.4 These pieces of work are vital if the Trust is to develop a longer term strategy and long term financial plan to ensure that the assets are maintained, repaired and restored and accessible to the public now and for future generations.

## **8.0 Cross Rail 2**

- 8.1 The Trust submitted a response to the current Cross Rail 2 consultation. The Trust made the case for a Cross Rail 2 station at Alexandra Palace but acknowledged that there may be benefits to the Park and Palace from the combination of a Cross Rail Station at Wood Green AND improvements in the access routes between Wood Green and the Park and Palace.

The response is attached at Appendix 1.

## 9. Wood Green Regeneration

- 9.1 The Trust has been in conversation with London Borough of Haringey about the regeneration plans for Wood Green and the importance of ensuring the connectivity between Wood Green and the Palace. The consultants will hold a session with the Trust during the consultation period. The timetable for consultation is currently being developed by the Local Authority.
- 9.2 The SAC may wish to consider how it intends to engage with the consultation by the Local Authority on its plans for Wood Green.

## PARK ACTIVITIES UPDATE

- 10. Park Conditions:** the Park is currently suffering as a result of very wet conditions since early-November. The surface water drains are old and many are suffering from blockages and collapsed sections. Contractors have been investigating the blocked drains and making repairs where possible. The current conditions highlight the importance of including a drainage review in the Park Vision work, including assessment of the options for installing Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) solutions to manage and attenuate the surface water flows.
- 11. Visitor numbers for 2015 (calendar year):** The Board will recall that there are electronic people counters at two Park entrances (The Avenue and Park Avenue North). These devices registered 678,000 people during 2015. This is an increase of 76,000 on 2014 (12%). The major spikes in the visitor numbers in 2015 were the Soap Box Derby (showing the large number of local customers at that event), the Fireworks Festival and New Year's Eve.

A number of assumptions are used to convert these figures into the annual estimate of Park visitors. In 2015 this figure was 2.8 million, which excludes the majority of event visitors and people arriving by car or bus. It is recognised that the calculation is not perfect, but it does allow an assessment of trends – the figure of 2.9 million is 320,000 more than the 2.6 million estimated for 2014. The data show that beyond a core user group, most likely dog walkers and commuters, the largest influence on visitor numbers is the weather.

Table comparing 2014 and 2015 visitor numbers:

	2014	2015	change
<b>Park Visitor numbers counted</b>	602,000	678,000	+12%
<b>Estimate of total Park Visitors (excluding most event visitors and car and bus passengers)</b>	2,550,000	2,800,000	+12%

**12. Go Ape Proposal:** The Go Ape proposals were validated by the Planning Authority in October 2015 and at the time of writing there have been over 90 comments, many of which are objections. The proposal is likely to be discussed at a Planning Committee and there will be a verbal update at the meeting.

**13. The Fallow Deer Herd:**

13.1 The fallow deer herd has been a feature of the Park for many years. Daily management of the herd is carried out by the Grounds Maintenance staff and an independent veterinary team provide management advice and monitor the health of the animals.

13.2 Over the past ten years there has been consistent concern from the veterinary team that the conditions of the enclosures were not ideal because they are too small and the ground gets easily poached and over-grazed. The deer have consistent signs of stress, evidenced by shyness towards human contact, which is not typical of enclosed deer, and occasional fighting. These concerns have been managed by various means including improving the size and management of the enclosure by fertilising, harrowing and reseeded, enlarging the enclosures and reducing the herd size (culling).

13.3 The stress levels of the deer are likely to be increased for a number of reasons in the future, increasing visitor numbers to the Park (both ordinary Park visitors and Event visitors), the forthcoming development of the Anderton Court site where three houses and a block of flats have been granted planning permission. Repairs and construction work in neighbouring gardens is also believed to cause extra disturbance for the herd.

13.4 The longer-term options for the deer herd have been in consideration for some time. It is recognised that the Go Ape proposal is an additional stressor that requires the Trust to accelerate its decision making about the long term future of the herd. Any removal will need to be carefully timed after rutting and before fawning and before any further stressors for the deer.

**14. Graffiti Wall Update:** Following previous discussions on this topic an independent risk assessment is being conducted and further information will be reported at the Board meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

**15. Park Resilience:** The Park Manager has been working with the Head of Events to identify improvement works in the Park that will have a joint benefit of making the Park more resilient to outdoor events. Examples include improvements to drainage and strengthening pathways.

