

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons	10052021
Subject: Epping Forest - Superintendent's Update for February to March 2021 (SEF 19/21)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 5, 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?	City's Cash Local Risk
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information
Report author: Paul Thomson – Epping Forest	

Summary

This purpose of this report is to summarise the Epping Forest Division's activities across February to March 2021.

Of particular note was the significant reduction of the in-year deficit resulting from additional COVID-19 costs and the loss of licensing, tenancy and sports charges income; an easing of the heavy rainfall that had dominated much of the winter months; the completion of a Year 1 Project Plan for the Carbon Removals Project; the recording of 300 fungi species in the Forest with 22 species new to the Forest; the successful award of a revised 10-year £1.39 Million Countryside Grant Scheme across 2020-29; successful grant applications by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust to secure £14,904 to fund 50 GPS NoFence™ cattle collars for Epping Forest, Heritage of London Trust grant of £24,000 to secure the Grotto landing stage and £14,053 for the Epping Forest Heritage Trust to promote the Centenary Walk; good progress with the hazardous tree backlog and a major increase to the forward plan due to the advent of Sooty Bark Disease in the Forest; and the award of planning consent for the Birch Hall Park dam safety project.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

Main Report

Staff and Volunteers

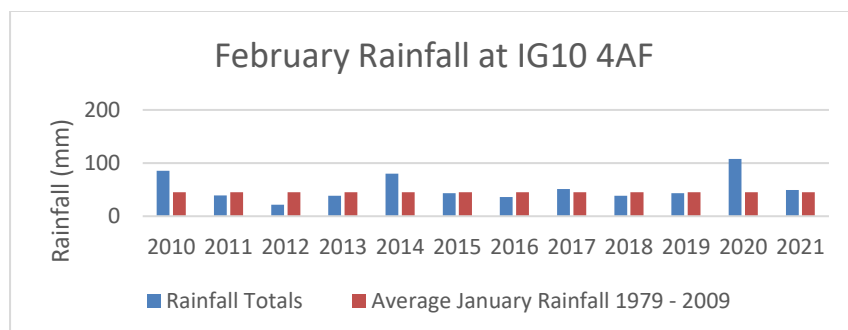
1. A second Senior Keeper commenced work on 11 February 2021 alongside a confirmed Forest Keeper role on 15 February 2021. Reflecting the current TOM recruitment restrictions seven new Casual Forest Keepers joined us on 18 January to cover recent and impending retirements and a resignation.

Budgets

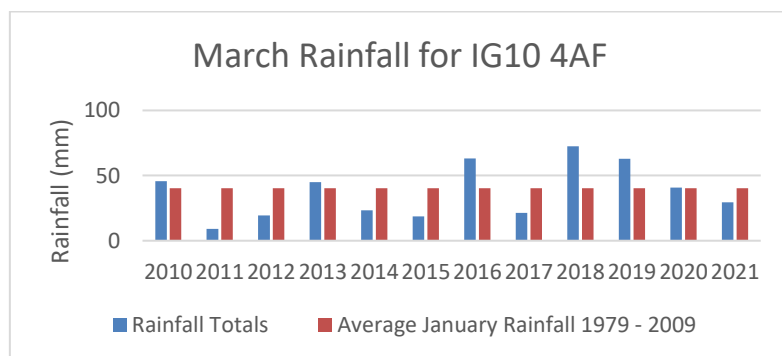
2. At closing of accounts for end of 2020-21 financial year early indications are that Local Risk budgets will be £97,000 overspent. This is due to significantly reduced income and increased demands on some areas of expenditure due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and has been reduced from earlier £700,000 overspend predictions by increased income performance; vacancy management; and the cancellation and delay of budgeted projects.

Weather

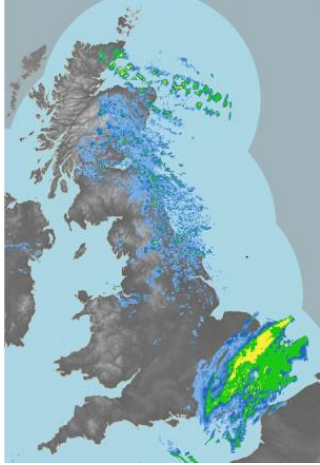
3. Rainfall for February 2021 was very close to the average rainfall seen for February (45.1mm), showing only a 4.3mm increase. There was a total of 20 days of rain, the wettest day being the 4 February with 14.6mm of rainfall.



4. March 2021 rainfall had a total of 29.4mm which was 27% below the average of 40.4mm for this time of year. There was a total of 12 days of rain with the 3 March being the wettest day, seeing 7.8mm of rainfall.



