

Committee:	Date:
West Ham Park Committee	7 December 2015
Subject:	Public
Superintendent's update December 2015	
Report of:	For Information
Superintendent of Parks & Gardens	
Summary	
<p>This report provides an update to Members of the West Ham Park Committee on management and operational activities at West Ham Park since October 2015.</p>	
Recommendation	
<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. The Nursery has successfully grown and delivered spring bedding plants for its internal and external clients. Charges are currently being processed. Floral decorations were provided for the China State Banquet, Lord Mayors Banquet and two other awards ceremonies, however no further requests for work have been received, therefore we are anticipating that income will not reach its target for this financial year.

Personnel

2. The nursery and keeper teams have a full complement of staff. A new gardener has joined our team from the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. He completed his apprenticeship at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park where he was involved with the south parklands and planting of the 2012 gardens. His first project in the park is to work with the Park Manager to re-design the rose garden. A more mixed herbaceous style of planting (including roses and nectar rich flowering plants and bulbs) will be introduced to replace the old roses, many of which are suffering from pests and diseases.

Operational Activities

3. Keepers and gardeners have been busy with autumnal projects in the park. Formal hedges have been cut back and the native hedgerow that surrounds the wildlife garden has been laid using traditional techniques. Habitat restoration and maintenance of the wildlife pond has also been completed. Islington Council's tree surveyors have completed the survey of the north east quadrant of the park along with all of the other mature trees and Plane trees. The resultant works will be carried out by our term contractors over the winter months.
4. The park has been successful in securing an £85,000 grant from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) towards the cost of re-surfacing the remaining 9 courts in the park. Works will begin in January and are expected to be completed by May 2016. Talks are on-going with the LTA to formalise a partnership arrangement with them which would provide users with access to on-line booking systems along with other benefits.

Community, Volunteering, Outreach and Events

5. On Sunday 15 November the Friends of West Ham Park held the annual Leaf Pile Event. The event was a great success with over 120 adults and children attending. The family fun day comprised of seasonal activities including building hedgehog homes and games of conkers as well as the mandatory mounding of leaves. The Friends of West Ham Park will return on 7th December to host Park in the Dark. This will feature carols from a local choir and craft making activities.
6. The Park's Sustainability, Outreach and Biodiversity Officer has been developing partnerships with local organisations and community groups to help support the outreach objectives of the Park. Successful networks have been established with the East London Business Alliance, the Newham Community Gardening Network and the Forest Gate Community Garden with a view to encouraging greater participation and awareness of Park events, as well as expanding our access to teams of local volunteers. 25 volunteers from Thomson Reuters planted over 100 native hedgerow saplings (donated by the Woodland Trust), and over 1,000 crocus bulbs (donated by the Newham Rotary Club) in November and have committed to returning next year.

Property Matters

7. Nursery update: The Superintendent and Park Manager met with London Borough of Newham's planning department to discuss the future of the nursery site and ascertain the designation of the land. While the majority of the park is listed as 'Green Space', the nursery site sits outside this area; however it is in a proposed Conservation area. The Superintendent has met with the Operational Property Asset Review Board in order to discuss the overall management of the project in line with the corporate project procedure.

8. Lodges update: Decoration of 2 Linden Cottages has begun with a completion date of mid-December. The member of staff residing in 242 Upton Lane will move to this lodge in January. The nursery team are relocating their office from 240 Upton Lane to the potting shed and main mess room facilities, leaving both 240 and 242 Upton Lane vacant. A condition survey of mechanical and electrical services of the two properties is planned. Refurbishment of the Upton Lane properties is due to start in the New Year, ready for letting in the spring.
9. Work to replace rotten timber on corporate noticeboards and garden structures is scheduled for the winter months. Further planned works include realignment of stone paving in the ornamental gardens and relaying of tarmac path edges at the main entrance.
10. Ice cream concession: The City Surveyor has offered the current Ice Cream Concession a year's extension to his licence at the increased rate of £12,500 per annum, which he has accepted. During the extended year the park will trial various different pop up food concessions (selling hot food) throughout the peak summer period of 2016 to ascertain which is most popular. This will help inform the future licencing of food concessions within the park.

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