

Committee	Dated:
West Ham Park	10/10/2016
Subject: Superintendent's Update October 2016	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Parks and Gardens	For Information
Report author: Lucy Murphy	

Summary

This report provides an update to Members of the West Ham Park Committee on management and operational activities at West Ham Park since July 2016

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Budget

1. The expenditure for West Ham Park is in line with budget profiles for this time of year. The Nursery business is now closed and buildings have been emptied and services switched off. All summer bedding was delivered, the expected income is likely to be £4k under achieved. Unfortunately there were no requests for floral displays at banquets etc therefore no income has been received. However savings have been made elsewhere within the budget and it is expected that overall the nursery will meet its resource base for the 6 months it was trading.

Personnel

2. The Park has a full complement of staff. As stated above the Nursery has now closed and redundancy procedure for affected staff is now complete.

Operational Activities

3. Over the last three months, the City Gardens team and City Procurement have worked in partnership with the London Boroughs of Islington and Waltham Forest in preparing the specification to tender a new contract for arboricultural maintenance services. The contract, to begin in July 2017, will be a framework contract for five years with an option to extend. The specification is being developed in collaboration with a number of Open Spaces teams. By buying together and in bulk, there will be cost savings and

evidence of achieving value for money. The shared specifications will also incorporate the required sustainability standards and product quality.

4. The tender will be carried out in accordance with EU and UK procurement regulations in a fair and transparent manner and the contract will be awarded following further scrutiny by the Land Management Category Board chaired by the Director of Open Spaces.
5. The new West Ham Park tennis coaches have been trialing different coaching courses for adults and children over the summer. Tennis tournaments at intermediate and advanced level were held in August and September attracting 17-24 people per day.
6. The Football season is now underway, this year only one pitch is being marked due to reduced demand. Two teams are playing league matches at weekends and additional adults and children's teams using the pitch for training and coaching. The second pitch will be rested and renovated over the winter and spring.
7. The park continues to be very popular for cricket. During the summer West Ham Cricket Club held a multi faith festival in the park and distributed 200 black cricket bats to local children (See link to a short video clip of the event <https://vimeo.com/181055989>). The Park Manager has been working closely with Essex County Cricket Board, English Cricket Board (ECB) along with Newham Council and other partners in the borough to increase opportunities for young people to access the sport.
8. **Ornamental gardens:** 2,000 woodland bulbs, perennials and shrubs have been added to a new woodland walk section in the ornamental gardens. The new space which was returned to the gardens (due to the new tennis courts being smaller dimensions) has given a lift to this under-utilised area of the gardens.



9. At London in Bloom the park retained its Silver Gilt award, with encouraging comments made about recent improvements to the rose garden and the plans for other areas of the gardens. The support of the friends group in leading walks and talks on site was also recognised.

10. West Ham Park received an overall band score of 80+ for Green Flag and Green Heritage (an increase from the 70-74 received in 2014). Positive comments were received regarding the recent changes to the ornamental gardens and the link to Dr John Fothergill and the use of the Linden garden as a Forest school base. The judges noted that the management plan is due for updating in 2017 and offers an opportunity to further embed the historical significance of the park into future plans whilst improving and ensuring that the park's features are fit for current use, e.g. signage review to update branding and lower signs so that they are easier to read, also to increase signage to tell the park's story and highlight its importance for wildlife.

Property Matters

11. **240 and 242 Upton Lane:** Both properties have now been leased to tenants who moved in at the end of September.
12. **Nursery Project:** Over the summer the appointed consultants for the nursery project, Lambert Smith and Hampton (LSH), have been carrying out a Planning Appraisal Report to consider the site and the six identified development options in the context of relevant national, regional and local planning policies. They are also formulating proposed scheme options and fixing appropriate values for the various uses. The Park Manager and Superintendent are meeting LSH in mid October to discuss their findings. They will then complete the valuation work. A cost benefit analysis of the various options will be presented to committee in the spring.

Community, Volunteering, Outreach and Events

13. **WHP Friends group:** The friends' group have led two Bat walks in the park. These free events are very popular with the local community, 60 adults and children attended in August and a further 75 joined the walk in September. If they continue to rise in popularity the friends may have to introduce ticketing in order to control the numbers.
14. Future forthcoming events that the friends are holding in the park include:
 - a. 6 November - 'Newham's biggest leaf pile'
 - b. 2 December - 'Park in the Dark' and Stargazing event

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