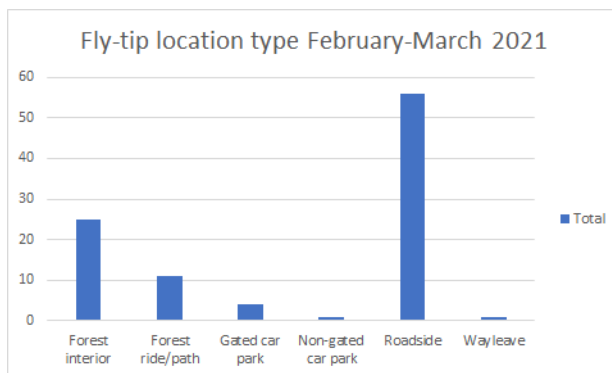
- Storm Darcy 7-13 February - The UK experienced a week of severe winter weather from 7 to 13 February, with easterly winds drawing a bitterly cold airflow from eastern Europe. Storm Darcy brought some strong winds and heavy snow to parts of south-east England on 7 February. Daytime temperatures struggled to rise above freezing, and, combined with the wind, resulted in severe wind-chill.



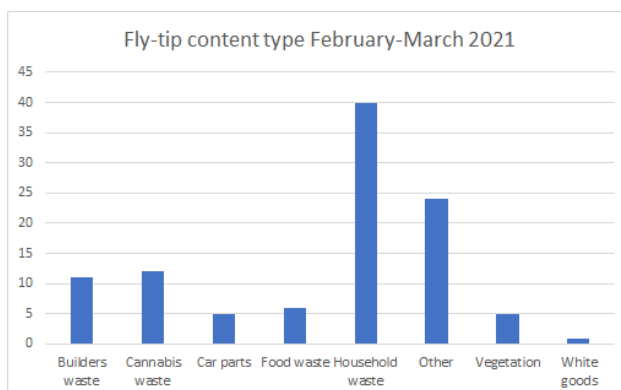
Forest Services

Fly-tipping

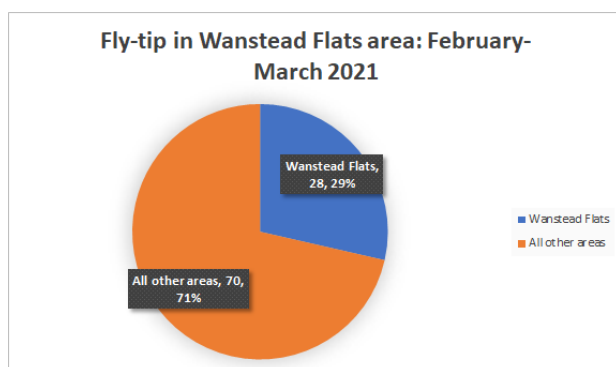
- There were a total of 98 fly-tips recorded over the period of February – March 2021, this represents a 36% increase over the same period in 2020.



- Roadside locations represented 57% of the tip locations over the period.



8. Household waste represented the largest category of items tipped over the period at 40 (41%), while Other waste (concrete, polystyrene, wires etc.) represented 24 tips (24%).



9. There were 28 fly-tips in the Wanstead Flats area over the period which represents 29% of all tips. 8 of these tips were on Forest Land adjacent to Highway Land on Capel Road.

Enforcement Activity

10. One EPA prosecutions was successfully heard in the period under report, together with the issuing of four Conditional Cautions, bringing the total of fines to £4,207.

Date	Defendant Name	Offence Accepted 33:Deposit 34:Duty of Care	Court Name	Costs Recovered
17.03.2021	BHOGAL	EPA 33 1 (a)	Basildon Court	Fine: £2500 Costs: £1557 V/S: £170
05.02.2021	Not For Disclosure	Section 5 & Section 11 Bye-Laws	Conditional Caution	£2000
23.02.2021	Not For Disclosure	EPA Sec 34	Conditional Caution	£200
25.02.2021	Not For Disclosure	EPA Sec 34	Conditional Caution	£150
01.03.2021	Not For Disclosure	EPA Sec 34	Conditional Caution	£300
Total Costs Awarded to Epping Forest (Including Compensation)			£4207	
Total			£4207	

Licences

11. A total of 36 licences for events were issued during the months being reported, which yielded an income of £38,617.80 plus VAT (inclusive of compensation and loss of amenity charge) 6 licences were issued during the same period in 2020 yielding an income of £560 which reflects the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.

Unexplained Deaths

12. Sadly, there was 1 unexplained death on 8 February during this reporting period, bringing the total for the calendar year of 2.

