

Committee(s)	Dated:
West Ham Park Committee	2 December 2020
Subject: West Ham Park Managers Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Colin Buttery	For Information
Report author: Lucy Stowell-Smith	

Summary

This report provides an update to Members of the West Ham Park Committee on management and operational activities at West Ham Park since October 2020. The funding for the work stated is met through the parks local risk budget, apart from the Friends of West Ham Park's Exhibition which is being paid for by external funding raised by the friend's group.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

Main Report

Budget and Personnel

1. **Budgets:** Budgets continue to be impacted by lockdown. November has seen the closure of the tennis courts and cricket nets and all football matches have been cancelled and goal posts removed to discourage games from being played on site. This will further impact our income levels by up to £3-5K.
2. **Staffing:** One of our Keepers left the team in November. She was responsible for obtaining the funding for the south meadow project and was always an advocate for biodiversity and conservation on site and will be missed by the team and local community. We have not recruited for the role but have employed two temporary staff for November to assist with winter maintenance tasks. A new learning officer has been seconded from another role within the learning team and will join the team until March 2020.

Community, Volunteering, Outreach and events

3. **Visit by The Lady Mayoress:** The Lady Mayoress visited site in October, with the Chair, Deputy Chair and Superintendent. She had an enjoyable visit during which she met the park's Bee Keepers and various members of the friends group whom she thanked for their help and support during the coronavirus pandemic. A downpour of rain and hailstones unfortunately cut the tour of the ornamental gardens short, however it meant that she had time to learn about the exhibition that the friends have been developing for the gardens and see the proofs of the new signage. She was very interested and impressed by the work that they have carried out and has stated that she would like to come and visit the gardens again and open the exhibition next year.
4. **Wild Schools:** Learning officers from other Open Spaces sites have been supporting local schools and providing tailored support required by some groups e.g. SEND group at Odessa primary school. A new learning officer as mentioned above has now started with the team and is planning Christmas themed activities such as wreath making and is working with the Park and Learning Manager to agree the programme for 2021.
5. **Friends of West Ham Park:** Lockdown has resulted in all normal autumn and winter activities being cancelled. The group held their first on-line zoom meeting in October and is hoping to hold socially distanced or 'virtually' supported bird count for the RSPB in January. Weekly Health walks have been cancelled in line with government guidance and advice from the Ramblers association who run the scheme. The vegetable garden volunteers are still tending the garden, however only two people are permitted in the garden at a time, again in line with government guidance.

Operational activities

6. The second lockdown phase has again seen increasing numbers of visitors to the park. Around twice as many people are being seen on site compared to normal visitor numbers for this time of year, however we have not seen the anti-social behaviour that was seen in the spring. All facilities, apart from the toilets are closed and no team sports are permitted on site. Schools continue to use the park for outdoor exercise, sport and lessons.
7. The keeper and gardening teams are focused on key maintenance tasks such as leaf clearance as all other projects have been put on hold to offset expenditure in other areas which has taken priority this year i.e. additional staff during the first phase of the pandemic and personal protective equipment etc and lack of income from facilities and events.
8. *Playground – A separate issues report is being presented to committee regarding the project. However additional work is continuing to seek the remaining £350k required to fund the extension to the playground with support from the Deputy Chair. A donations page is being developed and other*

sources of funding and fundraising being explored. A full report will be brought to February committee with further details.

Property Matters

9. **CWP programme:** external decoration works have begun to lodges across the park. Funding has been prioritised to ensure longevity of buildings and to bring the appearance of the external railings and fencing up to standard.
10. **COVID funding:** The park team are working with the City Surveyor to agree the design for a new window to be installed into the office. The hatch style window will allow contractors to sign in and deliveries be accepted without the need for individuals to enter the office, thus reducing any COVID risk and in accordance with the building's Covid-compliant risk assessment. The new hatch and intercom will provide a much better interface between the park office and the public and will be linked to a mobile phone for times when the office is not occupied.

Report author

Lucy Stowell-Smith

West Ham Park Manager

E: lucy.stowell-smith@cityoflondon.gov.uk

T: 020 8475 7104