

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
West Ham Park	14 October 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Park Manager's Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Superintendent of Parks and Gardens	<b>For Information</b>
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>This report provides an update to Members of the West Ham Park Committee on management and operational activities at West Ham Park since July 2019.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the report</li> </ul>	

### Main Report

#### **Budget and Personnel**

1. Expenditure for West Ham Park is in line with that expected at this time of year. The Park currently has a full complement of full-time staff.

#### **Community, Volunteering, Outreach and events**

2. Wild Schools: Over the summer holidays, the garden was opened to the public once a week with the wild school officer and volunteers running forest school activities with families. This September a new session on aboriginal art has been developed. Children are making symbolic maps of the ornamental gardens using natural pigments sourced from the park. Other sessions planned for this term include; a Roman engineering challenge to create miniature bridges and more of our popular 'Blitz Detectives' sessions to help local schools uncover more of the wartime history of West Ham Park. We are hoping also this year to build on the successful art shows we hosted in past years at local libraries and arts trails by creating more ceramic and collage work based on the flora and fauna of West Ham Park. Finally, the Wildlife Garden Extension is now hosting three regular Forest Schools for schools local to West Ham Park. City of London Volunteers recently worked to improve the dead hedge here and add new log piles to boost invertebrates and soil quality.

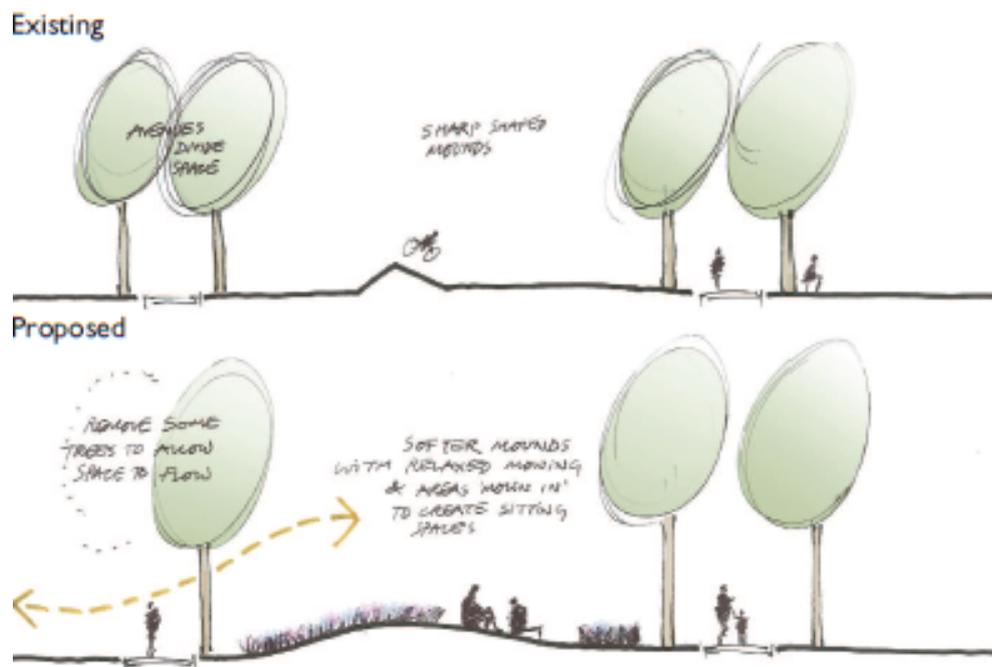
3. The Friends of West Ham Park continue to be very active in the park. They held two successful bat walks over the summer, both with over 50 attendees each. The August walk saw a small amount of bat activity, but the September evening saw much more. The friends think that two different species of bat, a pipistrelle and another (yet to be identified) are present. They are in contact with the Bat Conservation Trust to see if they can identify the second species.
4. Future friends' events happening in the park over the coming months are listed below.
  - a. Wildlife garden maintenance – 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October 12 – 3pm
  - b. Newham's biggest leaf pile – 10<sup>th</sup> November at 1:30 – 3pm
  - c. Park in the Dark and stargazing – 6<sup>th</sup> December 5 – 7pm
  - d. Wildlife garden maintenance – 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December 12 – 3pm
  - e. Vegetable garden sessions – Tuesdays 2 – 4pm
  - f. Health Walk – every Wednesday 11am – 12 noon
5. Vegetable garden – The group have completed the improvements to the garden and had a good harvest of courgettes, squash, carrots, potatoes, lettuce, beans, herbs and sunflowers. A number of new members have joined and the group which will enable them to keep the garden open throughout the winter months on a Tuesday afternoon.
6. The Snack Shack returned to the park at the end of May and traded Thursday to Sunday throughout the summer months. The changeable summer resulted in lower than expected sales. Trading was extended up until the end of September to allow them to capitalise on the late autumn sunshine and visitors in the park.

### **Operational activities**

7. The park retained its Green Heritage and Green Flag awards as well as being awarded Gold in London in Bloom and Large park (above 25 acres) of the year. The judges commented that 'It is Evident the park's management team are fresh thinking, drawing the local community into their park. West Ham Park is more than very horticultural and environmentally managed site, this is a highly visited park that is an asset to the local community and using creative, learning and sports initiatives, delivering interests throughout the year for different users.'
8. Ornamental gardens: Winter projects have begun in the ornamental gardens; the top terrace of the rose garden has been cleared and will be replanted in the autumn. Improvements are also planned to a section of the outer shrub border, where mature planting has become a screen for antisocial behaviour. A section will be cleared over the winter months and new evergreen trees and shrubs planted in 2020. Sight lines through the space will be kept open to deter future antisocial behaviour, whilst the size and stature of the planting will maintain the green screen around the perimeter of the site to reduce impact from the neighbouring road.

9. **Parkland** – soil excavated from the south meadow project (earlier in the year) is being used to help re-sculpt three mounds adjacent to the cricket pitches. The area is used for physical exercise but has become eroded with use. The hills will be re-graded to give gentler slopes. New wildflower and bulb mix will be planted on one edge as per the objectives of park's Conservation Management Plan actions (See Figure 1 below). The wildflower and bulb mix provides nectar and food for a variety of insects, butterflies and bees.

**Figure 1:** Proposed treatment of mounds taken from West Ham Park's Conservation Management Plan (2010)



10. **Playground** – The paddling pool remained closed for the whole of the summer season due to problems with the tiles on the base of the pool. Spot repairs were carried out by the City's breakdown contractor, however each time the pool was attempted to be filled more areas of tiles lifted. Initial quotes to complete a large 'patch repair' were uneconomical. Numerous complaints were received from members of the public via email and on social media. The closure of this popular facility also caused a drop in visitor numbers that impacted on the trade of the concessions on site. Working with the City Surveyors department a different contractor has now been found that can resolve the problem within budget. Works are planned for this autumn so that the paddling pool could be re-opened next year.
11. **Sports:** Tennis and cricket were both popular over the summer months. Children's holiday camps were well attended for both sports. The newly refurbished nets also saw usage double. A full report regarding this year's sporting activity in the park will be brought to December committee.

## **Property Matters**

12. Park Cottage - Claim for Adverse Possession. The fence line has now been moved to enclose land belonging to the park and the case closed.
13. A detailed report on the Nursery project is available in the non-public section of the agenda.

## **Lucy Murphy**

West Ham Park Manager

E: [lucy.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

T: 020 8475 7104