

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest and Commons	17/01/2022
Subject: Epping Forest - Superintendent's Update for October to November 2021 (SEF 01/22)	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: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment Department	For Information
Report author: Paul Thomson – Superintendent of Epping Forest	

Summary

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

Of particular note was the further increase in fly tipping across the Forest and successful prosecutions for fly tippers; the current position on Fairmead Road and Manor Road Traffic Regulation Orders; the commencement of consultancy work by Land Use Consultants on carbon recovery options for City Corporation-funded Open Spaces; the birth of 54 Longhorn cows and the declaration of both an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone across the UK from 3 November and the inclusion of the south of Epping Forest in the Higher Risk DEFRA mapping, reflecting concern by health agencies regarding the spread of the Avian Influenza HPAI H5 strain in the wild bird population.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

Main Report

Staff & volunteers

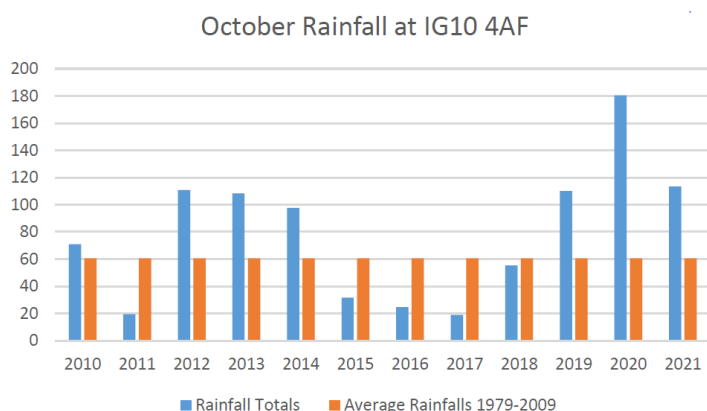
1. A new temporary member of staff was recruited in October to cover the role of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Officer.

Budget

2. At end of November, 8 months or 67% through the financial year, spend is at 59% of allocated budget, but this assessment is prior to upload of revised September forecast figures. Income continues to perform better than originally predicted and the Charity continues to hold a number of vacancies, as part of the current Departmental Target Operating Model (TOM) restrictions. Significant expenditure is also committed on Phase II of the car parking charging project, lodge income refurbishment projects and the substitution of London Ultra-Low Emissions Zone-complaint fleet vehicles. Overall spend is forecast to be on budget this financial year.

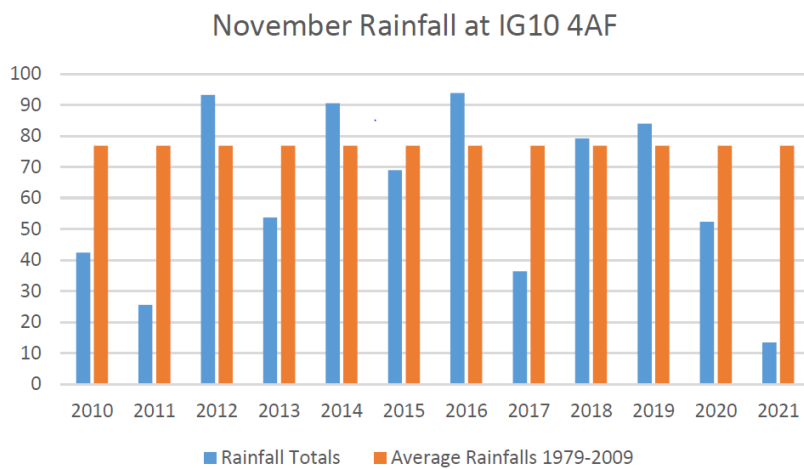
Weather

3. October 2021 saw a total of 113.4 mm of rain which is 87.2% above the average rainfalls between the period of 1979-2009 of 60.58 mm. October 2021 year saw the second highest October rainfall in the period 2010-2011, with 2020 having the highest total of 180.4 mm.
4. In total, October 2021 had a total of 18 days of recorded rain. On the 4th, a high of 28.4 mm was recorded.



5. November 2021 saw a total of 13.4 mm of rain which is below the average rainfalls between the period 1979-2009 which was 76.86 mm. Also, November 2021 saw the lowest rainfall total recorded in November in the period 2010-2021. The highest year in this timeframe was 2016 with 93.8 mm. This equates to an 85.6% decrease in rainfall between this year and 2016.