Rough Sleepers

13. There were seven rough sleeper camps located during the reporting period which have been managed in line with No Second Night Out (NSNO) guidance.

- 10/02/2021 - Higham's Park, cleared 12/02/2021.
- 12/02/2021 - Snaresbrook Rd opposite car park, cleared 20/02/2021.
- 17/03/2021 - Wanstead Flats, cleared 17/03/2021.
- 17/03/2021 - Hollow Ponds, cleared 29/03/2021.
- 21/03/2021 - Hollow Ponds, cleared 21/03/2021.
- 23/03/2021 - Wanstead Flats, cleared 23/03/2021.
- 29/03/2021 - Bushwood, cleared 01/04/2021.

Unauthorised Occupations

14. There has been no traveller incursions over this reporting period.

15. There have been two Unlicensed Music Events on Forest Land.

- 30/03/2021 - Buckhurst Hill Cricket Ground about 50 people.
- 31/03/2021 - Warren Hill, about 100 people.

Dog Incidents

16. There have been four recorded dog related incidents during this reporting period.

- 22/02/2021 - Theydon dog following horse, no owner present.
- 18/03/2021 - Wanstead Park, dog off lead attacks dog on lead.
- 24/03/2021 - Wanstead Flats complaint of dog walker, walking dogs and not keeping them under adequate control.

Deer Vehicle Collisions

17. Epping Forest staff dealt with a total of four deer vehicle collisions (DVC) during this reporting period.

- 19/02/2021 - A104, 50m North Wake Valley Car Park, Fallow Buck.
- 22/02/2021 - Stable Shaw, Woodredon, Fallow Doe.
- 22/02/2021 - Opposite Theydon Golf Course, Fallow Buck.
- 27/02/2021 - Piercing Hill, Muntjac Buck.

North Essex Parking Partnership Red Route Figures

18. There have been 128 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued manually during the reporting period. These figures do not include PCNs issued from camera car

footage. The total number of PCN's issued on the red route to date now totals 1,198.

Volunteer Figures

19. There has been a total of 648 volunteer hours completed over this reporting period by 31 volunteer wardens.

Heritage; Landscape and Nature Conservation

Climate Action Strategy

20. The Project Plan for the *Carbon Removals* project was prepared for the April meeting of Policy and Resources Committee, outlining the first year's proposed work (2021-22). The Procurement requirements are now fully incorporated into the Plan and its timetable. In addition, the outline specifications for the research studies that will provide the evidence for and evaluation of options are being worked up and Key Performance Indicators have been developed for the project to allow corporate project tracking. Work on the recruitment of the new posts focussed on the Project Manager role, with its Job Description and Person Specification completed and now in the process of being evaluated by the HR Team.

Biodiversity

21. As part of his regular fungi surveys on the Forest over many decades, one of Britain's foremost field mycologists, Geoffrey Kibby, noted in his 2020 species list that it was an exceptional year for fungi, with one of the best he has recorded in 30 years' study. Geoffrey recorded over 300 species of fungi for 2020, with a number of rare species recorded that had not been seen in the Forest for many years. These 300 species included 22 new species for the Forest, a second UK record for a recently described species and 1 new species for the UK. In addition, another awaits DNA confirmation to see if it is also a new species for the country, or even Europe.

22. These records reinforce the national importance of the Forest for fungal communities and the study of mycology and further emphasise the need to protect the Forest from air pollution, which is having an adverse impact on the balance of fungi species in the soil and significantly reducing tree health.

23. Two individual plants of the Polypody fern were found by the Biodiversity Officer along the Red Path leading up to Connaught Water, in Compartment 27 of the Forest. Although a widespread species in the UK, it has become very rare within Epping Forest with only two other plants known.

24. The detailed recording of damage to the fabric of the SAC began in February, following the huge increase in recreational pressure since the first lockdown. Forest Services staff recorded verge damaged by increased vehicle parking and Forest Operations staff conducted a stratified sample survey of Forest compartments and the trampling damage along paths and rides. The recording

method is similar to that adopted at Hatfield Forest National Nature Reserve in Essex, in order to provide comparable data.