## LEARNING AND COMMUNITIES

### 16. Go Crackers for Christmas

To engage with family visitors attending Cinderella on Ice the Learning and Community Team ran free family activities in the East Court. The inter-generational activities looked at the Victorian invention of the Christmas Cracker, significance of the hat, what inspired the bang and how the contents have changed over time. Children were then encouraged to make their own Alexandra Palace themed cracker to pull on Christmas day. Over the 2 days over 80 people attended the activities. The team were able to capture contact details of attendees to communicate future events.



### 17. Schools

Alexandra Palace's new Learning Leaflet was distributed (both electronically and hard copies) to all schools in Haringey, Barnet, Enfield and Islington in November. Since the start of January a number of new bookings have been made for new and repeat visitors. From the start of this financial year the Palace has welcomed over 1,500 visitors from schools which already surpasses last year's total of 1,280.

The Transmitter Hall has been allocated to Wilmot Dixon, the contractors for the East Wing restoration programme, when they start onsite at the end of January.

### 18. Streetz Ahead

Working with a local Street Dance Company a funding application has been submitted to Awards for All for a Haringey Flash Mob. If successful, schools from across the borough will be encouraged to take part in a borough wide activity to encourage exercise and well-being. Schools taking part require agreement from the Headteacher for a dance teacher to attend regular assemblies to teach the

whole school. All participants will be invited to take part in Haringey's largest Flash Mob as part of the Summer Festival planned for July 2016.

The Learning Officer will be attending one of the rehearsals at Alexandra Palace School on Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January to speak to teachers and pupils taking part about their experiences so far and how being part of the Summer Festival would enhance the experience – a verbal update will be given at the meeting.

## **19. Trading Company Support**

To date Community Engagement has been limited due to budgetary restraints and lack of resources. Using the Palace's experience of running Community Engagement programmes with funding for the Palace's centenary project moving forward the Learning & Community team will be looking to offer unique opportunities alongside commercial events working in partnership with local organisations to widen participation.

### **19.1 Aligning with Trading Company**

Alexandra Palace is unique in that it already has a varied programme of exhibitions, conferences and live music events. Rather than running one-off projects (dependent on funding) for community groups, developing opportunities for families, community groups, schools, that mirrored commercial events would engage local people with what is happening at the Palace whilst offering unique opportunities not possible elsewhere.

Activities could include circus skills for families during the Moscow State Circus tenancy, Haringey schools' bake-off linking in with the cake decorating show, BTEC Music visits during concert months and model making during London Model Engineering. Projects would be run alongside the events and would be managed by the Learning & Community Engagement Department.

These projects would be funded by the Learning & Community department; support from the client/commercial arm would enable more people to engage with the Palace.

## **20. Partnership Working**

The Learning Officer has created a list of all Haringey's funded organisations to work in partnership with for future projects. The Palace's most successful community projects have been run in partnership with local established partners (Haringey Shed & Accuml8). Discussions through the planning process with staff from partner organisations ensures that projects fit with the needs of users. Another significant advantage is that the partner organisation can assist with recruiting people to take part, often this is the hardest part of running these types of projects.

## **21. East Wing Restoration Project**

The scheme for the development of the BBC Studios, East Court and Victorian theatre have moved forward since the submission of the Round 2 application in December 2014. Having re-visited the Activity Plan it became apparent that a number of activities were included in other parts of the project or were no longer appropriate. Following a meeting with Land Design Studio consultants all activities have now been updated (along with budgets) to fit in with the themes of wonder, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Alongside this work connection has been made with the Learning and Development Team at Wilmot Dixon to discuss the opportunities proposed as part of the tender and the Palace's Activity Plan requirements. With work starting on start at the end of January it is key to engage with the local community from the start and opportunities may include school creating art for the hoardings as well as work placements, internships and apprenticeships.

## **22. COMMERCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

### **22.1 October – December**

The Palace had 100% occupancy throughout October and December with the exception of 5 days in November. This period has been our busiest to date with over 300,000 visitors to the site across 32 different events - an increase of 100,000 visitors and 15 additional events over the same period in 2014.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> October The Wombats played their largest London show followed by the Knitting and Stitching Show. This exhibition was open for 5 days for the 2nd consecutive year and attracted over 40,000 visitors.