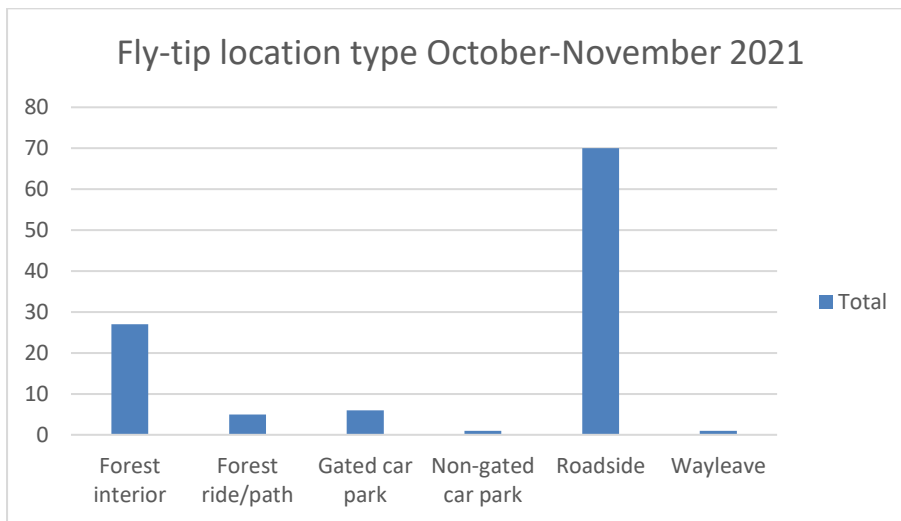
6. In total, November 2021 had a total of 17 days of recorded rain. On the 26th, a high of 4.8 mm was recorded.



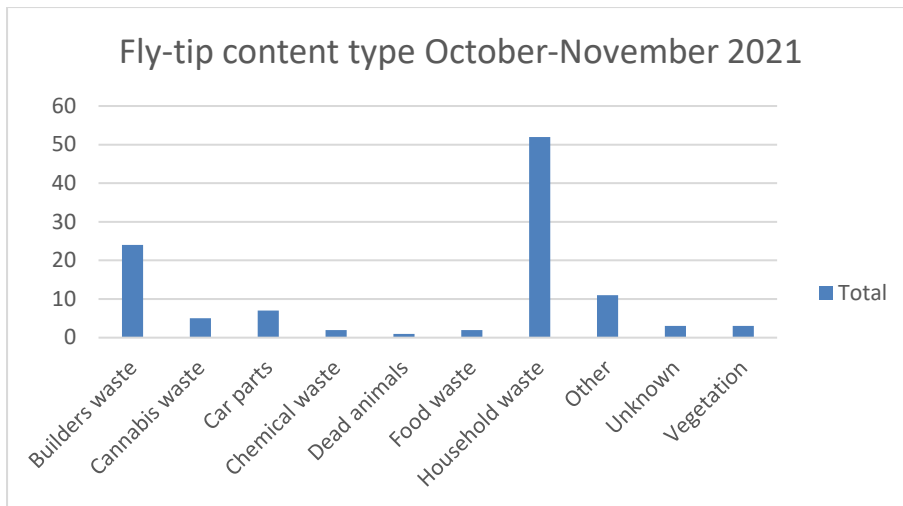
Forest Services

Fly-tipping

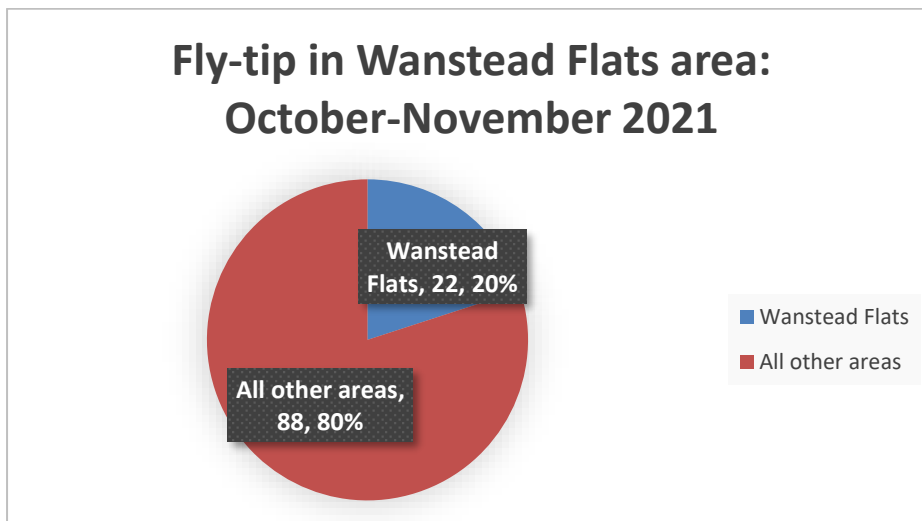
7. There was a total of 110 fly-tips recorded over the period of October – November 2021, this is a 72% increase over the same period in 2020. This may be due to the existing restrictions on household waste centres and other factors such as changes in household consumption, travel and leisure patterns.



8. Roadside locations represented 64% of the tip locations over the period.



9. Household waste represented the largest category of items tipped over the period at 52 (47%), while 'Other waste' (concrete, polystyrene, wires etc.) represented 11 tips (10%).



10. There were 22 fly-tips in the Wanstead Flats area over the period which represents 20% of all tips. 10 of these tips were on Forest Land adjacent to Highway Land on Capel Road.