25. Unfortunately, damage to the Forest was compounded during this period by a spate of three separate and significant sewage leaks at Swaines Green, Giffords Wood and Whitehall Plain, with another different biofilm contamination problem identified at Highams Park Lake. The Whitehall Plain site lies within the SAC and has been a chronic sewage pollution spot.
26. At Swaines Green, the Head keeper and Biodiversity Officer met Thames Water officers on site and negotiated an immediate clean-up of the pond, although all aquatic habitat had been lost. Built entirely by volunteers, the pond at Swaines Green, is important for amphibians including Toads and Smooth Newts, was completely contaminated by sewage and the surface had to be scraped with all the water pumped and removed by tanker. Thames Water eventually agreed further remediation in the form of washing out the site with clean water and pumping this water off-site in an attempt to clean the remaining sludge. The Thames Water ecologist and Epping Forest's Biodiversity Officer removed newts during the first visit and protective newt fencing was installed to prevent further access by amphibians. However, this will result in a lost breeding season for all species. The effectiveness of the clean-up will be reviewed in May and Thames Water may be approached for further remediation work if the results are not satisfactory.
27. The other three contaminated sites remain under active review with remediation work by Thames Water, under observation by Epping Forest officers, likely to begin at Whitehall Plain in April.
28. There was better news for another pond, Cow Pond at Leyton Flats (Compartment 36), which filled with water to its complete depth during this period following digging out, re-profiling and restoration work last September. Some aquatic oxygenating plants are already on site, which survived from the original vegetation, and which should multiply to provide some habitat during 2021.

Agri-environment Schemes

29. The negotiations with the Rural Protection Agency (RPA) on Epping's Countryside Stewardship application were concluded. A revised grant offer was made that will bring in £1.39 Million over 10 years (2020-2029). This grant makes helps support our conservation work for the most important habitat elements of the Forest.
30. The work funded includes critical elements of conservation management required to sustain the favourable condition of the Forest habitats. This involves care of over 2,000 veteran trees over the next 10 years, including some with an associated nationally rare moss species, as well as the removal of rhododendrons to reduce the risk of Ramorum disease spreading to our beech woodlands. In addition, the grant provides funding for the extensive management of the priority habitats of heathland and wood pasture, as well as conservation work across grasslands and ponds and, heritage protection work at Loughton Camp Scheduled Ancient Monument.

31. The confirmation of acceptance of the award, along with other detailed documentation, was sent for sign-off by the RPA. The work had been completed, 19 months after the initial application submission, however, a national review of scheme prescriptions resulted in the initial grant offer by the RPA being made the subject of significant revision of the grant amount. As an unavoidable consequence, there has been a large amount of additional and unplanned officer time spent on progressing this application across the FY 2020-2021.

Grasslands

32. A Grasslands Gazetteer is being developed mapping the 1,000s of individual parcels of grasslands that make up the Forest from tiny lawn frontages in front of houses to areas the size of Wanstead Flats. Of the 38 Forest Compartments, 37 have now been mapped and categorised. Alongside the mapping, a GIS database with all the key attributes of each grassland is being developed this year to create a one-stop shop for grassland information whether sports turf or meadow.

Grazing

33. The Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST), impressed by the Epping Forest Grazing Project, has engaged in a partnership with Epping Forest to support conservation grazing and to support the use of the English Longhorn. The main plank of this partnership involved the RBST, in close coordination with Epping Forest officers, submitting an application for £14,926.70 to the City of London Central Grants Programme (theme b - Enjoying Green Spaces & the Natural Environment). The application was accepted and confirmed as successful at the end of March.
34. The funding will now allow the purchase of 50 GPS *NoFence* cattle collars and associated equipment. This grant covers 100% of all the hardware and equipment costs and provides a significant investment in a new era of grazing management. The new equipment will allow the positive benefits of grazing management to be applied to a greater area of the Forest and replace the previous Boviguard containment system which has been used to enable grazing for the previous 10-years.
35. As in the previous period, the invisible fencing work at Epping Forest continued to attract national interest. The Grazing & Landscapes Project Officer and Head of Conservation gave an online presentation on 17 February to 45 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) officers from across the UK, including the RSPB's Head of Ecology. This was followed by a FAQs paper being sent to the RSPB to provide further background. A site visit of some of the RSPB officers is to be planned after COVID restrictions are lifted.

Heritage

36. The Superintendent and other officers made a site visit to Ambresbury Banks on 12 March to discuss protection of the Scheduled Monument from cycling damage, to discuss the results of 7 years' of tree monitoring there and to consider improvements to visitor access and interpretation. A number of actions are to be taken including better directional signing from the Green Ride and consideration of some small tree removal from the banks. Historic England will

also be re-engaged in relation to their pending response on the Conservation Management Plan so that this document can be brought to your Committee.