A tight overnight turnaround saw the team break down 200 exhibition stands and transform the space into fashion catwalk for 1200 delegates to view the new F&F clothing range hosted by Tesco. This corporate event led straight into 3 nights of music including performances from Rudimental, Major Lazor, and the Vans Warped Tour.

A number of smaller corporate conferences continued throughout a busy October and these were mainly hosted in the Panorama room. In the last two weeks of October we welcomed 2 new exhibitions: Mind Body and Soul and the OM Yoga Show, the former was business won from Olympia.

The Classic & Sports Car Show organised by Haymarket exhibitions followed. This show brought the world's most glamorous classic cars and attracted some of the world's most highly regarded classic car dealers and some of the wealthiest and most respected collectors. The organisers were keen to ensure that all visitors to Alexandra Palace had the chance to view some of the attractions and so displayed a selection of models outside on the Beach area for non-ticket holders to enjoy.

Also in November Ernst and Young hosted their 10 year anniversary staff conference in the West Hall with 1500 delegates.

On Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November we hosted and delivered our largest in-house event: The Fireworks and German Bier Festival. 50,000 Tickets sold out more than 2 weeks in advance and attendees were not disappointed. The firework display was in excess of 25 minutes with an additional 20 minute laser pre-show. Other entertainment throughout the Park include: street food and craft beer, mutant waste parade, funfair, a huge bonfire, and ice skating sessions. Inside the Great Hall was turned into a huge German beer Keller where 6000 people enjoyed local musicians and the headline tribute Elton John act.

Feedback to date has been largely positive and to note that the event was delivered to an incredibly high standard. Enquiries for 2016 ticket sales have already been received. As with all major events the team will reflect and make improvements where necessary but overall our flagship event is now London's hottest ticket in November and we should be very proud of this achievement. Please refer to our fireworks video to see all the activities that took place: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AybNoxq0P5s>

Further firework information is listed in the appendix 7.1.

Also in November Amma returned to the palace for her 8<sup>th</sup> year with 3,500 visitors a day attending to hug the spiritual healer originally from southern India. The organ society also hosted their special film night which attracted more than 300 visitors.

December opened with 7 concerts in 8 nights. Sell out performances from Frank Turner, Chvrches, and Bring Me the Horizon were followed by 3 sold out nights of Disclosure, and to celebrate 20 years together Faithless played out the year to a sell-out crowd.

The ever popular festival village in the West Hall has really supported catering targets with high food and beverage sales on music events. The unique street food concessions including Smoke Stack, Anna Maes, Flammin Cactus and Bodeans encourage music fans to get to the venue early to enjoy an experience that offers more than just music.

Antiques returned for its busiest show of the year and attracted over 4,000 enthusiasts.

Darts returned bigger and better than ever in the last weeks of December and across the Christmas and New Year period. The increased capacity in the West Hall meant that the organiser PDC could sell 3000 seats per session. 66,000 tickets were sold in total and more than a million pounds worth of beer was consumed. The live coverage on Sky Sports reached over four million viewers across the 14 days of the William Hill World Darts Championship a 25% increase on last year, including a record audience of more than 1.7 million for the thrilling final between Gary Anderson and Adrian Lewis.



## 22.2 Future events

Event	Event Type	Date
Masters World Snooker	Sporting Event	10 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> January
Excursions	Exhibition	23 <sup>rd</sup> January
Ping Pong	Sporting Event	22-24 <sup>th</sup> January
Club de Fromage on ice	Ice disco	29 <sup>th</sup> January
Feeling Gloomy on ice	Ice disco	5 <sup>th</sup> February
Antiques	Exhibition	7 <sup>th</sup> February
Slipknot	Concert	10-11 <sup>th</sup> February
Tame Impala	Concert	12-13 February
MA Healthcare	Exhibition	23-24 February
Jamie XX	Concert	26 <sup>th</sup> February
Enter Shikari	Concert	27 <sup>th</sup> February
Club de Fromage on ice	Ice disco	28 <sup>th</sup> February
RYA	Exhibition	4 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> March
Parov Stelar	Concert	12 <sup>th</sup> March
London Festival of Model Railways	Exhibition	19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> March
Andy C (Late night)	Concert	24 <sup>th</sup> March
Ally Pally German bier festival	Live Event	26 <sup>th</sup> March

At the time of writing Snooker was taking place and being broadcast live on the BBC. Viewing figures have already peaked at 1.1 million. Average attendance across the sessions is currently 1500 which will increase to 1900 attendees for the final on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January.

