

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
West Ham Park Committee	12 October 2021
<b>Subject:</b> West Ham Park Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Juliemma McLoughlin, Environment Department	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Ricky O'Garro	

### 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 2021. The funding for the work stated is met through the Park's local risk budget (City's Cash), apart from the Playground Project, which is a capital bid.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

### Main Report

#### Current Position

#### Budget and Personnel

1. **Budgets:** The majority of expenditure for the first half of this financial year is in line with expected profile, although a higher than budgeted spend on tree works is anticipated this year (see paragraph 9 below). The carry-forward request to cover the cost of the replacement Scarab road-sweeper vehicle was approved and the relevant local risk budget line amended accordingly.
2. **Staffing:** Visitor numbers continued to be relatively high during the school holidays despite the extra rainfall experienced. Park Guard have been a good support to the keepers during the summer by assisting with patrolling. This

has enabled the keepers and gardeners to catch up with works that have not been completed due to previously being short staffed.

### **Community, Volunteering, Outreach and events**

3. **Wild Schools:** During the school summer holidays the learning team hosted bi-weekly pond dipping, mini beast hunting and eco-art sessions for families in the Wildlife garden. The sessions received very good feedback. Around 360 people attended over eight sessions throughout August.
4. The start of term has been a busy one with 21 sessions booked for September that will reach roughly 360 children, most of which have been the Maths Trail. Bear Hunt, Stone Age, Habitats, Orienteering and Blitz Detectives sessions are also booked in for September and coming up in October is the brand-new Wellbeing in Nature session.
5. **Friends of West Ham Park:** Unfortunately, the application that The Friends submitted to the London Borough of Newham for funding the additional planting in and around the new playground was not successful. They have submitted another application to “Grow Back Greener Fund” for the same purpose. Now covid restrictions are easing the Friends have held “Litter awareness days” where the public can keep the park rubbish free by assisting with litter picking. The Friends have also held two Bat Walks which are very popular with the public, each walk attracting over 100 participants. On both occasions there were many bats putting on a great display.

### **Operational activities**

6. The Summer saw many visitors to the Park gathering in groups having picnics and birthday parties. With this comes an increase in waste. The keeping teams have been recycling more waste as it's collected to reduce both costs and the volume of waste that goes to landfill.
7. Cricket season has ended, and renovations have started to repair the pitch and get it ready for next season. The home team, Bow Green Cricket Club, had a good result this season and were runners up in the Essex Cricket League Cup and were runners up in the Essex Cricket League T20.
8. In the ornamental gardens, the 14ft standing tree carving or “totem pole” near the rear of the tennis courts, has had to be reduced in height as there is decay setting in at the base. It has been reduced by half the height and the remainder will be used as a seat in a nearby bed. This has created a small amount of local interest as it has been a habitat for birds, squirrels, bees, wasps and many other creatures over the years.
9. As reported in July, the particular combination of rainfall and drought periods over the past 18 months has resulted in a higher than usual amount of *Massaria* in the Park's Plane trees. Work to remove infected limbs is underway to alleviate any risk of branch drop. However, although a reasonable budget had been allowed given the amount of work usually required, this will inevitably fall short in years such as this, where instances of

the disease are greatly increased. This may therefore result in an overspend against this budget line.

### **Property Matters**

10. **Playground Refurbishment Project:** The tender evaluation and technical moderation for the playground works has taken place and the next steps are being taken before giving the selected contractor the go ahead. A meeting has taken place with the artists who will be creating the six wooden sculptures that will be featured around the playground. The theme for the carvings is linked with Fothergill's botanical discoveries from his travels.
11. **Mobile Telephone Mast Planning Application:** Since the last meeting, a planning application had been made by a telecommunications company to site a mobile phone mast immediately adjacent to the Park boundary, on the north-west corner just off Ham Park Road. Along with many local residents, comments were submitted on behalf of the Park to be considered by the London Borough of Newham's Planning team. Within the past few weeks, officers have been advised that the application was refused.

### **Corporate and Strategic Implications**

12. The work and activities outlined in this report contribute to numerous strands of the City of London Corporate Plan 2018-2023, but notably outcome 12. "our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained", under the Shape Outstanding Environments strand.

### **Financial/Resource/Legal/Risk/Equalities/Climate/Security/Public sector equality duty Implications**

13. None.

### **Conclusion**

14. Officers have been working hard to manage increased numbers of visitors and to encourage people back to using the Park's full range of services as lockdown restrictions have eased. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

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