Forest Protection and planning matters

Town & Country Planning

37. Progress with the SAC Oversight Group continued from January with a series of four meetings of sub-groups across the period, to tackle the governance structure and financial management of tariff monies. The meetings were convened by Natural England (NE) and Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) and attended by six London Boroughs, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) and the Greater London Authority (GLA).
38. The GLA is now taking a coordinating role along with NE chair, in relation to the governance and finance, and it has been agreed that sufficient progress has been made to allow for the sub-groups to come together and meet as one group each month.
39. During these meetings, the terms of reference have been discussed in detail and the on-site mitigation measures approved by your Committee for negotiation at the SAC Oversight Group have been analysed and debated. Changes have been proposed to the elements that should be included in the overall costings and these will be discussed at the Oversight Group in April and will be brought to your Committee once a new combination of SAMMS measures are proposed by the Group.
40. In addition, to the Forest-wide mitigation discussions, other SAC mitigation issues were discussed directly with the Whipps Cross Development teams and NE. There were a series of four meetings to discuss the proposed mitigation package for Whipps Cross should the development be given planning permission. This will be subject to a separate report to your Committee.
41. **Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Local Plan:** alongside these SAC mitigation meetings consultations on the EFDC Local Plan continued. On 8 February EFDC full Council held an extraordinary meeting to debate the proposed introduction of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) under the Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy (APMS). The debate resulted in EFDC confirming the CAZ but agreeing to have an advisory board of Members to work with the Cabinet's Local Plan portfolio holder. Members of your Committee have been invited to attend meetings of this advisory group and the first of these meetings was held on 23 March, with Deputy Chairman and a Verderer present.
42. In addition to discussions on air pollution, a further response was made to EFDC on its Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, and specifically its SANGS Strategy for the SAC. The letter of response to the consultation emphasised the considerable remaining gaps in the SANGS strategy and concerns that the Policies on this side of SAC mitigation remain non-compliant with the Habitats Regulations in your Committee's view. Natural England's (NE) letter of response made similar points on Policy and emphasised that the wording was still non-compliant in some of its aspects, in NE's view.

43. **London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF)** A detailed response to the LBWF discussions were also held with LBWF officers concerning SANGS locations for the borough and options were examined. In addition the impacts of urbanisation were explored at a meeting with LBWF officers and their consultants on the Local Plan. A further meeting on SANGS is planned in April.

Town & Country Planning – Development Control

44. Comments were submitted to Planners for this reporting period as follows:

45. On two developments which have been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in the case of the proposed development at Epping Forest College, Loughton. The Developer (Fairview Homes) has appealed to the Planning Inspectorate due to EFDC as the competent authority on planning not considering the application of 400+ homes on Borders Lane (including Luctons Field Site). Like many planning applications within EFDC it has been held in abeyance until the mitigation measures for impact on the SAC can be agreed.

46. LBWF approved development of 583 residential dwellings (high rise) on the former Homebase site on Fulbourne Rd, Walthamstow. This development is within 500m of the Forest (and the SAC boundary) and has a very limited SANGS provision and only the minimal SAMMS payment levied. An objection was lodged against an additional application for Cannock Court, adjacent to this site which was submitted once planning on the former had been approved. The objection was made on the basis of the additional likely significant effects on the SAC and concern that this additional development would further compound the problems likely to be generated by what is considered insufficient mitigation for the Fulbourne Road site. The developer has agreed to fund LBWF's plans to mitigate additional recreational pressure at Lloyds Park, rather than the SAC.

47. A development of eight additional dwellings on the Ridgeway, Chingford was opposed due to its closeness to the SAC and the likely significant 'in combination' effects. Infill properties were also objected to adjacent to the Forest on Albert Road, BHH & 600 High Rd, Woodford Green.

Land Registration, Access Audit & Wayleaves

48. Land Registry. 1st application has been made on registering former Highway at Manor Rd, High Beach. Which for the last decade has formed part of the Pillow Mounds car park.

Operations

Habitat Works

49. Wood pasture Management: Around 120 new pollards created over the last 10 years were reworked with their second repollarding on Ditches ride, Grimston's Oak ride and Almshouse Plain.

Heritage

50. Pleased to report that the Friends of Wanstead Park and Heritage of London Trust have between them raised £24,000 to pay for works to stabilise and repair the landing stage at the Grotto, Wanstead Park. This project will include an education project led by the HoLT.
51. Epping Forest applied for £600,000 of funding from the Government's Green Recovery fund for works at Wanstead Park but sadly the bid did not succeed. The bid was compiled with local partners, and while unsuccessful, helped strengthen working relations with partners. The broader partnership will continue to work together to achieve funding for this work.

