

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Epping Forest and Commons	12/07/2021
<b>Subject:</b> Epping Forest - Superintendent's Update for April to May 2021 (SEF 29/21)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>2, 5, 11 &amp; 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>City's Cash Local Risk</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Paul Thomson – Epping Forest	

### Summary

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

Of particular note was the loss of six long-service staff; a significant rise in licence income; the introduction of car parking charges at Phase One car parks across the Forest; a mass defoliation event by Winter Moth caterpillars of oak and hornbeam trees across the Forest; the successful initiation of a Countryside Stewardship application for £1.39 million over 10 years (2020-2029); a further and unusual tree fall on a neighbouring building; ongoing negotiations with Local Planning Authorities on the content of the Epping Forest SAC Mitigation Strategy tariff; a doubling of hazardous tree assessments for the current year in response to Sooty Bark Disease of Sycamores; a positive Large Raised Reservoir Panel Engineer Inspection and a continued improvement in Chingford Golf Club performance.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

## Main Report

### Staff and Volunteers

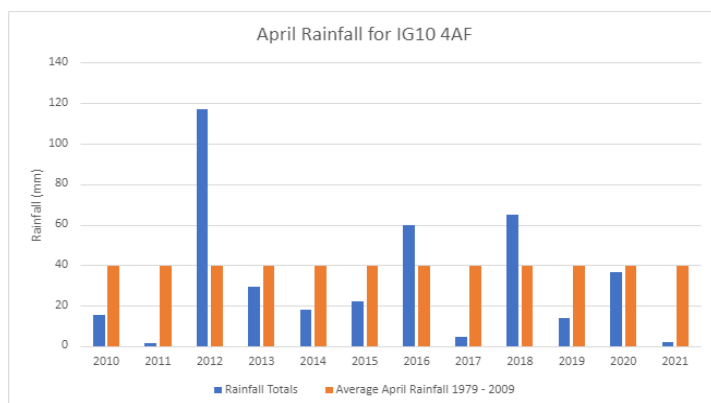
1. Six long service staff have left the Epping Forest team over the reporting period. A Conservation Team Leader, Conservation Arborist, Administrative Team Leader and Stores person have all resigned. Furthermore, a Forest Keeper and Wayleaves Officer have retired. Fixed Term Contract recruitment, subject to the Target Operating Model (TOM) reorganisation is underway for selected staff.

### Budgets

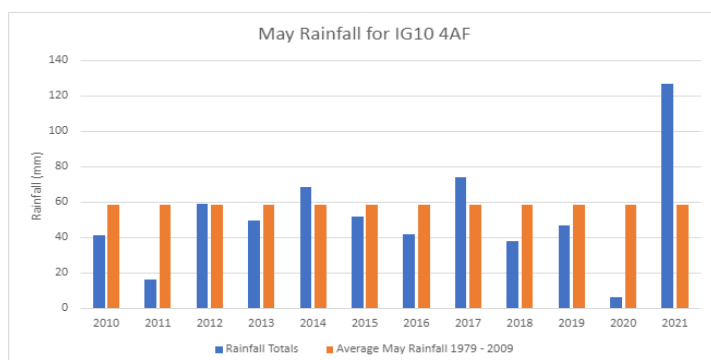
2. At the end of May, two months (17%) of the financial year, spend is at 14% of budget overall. Income is currently performing ahead of projections, reflecting sales of car parking annual passes and a rise in licence applications due to the lifting of the Government's COVID-19 restrictions on recreational and social gatherings.

### Weather

3. Rainfall for April 2021 registered just 2.2mm and was much lower than the average rainfall seen for April (39.8mm), showing a 37.6mm (94.5%) decrease. There was a total of only 4 days of rain, the wettest day, 28 April, with just 1mm of rainfall.



