

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest & Commons -	6 July 2015
Subject: Superintendent's Update	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest (SEF-34/15).	For Information
Summary	
<p>This purpose of this report is to summarise the Epping Forest Division's activities across April and May 2015.</p> <p>Of particular note is the successful completion of a range of projects including Highams Park Lake; Cobbins Brook Culvert</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to note this report</p>	

Staff

1. The post of Support Services Assistant is being readvertised, the current absence is placing pressure on telephone responses from The Warren. The first two permanent weekday and weekend working Litter Picker posts have been successfully recruited. Interviews are currently underway for the post of Landscape Officer with responsibility for managing the grazing contract.

Epping Forest Projects

2. **Higham Park Lake Large Raised Reservoir.**
The dam strengthening works are now complete and Balfour Beatty have left the site. The compound and operating equipment for the drawdown gate have been strengthened to cope with the public access environment. The pea gravel access path surface on the dam has been constructed to project specification, but is not able to offer a sufficient degree of consolidation, particularly on gradients and will need to be augmented or replaced. Negotiations are underway with Walthamstow Scouts and occupation is expected from Spring 2016.
3. **Baldwins and Birch Hall Park Ponds.**
Consultants Site Analytical Services and Randal Surveys have completed topographical surveys and borehole testing of the dam structures for both reservoirs. Scoping work is now underway and the proposals will be subject to a Gateway 3 report to your Committee.

4. **Cobbins Brook Culvert.**

The £37,000 substantial rebuild culvert works on Buffer Land, supervised by colleagues in Built Environment, have now been successfully completed.

5. **Grazing Expansion Scheme.** Cattle turned out on Warren Wood Slope on 16th June in one of the new barrier less fencing loops. Lacme have been unable to consistently achieve sufficient signal strength across the new 3.5km Boviguard™ barrier less fencing loops and work is underway to shorten the loops at Fairmead and Chingford Plain to the previous operating threshold of 2km. Cows will be going out behind normal electric fencing at Chingford Plain and also at Rushey Plain in an area north of the High Beach wheelchair path. The Team at Epping Forest continues to work closely with colleagues at Burnham Beeches to help further test and refine the technology.

6. **Wanstead Park – Conceptual Options and Cost Plan.**

Heritage Environment Associates have completed the first draft of the Conceptual Options and Cost Plan for Wanstead Park.

Consultations

7. Considerable work has been undertaken to load and cross reference the Management Plan Public Consultation document on the Inovem™ website. Server problems at Epping Forest delayed the opening of consultation on the 22 June. Consultation will now run from 23 June to 14 September.
8. Public consultation also closed on the community significance of Ambresbury Banks and Loughton Camp Hill forts. The dual questionnaire and online consultation is currently being compiled.

Forest Services

9. **Fly tipping.**

Fly tips for the first five months of the year totalled 246(1.6/day), compared to 195(1.3/day) for the equivalent period in 2014. This represents a 26% increase on the number of fly tips for the previous year. Of particular note was the tipping of a 7 cubic metre asbestos roof fly tip at Lincolns Gate car park which cost £5,500 in specialist disposal costs.

10. **Rough Sleepers**

Enforcement action on camps is continuing at a similar rate to last year. Forest Keeper staff have attended coordination meetings with the Police and London Borough of Redbridge staff to plan activity over the coming year.

11. **Enforcement Activity**

A sentence for fly tipping of 200 hours of community service and £910 costs is current being appealed at Chelmsford Crown Court. Three warning letters have been issued for driving on the forest (juvenile) and taking or removing moss.

Heritage; Landscape and Nature Conservation

12. Basic Payment Scheme (BPS)

The Division has undertaken extensive work to complete the paper application to the Rural Payments Agency for the new Basic Payment Scheme by the 15 June deadline. These submissions will replace the previous 10 years of the Single Payment Scheme.

13. EC Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme

The European Commission as part of its Smart Regulation policy has initiated a Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT) which is currently examining European Union Nature Legislation (Birds and Habitats Directives). Public consultation runs until 24th July before publication of the Fitness check in early 2016. Burnham Beeches, City Commons and Epping Forest are planning a joint response.

14. Birch Hall Park Conservation Statement

15. Scoping is underway with colleagues in City Surveyors for a tender to produce a Conservation Statement for Birch Hall Park (The Deer Sanctuary) which will in particular help inform work around the landscape significance of the Pond ahead of any capital works to address leakage.

16. Town and Country Planning

Objections were lodged for developments adjacent the Forest at 89 High Street, Loughton; Willows Stables, Lippitts Hill; and Rosewood, High Beach together with the appeal for 3 new residences at 20 Albion Hill

17. The Deputy Chairman met with Mornington Road residents regarding the maintenance of the wayleave on Forest Land and Anderson Group representatives regarding covenanted land at Albany Stud.

Operations

18. The arborist teams have focused on works associated with the hazardous tree surveys with work on over 200 trees scheduled. A second resistance survey has indicated that the veteran oak at the Brook Road junction will need to be felled.

19. While grass growth has been initially slow due to a cold and dry spring, work on Grass Cutting across the Forest is underway with spring cuts at Queens Green, High beach and dripline verges across the Forest.

20. Essex County Council also undertook a significant verge cut during late May.

Visitor Services

21. **Communication and Information**

22. The Twitter team have produced 606 Tweets for the first four months of the year. Twitter followers have risen to 3643

23. **Family Learning Events.**

The May half term family learning events were well attended. The subjects of 'air' and 'animal arrivals' attracted over 100 participants for each event.

24. **Wanstead Flats Football.**

The 2014/15 football season closed on the weekend 25/26 April, with allowances for a few extra fixtures in early May. A total of 2,911 games were played across the season with arrears limited to £60 by the end of the season. Sadly, the bid to the Aviva Community Sport fund was unsuccessful.

25. **Major incidents.**

26. None.

Paul Thomson
Superintendent of Epping Forest

T: 0208 532 1010

Email: paul.thomson@cityoflondon.gov.uk