Insurance works

52. In a joint project with Theydon Bois Parish Council and the St Mary the Virgin Church, the wrought iron fence was freed of encroaching vegetation to allow its repair and restoration by the Church. At the same time, wider vegetation management was undertaken to improve views to the Church from the green.
53. There was a dramatic tree failure in March when a mature oak tree with undetected root rot collapsed, toppling an adjoining oak tree which both fell onto the Rising Sun Pub. Fortunately, nobody was hurt, however, staff of the pub were in the building when the trees fell. We worked with a specialist contractor on this task which required a crane to be hired to remove the tree. Liability for the incident is in the hands of loss adjusters.
54. The Head of Operations, working with the City Corporation's Insurance Team, is currently managing a legacy of the hot summer of 2018 which has seen a rise in building subsidence claims totalling £300,000 allegedly linked to adjoining Forest trees. Consideration is being given to the installation of a root barrier systems which could negate the need for expensive underpinning works, which are self-insured.

Risk Management Works

55. Tree Safety – At the end of January, 166 trees were still to be worked from the 2020 tree safety assessments and 21 from the 2019 assessment. This represents better progress than first anticipated due to the staff absences with COVID-19. The Arborist teams are now close to completing all the tree safety works for 2020/21, just in time to start the 1,300 tasks identified for by our consultants for 2021/22. Normally, hazardous trees referred for work numbers around 900 each year, The rise in number of hazardous trees this year is due largely to the lethal Sooty Bark Disease (SBD) – *Cryptostroma corticale* - which impacts Sycamore - *Acer pseudoplatanus* - following periods of very low rainfall.
56. Fire Safety: As part of the outstanding required action from the current Epping Forest Fire Management Plan (FMP), old growth (10+ years) Common Gorse – *Ulex europaeus* - was cleared from the Transport for London Central Line

boundary at Leyton Flats. Old gorse is especially flammable and clearing this was one of the last outstanding improvement actions in the FMP.

57. Education Areas: The Arborist Teams have reviewed the areas managed for education activities during this period and have made a few changes. We have added an area of Highams Park into the program.

Access Works

58. Following a hiatus due to COVID-19 restrictions, work has now started to develop the informal log play area at Wanstead Park. Outline ideas have been developed and potential logs identified from across the Forest based on naturally fallen branches and trees and logs arising from tree safety works. Development of this will be undertaken through the spring and it is hoped to have a simple natural play facility ready for the summer. The play area is being developed in partnership with local parents in the development of this facility.

59. In response to local community requests and discussion with the Head of Visitor Services an enhanced maintenance regime has been started along Harrow Road in the vicinity of the Sports Pavilion. The aim is to restore the open character beneath the London plain avenue to deter anti-social behaviour and to open views onto Wanstead Flats for residents living opposite. Annual verge cutting will maintain this open character.

Wanstead Park Ponds Project

60. The Wanstead Park Ponds flood study completed last summer recommended a further follow-on study looking at the interaction of the Ornamental Water and The River Roding. Specifically, the impact on the Ornamental Water dam if the River Roding flooded, as this pond is in the river flood plain. The consultant engineers _ Dams & reservoirs Ltd - have now been appointed and it is estimated the study will take two months to complete.

Birch Hall Park Pond (Deer Sanctuary)

61. The Panel Engineer, in his pond inspection raised concerns on the safety of some aspects of the pond in the event of extreme weather. The project seeks to solve issues of leakage through the dam, an uneven dam crest, and increased capacity spillway, allow safe water management in flood events.

62. Planning permission was granted by Epping Forest District Council on 3 February 2021. This approval covers:

- Construction of a reinforced grass / concrete spillway to the earth embankment dam.
- Permanent lowering of water levels in the pond (the water level will be approximately 1.5m deep from the crest of the dam) to mitigate leakage

issues, by lowering below the leakage paths thought to be caused by decayed tree roots.

- Regrading the dam crest (currently varies by 400mm over the 180m length) to a common level and installing an emergency reinforced access track along the crest allowing overtopping along the entire length rather than smaller lengths which leads to erosion, and
- Installing a permanent access track to the pond from the Deer Sanctuary entrance for construction vehicle access, which will be left in place for future maintenance access. This has been sympathetically designed to follow the contours of the land, avoid trees and minimise the visual impact on neighbouring properties to be as unobtrusive as possible.

Visitor Services

Learning and Education (Learning Team)

63. With COVID-19 restrictions in place during February and March, including school closures, the team have not been able to deliver their usual programme of face to face learning activities in Epping Forest. However, with restrictions lifting and schools reopening on 29 March, they have welcomed their first school groups back to the Forest, and schools are booking for the summer term, with 24 school groups booked in so far.