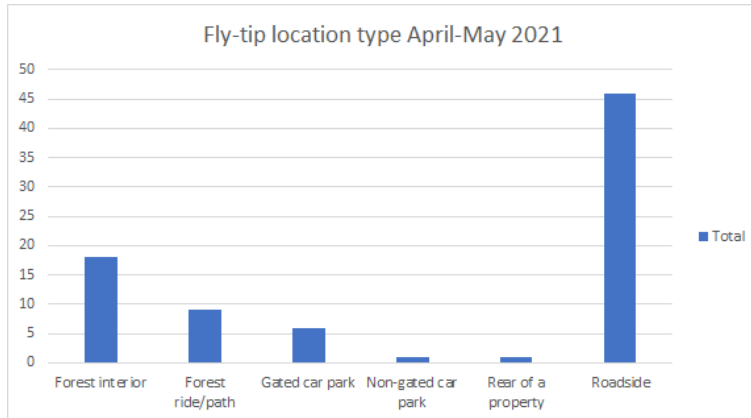
4. May 2021 has recorded the coldest and wettest conditions since 1986. The month's rainfall had a total of 126.8mm which was 215.6% above the average for this time of year (58.8mm). There was a total of 24 days of rain with the 16 May the wettest day, seeing 19.8mm of rainfall.



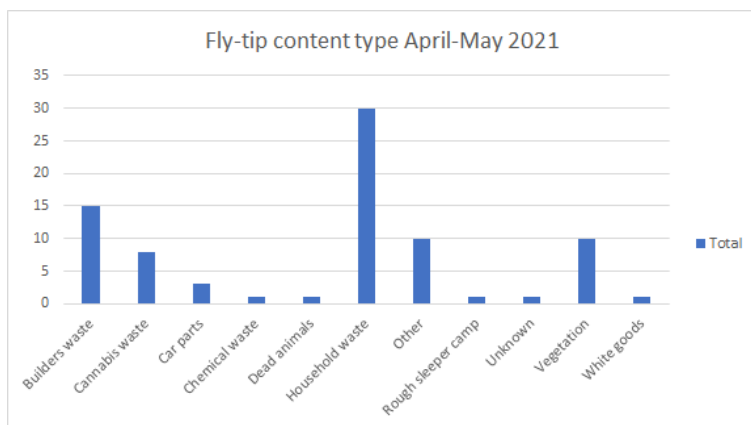
## Forest Services

### Fly-tipping

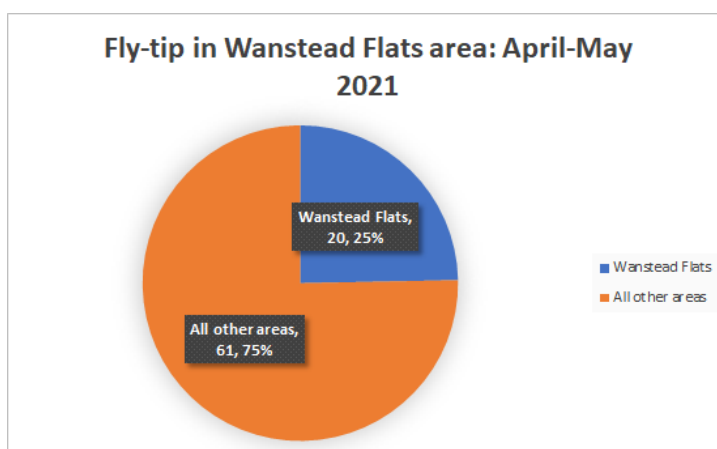
5. There were a total of 81 fly-tips recorded over the period of April – May 2021, this represents a 17% decrease over the same period in 2020.



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



7. Household waste represented the largest category of items tipped over the period at 30 (37%), while 'Other waste' (concrete, polystyrene, wires etc.) represented 10 tips (12%).



8. There were 20 fly-tips in the Wanstead Flats area over the period which represents 25% of all tips. Nine of these tips were on Forest Land adjacent to Highway Land on Capel Road.

### **Enforcement Activity**

9. No EPA prosecutions were heard in the period under report. Four verbal warnings were issued, alongside one written warning issued and two Conditional Cautions bringing total fines of £290.

### **Licences**

10. A total of 47 licences for events were issued during the months being reported, which yielded an income of £124,358.25 plus VAT, mainly due to three large compound licences. Eight licences were issued during the same period in 2020 yielding an income of £2,520 which reflects the impact of COVID-19 restrictions.

