

Committee: West Ham Park Committee	Date: 12 th October 2015
Subject: Superintendent's update October 2015	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Parks & Gardens	For Information
<p>Summary</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 2015.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report. 	

Main Report

Budget

1. The West Ham Park budget is in line with agreed budget profiles. Income from sport is higher than expected due to good weather in May and June. The summer bedding plants produced by the nursery were well received by our clients with good feedback received from all. Demand for floral displays has been very low. To date several quotes have been completed for forthcoming events, however only two small events have been delivered by the team. This coming autumn the team will decorate the Great Hall for the China State Banquet and also provide pot plants to decorate the corridors at Guildhall for the Lord Mayors Banquet, however as in previous years it is not expected that we will meet our income targets for floral decorations this financial year.

Personnel

2. The nursery has a full complement of staff. The joint apprenticeship scheme between the City of London, Roots and Shoots and the Royal Parks (funded by the City Bridge Trust – Growing Localities fund) has come to an end. The parks apprentice successfully completed his Level 1 City and Guild Certificate in English and Maths and achieved his NVQ Level 1 in Horticulture. Further work based training and short term work placements to Golders Hill Park and City Garden's helped to build his confidence. He has secured a permanent job with a landscaping firm in North London.

3. One of our gardeners is retiring from gardening duties in the park at the end of October after 35 years of service. Recruitment for a replacement gardener is currently taking place, 5 applications have been shortlisted for interview.

Operational Activities

4. The end of July saw the return of Capital Kids Cricket's West Ham Summer Cricket Camp. The camp, aimed at 8 – 16 year olds of all abilities, took place in West Ham Park and provided an opportunity for children from the local community to learn new skills, meet new friends, exercise and, have fun. As a result of the camp some of the children have joined West Ham Cricket Club.
5. September has seen the start of the football season, with Laron FC returning to the park to play matches, along with a new team AC Milano. A children's coaching squad will be operating in the park from the end of September also.
6. On the 15th September, officers attended the London in Bloom finalist award celebrations. The park received a Silver Gilt award in the Large park (over above 25 acres category).
7. The Park Manager has been working with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to create a Tennis Development Plan for the park and secure funding towards the refurbishment of 9 tennis courts (the remaining 3 were resurfaced in 2012/13). Quotes for the works are currently being sought with the City Surveyor and it is expected that work will begin in January 2016, with the courts being opened to the public in May.

Community, Volunteering, Outreach and Events

8. In July the Park commissioned local artist Sonia Patel Ellis to install an exhibit on the West Ham Park bandstand. The exhibit, titled 'The Story Without' was part of the Forest Gate Arts Trail and took the form of a pop-up Victorian library exploring the links between nature, art, books and local history and paying particular homage to former resident, physician and botanist Dr John Fothergill. The exhibit attracted over 170 visitors over three weeks and formed part of our Love Parks Week celebrations.
8. Throughout August the parks Outreach, Biodiversity and Education officer delivered a Summer Wildlife Club every Tuesday for local families looking for inspiration over the school holiday period for fun, free activities to entertain the children. Activities included wildlife exploration, pond dipping, minibeast hunts, crafts and games and saw 65 local children taking part. Following the return of the schools this autumn the parks learning programme has delivered outdoor education sessions to 119 students from local schools.
9. In collaboration with the Friends of West Ham Park we have delivered three educational bat walks in the Park to 179 visitors, including 69 cub scouts from the Newham Scout District. The bat walks were thoroughly enjoyed by all those that attended and have even inspired some students to hand in bat inspired homework following their extra-curricular participation on the West

Ham Park walks. Over the summer months the friends conducted 60 second surveys the results of which are currently being collated.

10. The gardening group have had a bountiful crop of vegetables throughout the summer. Potatoes, tomatoes, leeks, onions, cabbages, kale, runner and French beans, herbs, salad leave, carrot, beetroot, chilies and spinach have all been collected by the 8 regular members and other volunteers. A three bin compost system has been added to the garden and will be used to enrich the soil over the winter months.

Photograph1: Gardening Group and produce collected during one volunteer session in the garden.



11. The Challenge Network are returning to the Park to complete their National Citizenship Service programme through September 2015. 54 volunteers delivered a range of community engagement initiatives in the Park on the 19/20 September and 26 volunteers helped deliver practical conservation tasks as part of the Parks wildflower meadow maintenance plan the following week, contributing towards the parks biodiversity goals. The wildflower meadow maintenance plan for the Park was developed following a site visit to Hampstead Heath to share knowledge with colleagues experienced in conservation and countryside management and bring this back to West Ham Park.
12. The Park has successfully secured 105 native tree saplings free of charge from the Woodland Trust as part of their community tree packs initiative, which will be planted with the support of local volunteer groups this winter.

Property Matters

13. Existing clients have now been notified about the closure of the Nursery. Following a meeting with The Royal Parks (TRP) and formal written notification, they have responded expressing sadness at the loss of the service, but understanding that this was a necessary business decision. TRP have also expressed gratitude at our intention to honour deliveries up to and including summer bedding next year (delivered June 2016), as this will give them time to source an alternative supplier. They clearly stated their intention to keep sourcing costs to an absolute minimum through robust procurement,

in order to minimise the ongoing impact to the City of London for the duration of the contract (final bedding season autumn 2018). This will result in a revenue-type discharging of our obligation to them, which will be agreed formally in due course.

14. Whichever option or combination of options is selected for the future of the Nursery site, this will automatically trigger the City's Project Procedure due to its value (i.e. greater than £50,000). Consequently, it is desirable to begin the Project Procedure's gateway reporting process sooner rather than later. This will entail reporting to Projects Sub-Committee as well as your Committee, and potentially Corporate Asset Sub-Committee. Consultation with your Committee regarding future options will remain paramount, regardless of the various committee routes.
15. Conversations have continued with Newham Council and Park Primary school regarding the proposed installation of an access gate on the Ham Park road edge of the park. Final designs are being drawn up by their planning department for submission to your committee in December.

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