64. During this winter lockdown the team continued to share nature-focused activity sheets with schools, food banks and community groups. The activities have been designed to engage children and families who may have limited access to resources or outdoor space.

65. The team also organised a virtual outing to Epping Forest for young unaccompanied refugee minors, who are part of a group psychotherapy session organised by the Refugee Council. This group of young people have experienced serious and often multi-layered trauma and are living in foster care as they do not have family connections in the UK. The aim of the virtual outing was to allow them to explore Epping Forest and its wildlife and to support their wellbeing.

Chingford Golf Course

66. In line with Step 1b of the Government's relaxation of lockdown restrictions, the golf course re-opened on 29 March: bookings were full between 8am-5pm. During February & March, ditch clearance work continued across the course to help improve drainage which included replacing old pipework with new bigger drains. The irrigation project to replace all the old manual valves to water the tees has been completed upgrading this to the automatic Bluetooth-activated valves allowing water to be delivered at night, saving on water used and staff labour in summer months. In the weeks leading up to the re-opening date, where possible general cutting took place on fairways, tees, and greens to be ready for re-opening day. Winter mats were brought in, washed down and repaired ready for next season. All machinery was serviced in house by the grounds team.

67. Total revenue from online sales February & March was £3840, total revenue from reception was £31,387.24 broken down into:

Breakdown of figures from Reception February & March			
	2020/21	2019/20	Difference (+/-)
Green fees:	£1987.60	£20,674.52	-£18,686.92
Drinks:	£98.90	£557.30	-£458.40
Hire Equipment:	£537.50	£1029.00	-£491.50
Shop Sales:	£132.60	£1214.75	-£1082.15
Wanstead:	-£3631.20	£2618.00	-£6,249.20
Horse Riding:	£55.80	£75.55	-£19.75
Forest Licences:	£32,206.04	£0.00	+£32,206.04

68. Online bookings for the same period last year was £3919 compared to £3,840 this year, a decrease of £79. Total revenue from reception for February, March (2019/20) was £26,169.12 compared to £31,387.24 for February, March (2020/21), an increase of £5,218.12. (*Forest licences taken in Caddie House as Warren staff working from home due to CV-19*). Forest fines & licence payments for February & March amounting to £32,206.04 were taken by staff in Caddie House coming in on selected days to process these.

Wanstead Flats

69. Increased litter picking duties continued for the staff down at the flats due to the increased number of visitors as a result of lockdown. Work to repair damage on pitches from weather, public and animals was carried out. Once pitches started to dry out, they all had the chain-harrow pulled over them to help improve playability.

70. The second half of the season was cancelled, and refunds were issued to hirers. Plans have now turned to the new season.

71. The national charity parkrun has chosen not to restart in line with Step 1b of the COVID-19 relaxation of restrictions and is expected to recommence in June 2021.

Visitor Numbers

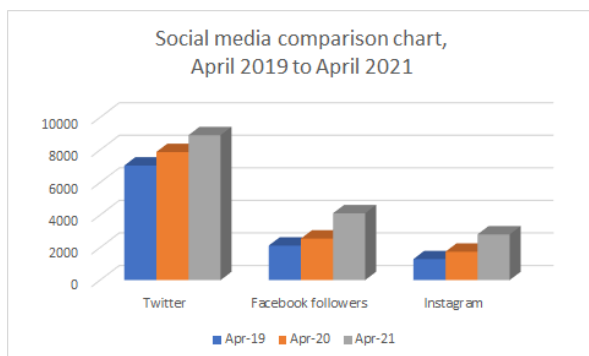
72. Visitor centres have been closed throughout this period.

Communication and Information

73. As of 14 April 2021, our social media following is:

- Twitter followers: 8,906 an increase of 13%
- Facebook likes: 3,701, an increase of N/A as not recorded last year
- Facebook followers: 4,108, an increase of 61%
- Instagram followers: 2,807, an increase of 61%

74. Please find below comparison spreadsheet for social media followings:



75. The top tweet for February 2021 – with 5,109 impressions:

Sadly didn't make it out in time to get the best of the gorgeous [#sunset](#) earlier, but it was still rather lovely in [#EppingForest](#) this evening [#WinterSunset](#)
pic.twitter.com/X2inJGJxSY



🔄 9 ❤️ 61

76. The top tweet for March 2021 – with 12.8k impressions:


1/2 Next week we will be installing temporary fencing around the site on [#WansteadFlats](#) where we have nesting skylarks. These beautiful songbirds are very rare in this area of the UK and as such we are doing all we can to help protect them in this remaining habitat...