### **Unexplained Deaths**

11. Sadly, there were 2 unexplained deaths during this reporting period, bringing the total for the calendar year of 4. This is higher than the average occurrences in previous years, and contrary to national measures which show no increase in unexplained deaths.

- 01/04/21 – Wake Valley Pond
- 09/04/21 – Exchange Land Wanstead

### **Rough Sleepers**

12. There were 15 rough sleeper camps located during the reporting period which have been managed in line with No Second Night Out (NSNO) guidance. The current COVID-19 restrictions around household mixing is thought to be expanding homelessness by reducing the potential for short-term support by friends and relatives.

- 01/04/21 – Woodcote Rd cleared on 22/04/21
- 03/04/21 – Bushwood, cleared 03/04/21
- 06/04/21 – Near Bushwood Lodge, vacated 06/04/21
- 07/04/21 – Whipps Cross Hospital, vacated 02/05/21
- 07/04/21 – Bushwood, vacated 02/05/21
- 10/04/21 – Exchange Land, vacated 10/05/21
- 13/04/21 – Wanstead Flats, vacated 13/04/21
- 15/04/21 – Woodcote Rd, vacated 20/04/21
- 26/04/21 – Woodcote Rd, vacated 29/04/21
- 02/05/21 – Bury Rd, vacated 02/05/21
- 15/05/21 – Bushwood Road, vacated 10/06/21
- 17/05/21 – Woodcote Rd, vacated 17/05/21
- 23/05/21 – By Crossroads Whipps Cross, vacated 05/06/21
- 22/05/21 – Leyton Flats, vacated 28/05/21
- 30/05/21 – Cuckoo Brook, vacated 30/05/21

### **Unauthorised Occupations**

13. There has been 1 traveller incursion over this reporting period at Chingford Plain.

14. There have been no reported Unlicensed Music Events (UMEs) or Spontaneous Social Gatherings (SSGs) on Forest Land.

### **Injunction**

15. In anticipation of the repeat of last summer's poor public behaviour associated with some SSGs and UMEs, an application at the High Court for temporary powers to enable the enforcement of selected offences was unsuccessful following developing case law underlining the importance of identifying and notifying 'persons unknown'.

### **Dog Incidents**

16. There have been 3 recorded dog related incidents during this reporting period.

- 16/04/21 – Wanstead Flats, Dog off lead and jumped up and scratched complainant.
- 20/04/21 – Wanstead Park, Dog on Dog attack, Metropolitan Police dealing
- 03/05/21 – Near Earls Path, Dog attacked runner, Essex Police dealing.

### **Deer Vehicle Collisions**

17. Epping Forest staff dealt with a total of 3 deer vehicle collisions (DVC) during this reporting period.

- 12/04/21- Crown Hill near Junction with Epping New Road
- 26/04/21 – Epping New Road
- 29/04/21 – Nursery Rd near Stubbles

### **Open Horse Riding**

18. On Monday 28 May, the Forest re-opened to open horse riding.

### **North Essex Parking Partnership Red Route Figures**

19. There have been 143 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued manually during the reporting period. These figures do not include PCNs issued from the NEPP camera car footage. The total number of PCN's issued on the red route to date now totals 1,341. A review by NEPP of the Red Route Scheme is planned for late summer.

### **Car Park Charging Scheme**

20. During April and early May, the infrastructure to support the introduction of car parking charges was installed within the fourteen Phase One car park locations. Software and association administrative systems were brought to operational readiness through close liaison with chosen contractors.

21. The scheme went live to the public on the 10 May 2021. There were a limited number of technical 'teething issues', which were quickly resolved by contractors and affected a limited number of users. Aside from these initial issues, the system functioned as intended. Forest Keepers and Voluntary Wardens were deployed to support visitors with questions regarding the new payment system.

