

<b>Committee:</b> West Ham Park Committee	<b>Date:</b> 3 February 2020
<b>Subject:</b> West Ham Park Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> <b>Lucy Stowell-Smith</b>	

### Summary

This report provides an update to Members of the West Ham Park Committee on management and operational activities at West Ham Park since December 2019.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

### 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. A Level three Gardening apprentice joined the team in December and will be working in the Park for the next 2 years training up to Team Leader Level.

#### Community, Volunteering, Outreach and events

2. **Wild Schools:** The 2019 winter term saw 1653 pupils from local Newham Primary Schools come to West Ham Park for outdoor learning sessions. The 2020 year began with Soil Scientists lessons for year 3 pupils, comparing two soil types in West Ham Park and then choosing the most suitable one with which to build a dam. A new weekly Forest School group from Odessa Primary school are now using the extended wildlife garden, catering to pupils with autism. Finally, work on the Wildlife Garden Extension continued with pupils helping to plant 2000 spring bulbs around the coppice and fruit trees. New sessions are being planned for the spring in orienteering and updating the popular 'going on a bear hunt' sessions in the Ornamental Gardens.
3. **Friends of West Ham Park:** Park in the dark was well attended in December with 100 adults and children in attendance. January saw the Friends lead a bird watching walk and guidance on how to use binoculars. At the end of January, the group are running a 'Space Exploration Weekend' in the Park and at the local Scout hut. A stargazing evening will be accompanied by daytime activities; on the Saturday locals will be encouraged to 'Ask an Astronomer' with displays and charts along with a presentation given at the scout hut. Sunday will see the Park turned in to a model solar system with the

Cairn used as the sun and groups from local schools accompanied by the scouts working out the scaled distance of the other planets.

- Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January or Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February or Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February (weather dependent): Stargazing from 6pm
  - Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February: Ask an Astronomer at the Scout hut, Evesham road from 4 until 6pm
  - Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February: Solar system comes to West Ham Park from 2 until 4pm.
4. London Borough of Newham are running a range of activities throughout March to celebrate and encourage “**Bloomin’ Forest Gate**” asking local residents and businesses to spruce up front gardens/businesses, put on a nature themed event, run a planting activity etc. In addition to the Park’s regular Health walks and Food growing sessions we will be hosting a walk around the ornamental gardens on the 11<sup>th</sup> March at 11am to share with people the history and horticultural significance of the plant collections.

### **Operational activities**

5. The keeper and gardening teams have been busy with regular maintenance over the winter, clearing leaves, renovating sports pitches, cutting hedges and mulching borders.
6. **Playground Project:** A bid to the London Marathon Charitable Trust for £150,000 (towards the £350,000 that we are hoping to raise externally) has successfully passed the round one submission process. Another bid has been submitted to Veolia for £75,000, with further work being carried out by the project team to apply for the remaining shortfall from other funders.
7. **Trees:** The contract has been awarded to a new software supplier. Officers are now preparing for the process of transfer of data from the old system to “Treeplotter”.

### **Property Matters**

8. **Nursery project:** Further interviews to appoint a Senior Development Manager to support the project were held in January and it is hoped that the successful candidate will be available to start imminently..
9. **Drainage replacement:** A project to improve drainage outside the playground and toilet block has begun. Existing pipework and the old soakaway were no longer effective due to a build-up of silt and tree roots. Works to replace an existing soakaway drain and pipework as well as installing two new soakaways should prevent puddling from occurring after intense rainstorms.

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