

Committee	Dated:
West Ham Park Committee	7 December 2021
Subject: West Ham Park 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
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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 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, as previously reported.
2. **Staffing:** The unseasonably warm and dry weather has meant that visitor numbers remain relatively high for this time of year. One of the keeping teams has a temporary member of staff due to one of the team being off on long term sickness. This enables the keepers to maintain the Park to the usual high standard. Park guard still support the keepers by assisting with patrolling.

Community, Volunteering, Outreach and events

3. **Wild Schools:** The last two months have been very busy for the learning team. During October, 26 sessions were taught to roughly 720 children. November hit a high of 32 sessions taught, reaching 880 children. The team have continued with Bear Hunt, Stone Age, Habitats and Blitz Detectives, as these subjects have proven very popular.
4. The Nature Learning Programme has been a great success, working alongside SEN staff from Odessa Primary School. Students, many of whom are non-verbal, have shown amazing improvements since attending the sessions at West Ham Park. The children have really engaged during the sessions, with many of them increasing or improving their speech. Another primary school is on the waiting list to take part in the programme.
5. **Friends of West Ham Park:** The Friends have been carrying out litter picks in the Park four days a week for the last month. This supports the keepers and gardeners to help them to continue the arduous job of leaf clearing while short staffed.
6. “Newham’s Biggest Leaf Pile” event was held in the Park on Sunday 7th November. At this event, the public are called upon to help create the largest leaf pile from the fallen leaves in the Park. Over 200 people attended this year, an extremely high turn out, and great fun was had by the public, Friends, and staff.

Operational activities

7. The football season has started, and there are two teams using West Ham Park as their home ground. The pitch used last year has been renovated and will be left to rest for the next couple of months. Unfortunately, due to social distancing rules, the changing rooms cannot be used by the teams for changing. They can only be used for storing their kit and as a toilet facility.
8. On 23rd October, there was an unfortunate occurrence, when one of the footballers collapsed on pitch while playing and suffered a cardiac episode. The team members gave CPR and keepers were on hand to help when needed and escort the emergency services. The gentleman, in his early 30s, was quickly taken to Newham General Hospital.
9. The current tennis coaches have just had a “club house” installed in the central corridor of the tennis courts. The structure is intended to be used as storage facility and a training room, this will enable shelter for students and waiting parents. The coaches believe it will be of benefit to have a central hub for tennis payments, enquiries, and advice.
10. The Park had the pleasure of receiving some help from a group of volunteers from Close Brothers Asset Management. The group of seven had the task of laying a thick carpet of woodchip in the forest school area by Linden gate. The team started with some weeding, removing stubborn plants such as nettles and brambles. They then spread about 20 tonnes of woodchip across the

ground. This is to increase the organic content in the soil and to help reduce compaction.

Property Matters

11. **Playground Refurbishment Project:** The Gateway 5 report (permission to start work) was approved at Projects Sub-Committee in November. The City Solicitor is now preparing the contract for works with the selected contractor. The project manager is currently negotiating with the contractor to arrange a suitable start date.

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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