22. A two-week 'grace period' ended on the 24 May, with visitors given warning notices instead of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) during this period. The first week of PCNs, including a busy bank holiday, saw a steady number of enforcement measures. Enforcement levels are expected to fall now that the system is more established.
23. There were a number of customer contacts relating to the introduction of charging, particularly during the first week. Some of these were complaints about the introduction of charges, however, the vast majority were queries about how the RINGO pay-by-phone and Pay-by-Card systems work and how to access the phone application. These questions have quickly declined as visitors became more familiar with the process.
24. The annual pass has proved more popular than some predictions with 152 sold so far and to date (7 June). A total of 10,600 parking sessions had been booked and overall, the scheme has raised £47,600 in the first 28 days of generally unseasonable weather.
25. Negotiations are continuing with tenants, inclosure occupiers and neighbours who claim to be adversely affected by the introduction of the car parking scheme.

### **Volunteer Figures**

26. There has been a total of 525 volunteer hours completed over this reporting period by 37 volunteer wardens.

### **Heritage; Landscape and Nature Conservation**

#### **Climate Action Strategy**

27. A report was presented to this Committee (SEF 31/21) and Project Sub (Policy & Resources) Committee detailing the first phase of works. This will include tendering for studies to understand the carbon sequestration across the Open Spaces and identifying opportunities to increase it, to catalogue and quantify the natural beneficial functions that the ecosystem services of the Open Spaces provide, and to understand how wood products can be used to lower carbon footprints. The report also outlined the first phase of land management works on the Buffer Lands.

#### **Biodiversity**

28. Discussions were held with the regional Natural England Nature Recovery Networks officer to explore opportunities for including some of the conservation projects at Epping Forest in the contributions to the network and ensuring link-ups with similar projects.
29. The main wildlife event of this period was the mass defoliation of oak and hornbeam trees across the Forest, by caterpillars of the Winter Moth (*Operophtera brumata*). Numbers of Winter Moth have been building for several years, with limited but noticeable concentrations of defoliation of oaks in both 2019 and 2020. However, this was the first mass event since 2009, the longest gap between such Forest-wide defoliation years since the 1990s.

30. Unfortunately, despite this large availability of food resources for Forest bird populations, like the blue and great tits, the impacts of climate change continue to create an asynchrony between these birds and their insect prey. On average birds' eggs are hatching earlier and the caterpillars appearing later than in previous decades.
31. The impact of this asynchrony was revealed by the nest monitoring results from the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology PhD project, that is in its second year at the Forest in 2021. The numbers of nestlings and their growth rates were much lower than normal, with significant die-off of starved nestlings. The birds are responding in some cases with second broods or second nesting attempts and, as a result, the breeding season looks set to continue until the end of June, a month later than average.
32. In the meantime, Starlings, a bird species in severe decline and now red-listed in the UK, produced their young much later than in 2020 and many of their fledglings missed out on the caterpillar bonanza. However, there were beneficiaries and Jackdaws, with young, were concentrated in their hundreds across Bury Wood and Fairmead.
33. The unusually cool spring, including one of the driest April months on record, ensured that the Forest and Buffer Land grasslands had significantly limited growth in this period (see *Grazing* section below). Peak flowering of the rare species, Lousewort, was delayed by 6 weeks and in some of the smaller populations the dry April resulted in no appearance of any plants. However, the even rarer Petty Whin was found flowering at a new site in the centre of the Forest, probably spread through cattle grazing.

### **Damage to Forest and Buffer Lands habitats**

34. A recent spate of sewage leaks from Thames Water pipes has damaged three sites across the Forest and Buffer Lands. The most significant damage occurred in April at Swaines Green (Compartment 63) on the Buffer Lands. Here the pond, dug as a special conservation project on the site shortly after acquisition and an important breeding place for amphibians, was flooded with large volumes of raw sewage from a pipe running close to it.
35. Following a site inspection with your officers, Thames Water undertook to clean out the pond and refill with non-chlorinated water. Heavy rainfall in May also helped with the water level restoration. TW also completed repairs to the pipeline in May, including removing significant tree root ingress.
36. Water sample testing has also been requested so that residual pollution can be assessed later in the summer. In the meantime, newt fencing was put around the pond to prevent newts reaching it from their hibernation sites, and as a result this year's breeding cycle is unlikely to take place.