## 23 EVENT OPERATIONS UPDATE

### 23.1 Table top exercise

In addition to the numerous events taking place throughout this period the events team hosted a table top exercise to talk through potential emergency scenarios and how each operational team within the venue would manage and react to them. This was a successful exercise aimed at continually improving our existing operational responses and will be repeated annually.

### 23.2 Venue Management Plans

Venue management plans and key operation documents have all now been updated. All departments have been briefed on these updates to ensure all events continue to be delivered to a consistent high standard.

### 23.3 Improvements to Egress

The Head of Events continues to implement a number of procedural additions to our standard egress plan including a different egress route for visitors when leaving the building, additional security and traffic management and dedicated cleaners in certain external areas including Bedford Road.

#### 23.4 Outdoor Events Strategy

The Commercial team is near to completing the outdoor event strategy to ensure Park opportunities are maximised throughout the summer. This will enable us to increase our portfolio of outdoor events, attract new audiences and build on our outdoor activity benefiting park users and the local community.

#### 23.5 Fireworks

As with all major events the team undertake a debrief of all elements and make improvements where necessary. Please refer to Appendix 1 for full responses and details relating to queries raised at previous SAC/CC meeting.

### 24 **MARKETING**

#### 24.1 Media Coverage

The numerous events held at the Palace over the autumn attracted increased media coverage. The venue was listed in Time Out 4 times, NME 8 times, Metro 4 times and Evening standard 3 times. Our 'What's On' has estimated to have achieved over 10,000,000 views and impressions from these publications alone. The Time Out December edition listed the Alexandra Palace waterslide at the Ally Pally summer festival as the number one thing to attend in London in July 2015.

#### 24.2 Customer data

Marketing have been focussing on digital advertising and social media platforms in order to engage with new and existing customers. This is not limited to event promotion only but also promotions for the Ice Rink, Learning and Community programmes, Park events, and activity in The Phoenix Bar & Kitchen. These platforms have provided a valuable source of customer data, which can then be used to communicate and promote future events and offers.

#### 24.3 Social Media

In terms of social media, Facebook followers currently number (53,694), Instagram (4,892), twitter (18,800) Snap chat (100) and our database now exceeds 145,000.

#### 24.4 Filming

For the past 12 months the team have been filming all our events and onsite activity. We have collated some fantastic footage and a show reel was created for the Christmas period to showcase all our highlights. The video has currently received 250,000 views on line. It can be viewed following this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Cs-viv8kOI>, and will be shown at the end of this meeting.

## **25. THE PHOENIX BAR & KITCHEN**

With 300,000 visitors to site the Bar and kitchen benefited immensely and also exceeded its target for this period. This can be attributed to the high volumes of concerts in particular Faithless attracting a slightly older audience which was reflected in the higher spend per head, increased volume of high footfall and high profile exhibitions, additional footfall and additional capacity at the darts.

## **26. ICE RINK**

26.1 The Cinderella on Ice pantomime took place across 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> December and proved popular with both school groups and general ticket holders, selling out 1 month in advance of the first show.

26.2 Club de Fromage continues on the last Friday of every month and has seen a 150% increase to Friday footfall. Club de Fromage's alternative night 'Feeling Gloomy' will pay tribute to David Bowie on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February with the organiser pledging to give part of the proceeds of this event to the Teenage Cancer Trust.

26.3 The winter campaign has just launched and includes numerous promotional materials, flyers, posters, Facebook advertising, featured digital advertising, social media support and e-shots.

## **27. Legal Implications**

The Council's Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and has no comments.

## **28. Financial Implications**

The Council's Chief Financial Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and has no additional comments.

## **29. Use of Appendices**

Appendix 1 APPCT Response to Cross Rail 2 Consultation, January 2016

Appendix 2 Fireworks: Response to queries raised at previous meetings

Appendix 3 Fireworks Video (paragraph 22.1) and End of Year Alexandra Palace show reel (link in paragraph 24.4) which will be shown at the meeting