👤 5 🔄 42 ❤️ 188

77. The top Facebook post for February 2021 – with a reach of 3,376:

Epping Forest City of London
Published by Yvette Woodhouse · 4 February · 🌐

Have your say on car park charging in #EppingForest. For more information and to link to the survey please visit https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/_/vha.../car-park-charging
The consultation finishes on 15 February. Thank you.



3,376 People reached 419 Engagements Boost post

👍❤️ 11 2 comments 17 shares


78. The top Facebook post for March 2021 – with a reach of 12,437:

Epping Forest City of London
Published by Yvette Woodhouse · 13 March · 🌐

We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who took the time to respond to the recent car parking consultation.

As a result of your feedback, the Committee decided at their March meeting that neither premium location or peak time tariffs would be implemented as part of the charging model at this time.

The Annual Car Parking Pass was approved to provide a convenient, cost effective method of parking payment for our regular visitors.... See more



12,437 People reached 4,118 Engagements Boost post

👍❤️ 59 152 comments 19 shares

79. The top Instagram post for February 2021 was surprisingly a post about the mud in the Forest – with 176 likes:



coleppingforest · ...

coleppingforest Pathway through #ChingfordGolfCourse in #EppingForest (yes, it's a little bit muddy out there! Wellie boots highly recommended! 🤪)

#forest #woodland #cityoflondon #london #londonlife #nature #naturephotography #eastlondon #ancientwoodland #royalforest #queenscommonwealthcanopy #beautyiswhereyoufindit #chingford #withamforest #urbannature #winter #britishnature #thisislondon #eppingforest #forest_photo_fairy

9w

❤️💬🚩🔖

Liked by eppingforestjohnmuiraward and others

FEBRUARY 5

😊 Add a comment... Post

80. The top Instagram post for March 2021 was an atmospheric photograph of Queen Elizabeth’s Hunting Lodge – with 146 likes:



81. We continue to deliver ‘Forest Focus’ as a monthly, digital publication via Mailchimp. This enables us to keep delivering the ever-changing COVID-19 messaging in a timely and reactive manner and obviously we are still not in a position to publish printed material due to issues around handling the magazine. The full editions, as well as previous editions can be found here:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/whats-new-in-epping-forest>



Forest Focus February 2021



Welcome to Epping Forest

We are approaching the tail end of a, thus far, cold and very wet winter that has resulted in a somewhat muddy Epping Forest. Of course, it's not unique to this area and that is obviously to be expected in a Forest in winter. This year more than ever we are ready to start to see those welcome signs of spring with the tentative emergence of foghens, bluebell and wild leek.

The Forest is also beginning to sound different, there is bird song, new hawking the earliest start of the breeding season. Woodpeckers are drumming and what other more heart lifting song can there be than that of the blackbird. Any visit to the Forest at this time of year is sure to lift the spirits and bring a sense of outdoor days being not too far away.



Forest Focus March 2021



Welcome to Epping Forest

That feeling that spring is upon us is hard to beat – when one can leave the house without a coat and feel the first warmth of the sun's rays on one's skin. You don't have to venture far to know spring has sprung, the bird song and smell of spring is in the air. The first of the early bees may be seen bustling among the primroses and dandelions.

It is a relief to many that the ribbons of muddy trails that once-crowded the Forest over winter, are quickly drying out, even after just a few dry days.

We welcome all our visitors, whether old or new to Epping Forest but in line with Government guidance, we do ask you to stay local and walk or cycle to the area of this ancient woodland closest to where you live, if at all possible. #StayLocalEppingForest

Major incidents

Cycle Incident, First Aid & Air Ambulance Scramble @ Warren Hill

82. Saturday 27 March an Arborist was called from his lodge to assist an unconscious mountain biker on Warren Hill with severe head injuries and bleeding from nose mouth and ears. An air ambulance was called whilst the Arborist gave first aid to help improve the airways of the casualty and to assist with breathing. The helicopter crew needed time to stabilise the casualty, who had a bleed in the chest before escorting the casualty to the London Hospital.

COVID-19 National Health Emergency

83. A new four-step plan to ease England's lockdown was published by Government on 22 February. Step 1a was implemented on the 8 March allowing outdoor recreation to involve two people. Step 1b was implemented on 29 March allowing 6 people or two households to meet outdoors alongside the resumption of outdoor sports. Step 2 is planned to be introduced in April subject to satisfactory progress with a number of public health indicators.

Paul Thomson

Superintendent of Epping Forest

T: 0208 532 1010

E: paul.thomson@cityoflondon.gov.uk