### **Agri-environment Schemes**

37. Epping Forest Officers completed the negotiation with the Rural Payments Agency (SEF 13/21) on the Countryside Stewardship application which went live

in early April 2021. This agreement is for £1.39 million over 10 years (2020-2029).

38. A Countryside Stewardship application for Wanstead Park has begun to be explored to fund some habitat management and historic feature protection.
39. The annual Basic Payment Scheme application was submitted for the whole Open Spaces Department in mid-May. This is the first year that income will start to be reduced by the government in its phased approach to ending this Scheme under the Agriculture Act 2020. The expected income in 2021 will be around 18% lower than in 2020 falling by around £33,000 from approximately £185,000 to £152,000. However, despite the drop in this financial year, the income provides important support for grassland management work.

### **Defra visit**

40. Looking forward to future grant opportunities and previewing the possibilities that new UK environmental policies may provide for the Forest and Buffer Lands, your officers met with senior Defra officials and the Knepp Estate project on 9<sup>th</sup> April. Defra's Deputy Director (Climate) and Director of Environmental Strategy both attended. The site visit looked at wood-pasture restoration in the Forest and future proposals for parkland and wood-pasture creation at Copped Hall.
41. Several new avenues for working together with the Knepp Estate project on research were identified and the Defra officers provided an overview of the possible grant landscape and provided links to senior officials in Landscape Recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain with the aim of integrating the Forest conservation work into these new Policy themes.

### **Grazing**

42. As highlighted at paragraphs 3 and 32, a lack of "April showers" and cold night-time temperatures has resulted in a subdued spring with low vegetation growth across the Forest. Animals left their winter housing at Great Gregories Yard and started grazing from mid-April with the majority held back on the Buffer Lands until vegetation heights on Forest sites start to increase.
43. Grazing has been re-introduced at Yardley Hill / Yates Meadow / Daisy Plain with six cows equipped with the new, grant-funded GPS collars. This area has not been grazed for many decades, apart from a trial in 2003, which ended abruptly after a short period due to vandalism to the electric fence used to contain them and the escape of the cows.
44. The re-introduction of grazing on these sites is incredibly important for their sustainable, long-term management and wildlife diversity. The conversion of vegetation to dung, helps support a huge array of life below and above ground. Above ground insects that feed on, and are attracted to dung, also provide food for birds and small mammals. The range of vegetation heights resulting from extensive grazing creates habitat for insects to breed, hunt and perch with short areas of grass providing basking spots. The shorter turf areas also double as areas where birds, like Starlings, can land and feed.



## **Heritage**

45. Following approval by your Committee, the Copped Hall Parkland Management Plan was published and circulated to various stakeholders. In addition, a meeting was held in May with Historic England and Natural England senior advisors to consider survey requirements and funding options for managing the important heritage features of this historic parkland landscape.

## **Forest Protection and planning matters**

### **Town & Country Planning**

46. The SAC Mitigation Oversight Group met twice during this period to continue its examination of governance proposals, financial arrangements and, in particular, the SAMMS package of measures for recreational pressure mitigation on the Forest. The meetings continue to be chaired by Natural England (NE), with coordination of information also by the GLA officers and with Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), six London Boroughs and the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) attending.

47. In terms of the SAMMS package, this was revised at these meetings and additional costings on unsurfaced pathways were presented to the authorities. The package requires further revision in relation to hubs versus Forest-wide proposed expenditure. The aim was to conclude the discussions and filtering of measures by July so that they would be ready for presentation to each of the authorities' members, including your Committee. The current timetable is for these measures and the governance and finance arrangements to be ready for sign-off by members by October this year.

48. London Borough of Redbridge (LBR) and London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) agreed to work together to commission legal opinion on the issue of 'in perpetuity' and how this period should be agreed for the current round of developer tariffs.

49. **Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Local Plan:** there was limited further liaison with EFDC over this period. However, at a Cabinet meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> April, EFDC approved a district-wide Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy, which included two appendices concerning alternative natural greenspaces (SANGS). Comments on the SANGS approach would need to be made during the forthcoming Planning Inspector's Main Modifications consultation.

