

Report Title: Park Activities Update

Report of: Mark Evison, Alexandra Park Manager

1. Purpose

1.1 To update the Board on current matters relating to Alexandra Park.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Board note the contents of the report.

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3. Executive Summary

3.1 The report updates the progress on the new Grounds Maintenance Contract, the Go Ape proposal, and work on replacing and repairing utilities and services in the Park.

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

N/A

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A

6. Grounds Maintenance

- 6.1 Following the Board's agreement to award a new contract to John O'Conner (Grounds Maintenance) Ltd, the contract mobilisation plan is well underway for the start date on 1st May. The grounds staff will take part in an induction programme to ensure they are all aware of the changes to the specification and the new requirements.
- 6.2 The specification includes a schedule of potential projects which the contractor can undertake to 'add value' to the contract by working with volunteers, students or similar third parties to deliver maintenance in the Park. They made a flying start to this aspect of the agreement in March by planting a new native hedge with a group of horticulture students from Capel Manor College.

7. Go Ape Proposal

- 7.1 The Go Ape proposal was granted planning permission in a notice dated 15 March 2016 (attached as Appendix 1 to this report). The permission is subject to seven conditions. At the time of writing the Ecological Survey has been commissioned but cannot be carried out until Spring is underway. The ecologist will work with the Park Manager to ensure any required mitigation complements the needs of the Park.
- 7.2 An indicative programme for the project is as follows:

Invertebrate survey	early-April
Finalise lease	mid-April
Install foundations and poles	late June
Install tower and ropes	mid-July
Course opens	late July

- 7.3 The lease agreement is now in final draft stage and will be reviewed by the Trust's Solicitor before sealing takes place.

8. Utilities and Services

- 8.1 The gas main installation through the Park is complete. At the time of writing, final restoration of some areas is still outstanding. Ground conditions are very soft in places, so this work will not be attempted until the site has dried out to avoid further disturbance.
- 8.2 The street lights between the Garden Centre and Dukes Avenue have not been working for some time. It was quickly established that the fault was not a simple one, such as a lamp or fuse that could be easily replaced. After further investigations the lighting contractors diagnosed a serious underground cable fault and have been working to rectify the problems by replacing the cable.

9. Legal Implications

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

10. Financial Implications

The Council's Chief Finance Officer has been consulted on these reports and has no additional comments to make.

11. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Notice of Planning Permission for Go Ape high ropes course.