50. **London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF)** officers arranged a day-long visit to all potential SANGS sites with Natural England and your officers. The review of sites and discussion around SANGS were instructive and wide-ranging and the conclusions from the meeting will help LBWF revise its Green & Blue Infrastructure and also its Local Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment. Both of these important documents were the subject of significant proposed amendments by your officers and Natural England at LBWF's Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation in December 2020.

### **Town & Country Planning – Development Control**

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

- Former LBWF Court buildings LBWF 210776 (slide 70) this will see the demolition of the former magistrate's court buildings and replacement with five new residential blocks ranging from 5- 9 storeys comprising of 433 residential units (205 affordable). The application was opposed due to its proximity to the Forest (1km) and poor SANGS provision, in addition to its position between Fulbourne Rd (approved) and Jubilee Park, which was provided as a SANG for the now approved later development.
- The Plains, 3 Crescent Rd, Chingford Green – within 50m of SAC and made no mention in planning statement.
- Knoll House Bury Rd, EFDC 0775/21 (additional dwelling) (this focused on whether EFDC could account for this within their windfall numbers) if approved would require a deed of grant easement.
- 76 Algiers Rd (6 flats in replacement of single dwelling). (this focused on whether EFDC could account for this within their windfall numbers)

52. In addition to those planning applications that were commented on, three significant developments were previewed during this period which will require future detailed responses:

- Whipps Cross University Hospital residential-led re-development for 1,500 homes, within 500m of the Epping Forest SAC, was submitted in April but the hundreds of documents were only provided in the second week of May as a result of their complexity.
- A smaller development proposal of 21 units at Whitehouse Farm, Hawksworth, Chingford was significant being adjacent to the SAC boundary and will require liaison with LBWF officers under the Habitat Regulations HRA requirements.
- A proposed retirement village within the curtilage of the West Essex Golf Course, on the western flank of the SAC boundary.

### **Land Registration, Access Audit & Wayleaves**

53. Work is continuing, in partnership with Savills plc, on the valuation of commercial wayleaves and the response to a Court Mediation process associated with litigation.

### **Operations**

#### **Insurance works**

54. Unusually, there has been a second tree failure which came down on a three-storey block of flats at Roebuck Green this year. The saturated ground and unseasonal high winds may have been contributory factors. An independent assessment of the tree and its management is being undertaken as part of the Corporate liability response.

55. During the period, there have been three liability claims, one related to a car park and two linked to recent tree failures and the consequent damage to buildings. There have also been five claims for tree-related subsidence on buildings with

one claim on its third iteration. In all the claims cases, robust defences have been submitted and the outcomes are still with the insurance companies.

### **Risk Management Works**

56. Oak Processionary Moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) (OPM): Spraying for OPM was undertaken in the period with two sessions 2 weeks apart 28-29 April and 10 May when around 100+ trees across ten sites being sprayed. This will be followed up by nest surveys and their subsequent manual removal over the next few months.

57. Tree Safety: There has been a considerable increase in tree safety tasks assessed for the current year with 1,300 trees identified for work, double the usual amount. It would appear that the increase in the lethal Sooty Bark Disease (*Cryptostroma corticale*) (SBD) on Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), following the previous dry years has been the main cause for the increase. Arborist teams will be focusing on the most high-risk, Red + and Red, tree safety zones in the first instance this year. There is a distinct possibility that amber-listed tasks may not be completed this year due to staff shortages and increased workload.

58. Large Raised Reservoir: The biannual inspection of the reservoirs by the Supervising Engineer from Dams and Reservoirs (Ltd) was undertaken during the period. Apart from Baldwins Pond and Birch Hall Park (Deer Sanctuary), where improvement works are in development. The Supervising Engineer found the dam embankments to be good to satisfactory in condition with the requirement to keep engaged with current maintenance schedule and inspections. The responsibility for the routine maintenance of Pumps, Penstock Gates and Valves remains the subject of discussion between the City Surveyor and the Department of Built Environment.

### **Access Works**

59. Work has started on an inaugural item for the built natural play area in Wanstead Park with the arrival of two large logs. The logs had been felled as part of routine tree safety works. To transport the logs specialist help was needed from a grab loader lorry contractor. With the valued help of fund raising by local residents the first item of play equipment should be in place from the end of July.

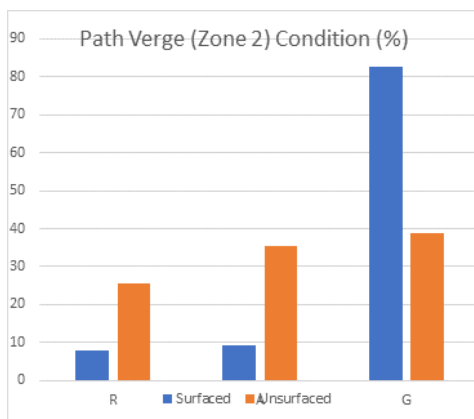
60. In a new development this year 30km of Forest path verge cutting was specified along with the retendered highway verge cutting contract programme. This work will focus on the busier public access areas of the Forest and will begin to progress improvements to path management outlined in the Path Management Policy Development Note approved by your Committee. The further use of contractors will also help to release skilled staff time to undertake the Countryside Stewardship Schemes implemented directly by Epping Forest staff.

61. During the period, a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) assessment of the condition of the 198km of the managed path network across Epping Forest and the Buffer lands was completed. The RAG assessment was based on a system pioneered by the National Trust at Hatfield Forest and along each path three zones were RAG assessed, namely:

61.1 Zone 1 - the pathway which is typically up to three metres wide.

- 61.2 Zone 2 – path verge which is typically up to four metres from the path edge on both sides of the path.
- 61.3 Zone 3 – wider indeterminate accessible area beyond the immediate path verge of Zone 2.

62. Surfaced paths fared the best with 4.5% of the path surfaces (Zone 1) in the red compared with 49.5% of the unsurfaced paths in the very poor red category. Overall, 17% of surfaced path verges (Zone 2) and 61% of the unsurfaced path verges were in the R and A categories and it is estimated that in total permanent verge damage (Zones 2 and 3) on unsurfaced paths is 82.5 ha. The equivalent figure for the unsurfaced paths is 10 ha. A full report on the survey and the costs of restoration with ne brought to November Committee.



### Wanstead Park Ponds Project

63. The further study into the interaction of the River Roding and the Large Raised Reservoir Ornamental Water at Wanstead Park has now been awarded to Dams & Reservoirs Ltd. It is anticipated that the study will be completed by the end of the summer.

### Birch Hall Park Pond (Deer Sanctuary)

64. Following the successful award of planning consent, a quotation for the pond access haul track works to Birch Hall Pond from the City of London term contractor has exceeded allocated budgets. The works will now be tendered externally, with the aim of undertaking works this summer, whilst ground conditions are usually good.

### Visitor Services

#### Learning and Education (Learning Team)

65. The OS Learning Team have been delighted to welcome schools back to Epping Forest following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. Schools have participated in a variety of outdoor learning activities where they can develop their understanding of local history, explore habitats and biodiversity and build their confidence and skills. Over the Easter holidays the team also ran a successful 'nature and wellbeing' programme for families, developed in response to concerns over the impact of the pandemic on mental health, as well as facilitating an Epping Forest

visit for children and young people from Newham who had been suffering from anxiety and depression over lockdown.

### Chingford Golf Course

66. Since reopening on 29 March, the golf course has remained busy. Total income generated from green fees and shop related sales amounted to £142,983.00 for April and May compared to £30,846.00 the previous year (noting that the golf course was closed in 2020 from 1 April – 17 May), an increase of £112,137.00. Online bookings increased this financial year compared to the previous year by £46,590.50. The grounds staff have been carrying out regular cutting duties & setting the course up ready for play. A total of 5 sprays were carried out on the greens to help speed up the recovery from winter disease and damage.

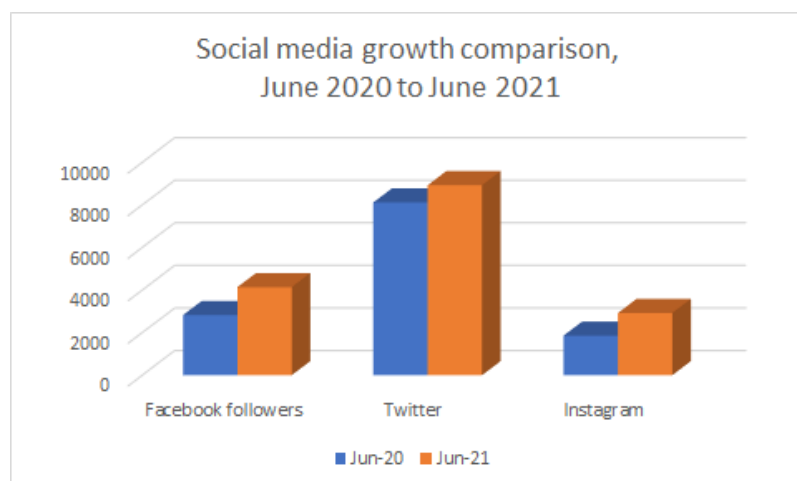
67. The new staff welfare facilities were completed, and staff have moved into the building and the portable facility has been removed.

### Communications

68. As of 10 June 2021, Epping Forest social media following is:

- Twitter followers: 8,926 (10% increase)
- Facebook followers: 4,136 (47% increase)
- Instagram followers: 2924 (58% increase)

69. The chart shows a comparison of our social media followers at the same point in 2020 and 2021:



70. Epping Forest news monthly continued to be delivered via a digital edition of Forest Focus, in place of the printed magazine which had to be temporarily stopped due to the pandemic. This continues to be well-received and is an effective method of communicating seasonal messaging and allows update messaging around how to visit the Forest in light of COVID-19 restrictions according to most up to date government guidance.

71. The Top social media posts for April and May 2021 related to messaging around visiting over the Easter period.

72. The social media activity relating to the felling of a much-loved tree in the James Lane area of Epping Forest (near Leyton Flats) was successful and appreciated by the local community.
73. Signage for the recently implemented car park charges have been successfully delivered and installed and are now operational.
74. New noticeboards are being installed in the car parks where charges have been introduced and work is progressing to ensure that appropriate and seasonal messaging is well-presented within these new noticeboards, ready for their installation.

### Wanstead Flats

75. Despite the Football Association arbitrated extension to the football season, grassroots clubs chose not to play over April in May reflecting the cancellation of the earlier part of the season as part of COVID-19 restrictions.
76. The grounds staff have been carrying out regular cutting duties, pitch repairs & increased litter picking duties due to the increase of visitors. Work to clear overgrown vegetation and trees around Capel Road compound were also carried out.
77. While technically Parkrun at Wanstead Flats has been able to run since 29 March, the organisation had selected a later start in June.

### Horse Riding

78. Total income from horse riding licences for April & May 2021 amounted to £6,585.53 compared to £2,440.97 the previous year. The figures showed an increase of £4,144.56 given that in the previous year the first national lockdown was in place with British Horse Society guidance recommending that horse riders should restrict their activities to stable facilities.

### Visitor Numbers

79. Visitor Figures for April – May 2021 & 2020

Visitor Number s	QEHL 2021	2020	View 2021	2020	Temp le 2021	2020	High Beach 2021	2020	Total 2021	Total 2020
April	0	0	442	0	0	0	0	0	442	0
May	20	0	1170	0	0	0	0	0	1190	0

80. The Visitor Centre at Chingford (The View) reopened on the 13 April. Comparison with 2020 is still in the period in which the visitor centres were closed due to national restrictions on indoor spaces.

81. Figures are circa 10% of the 2019 number for April and circa 25% of the 2019 figure for May. Visitors still seem reluctant to visit indoor spaces, while the building has a limited capacity this has not been reached at any time.

### **Major incidents**

82. None.

### **COVID-19 National Health Emergency**

83. The four-step plan to ease England's lockdown published by Government on 22 February, eased further on 17 May as Step 3 was implemented following satisfactory progress with a number of public health indicators. Most legal restrictions on meeting others outdoors were lifted, although gatherings of over 30 people remained illegal. Most businesses in all but the highest risk sectors were able to reopen.

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