Enforcement Activity

11. Six Environmental Protection Act (EPA) prosecutions for fly tipping-related offences were successfully heard in the period under report, with fines totalling £2,720.

Date	Defendant Name	Offence Accepted 33:Deposit 34:Duty of Care	Court Name	Costs Recovered
14/10/2021	DADEN	EPA 33 1 (a)	Chelmsford	Fine: £480 Costs: £480 V/S: £48

14/10/2021	FARDOS	EPA 33 1 (a)	Chelmsford	Fine: £250 Costs: £220 V/S: £34
14/10/2021	NASSER	EAP 33 1(a)	Chelmsford	Fine: £250 Costs: £220 V/S: £34
02/11/2021	CRICON	EPA Sec 33 1 (a)	Barkingside	Fined £1230 Costs £600 V/S £123
16/11/2021	WILSON	EPA Sec 34 1 (a)	Chelmsford	Fine - £961 Costs - £480 V/S £96
30/11/2021	STAN O & M	EPA 33 1 (a)	Barkingside	Fine £960 Costs £720 V/S £96
30/11/2021	DOOKHIT	EPA 33 1 (a)	Barkingside	Adjourned to 25/012022
Total Costs Awarded to Epping Forest (Including Compensation)			£2720	
Total			£2720	

Licences

12. A total of 47 licences for events were issued during the months being reported, which yielded an income of £60,447.77 plus VAT. 33 licences were issued during the same period in 2020 yielding an income of £52,766.60. There has been an increase in the number of licences issued due to Utilities Companies and Filming Companies advancing projects that they were unable to complete due to the pandemic.

Unexplained Deaths

13. There have been no unexplained deaths reported over this period.

Rough Sleepers

14. There have been five Rough Sleeper encampments located during the reporting period. All Rough Sleepers continue to be managed in partnership with Local Authorities through the No Second Night Out (NSNO) protocols.

- 08/10/21 – Northeast of Strawberry Hill Pond
- 13/10/21 – Outside The View
- 19/10/21 – Near Strawberry Hill Pond
- 28/10/21 – South of Epping Cricket Ground
- 22/11/21 – Near Jubilee Pond

15. To date over 2021 there have been 46 reported cases of Rough Sleepers in comparison to 63 in 2020. Within this reporting period there have been 5 reports of Rough Sleepers in comparison to 2020 where there were 6 reported cases over the same period.

Unauthorised Occupations

16. There have been no reports of Traveller Incursions during this reporting period.

17. There has been no reported Unlicensed Music Events (UMEs) on Forest Land.

Dog Incidents

18. There have been four recorded dog-related incidents during this reporting period all related to nuisance at Wanstead Park associated the volume of dogs being exercised by individual owners.

- 10/11/21 - Wanstead Park - too many dogs being walked
- 17/11/21 – Wanstead Park ten dogs being walked
- 24/11/21 – Wanstead Park - someone walking 12 dogs.
- 26/11/21 – Wanstead Park general complaint about dogs in the park.

Deer Vehicle Collisions

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

- 12/10/21 – South of Wake Valley Car Park
- 26/10/21 – Near Esso Garage by Warren Wood
- 26/10/21 – Goldings Hill

Car Park Charging Scheme

20. The second phase of the car parking charging project was implemented in November rather than September, due to in the national shortage of building materials. This involved ten new pay and display meters and 92 new pieces of signage across 22 car parks. Charging in these locations went live on 22 November.

21. On 15 November four Parking meters in High Beech were vandalised, with damage to their solar panels. The machines remained operational, and the solar panels were temporarily replaced with blanking plates.

	Hourly P&D Income** £	Permit Income £	Penalty Notices £
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October	23,371.83	3,994.37	3,892.68
November	24,853.30	10,721.77	3,497.09

** Hourly P&D income includes income from the RingGo systems and car payment machines at High Beach (collected by Horizon).

Cumulative net income from the scheme currently stands at £ £242,703.14, as of November 2021.

Traffic Regulation Orders

22. **Fairmead Road**; Essex Highways have advised that due to a lack of resources the order for confirming the closure of Fairmead Road was not completed and it will therefore be necessary to reopen the road. Based on the feedback from the public consultation on closure, a proposal for the restricted night-time closure of the road is being considered.
23. **North Essex Parking Partnership Red Route** There have been 18 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued between 1 October and 21 November. These figures do not include PCNs issued from the NEPP camera car footage. There has not been any enforcement after the 21 November, as the TRO is no longer in place.
24. **Manor Road Gating Order**. The Public Consultation on The Essex County Council (Wake Road, High Beech, Waltham Abbey) (Prohibition of Motor Vehicles) Order 2021 in operation to restrict Anti-Social Behaviour at the Pillow Mounds car park closed at the end of October, and the results of the consultation are still awaited.

Heritage; Landscape and Nature Conservation

Climate Action Strategy

25. As previously considered by your Committee, early opportunities for carbon recovery projects have been identified within Epping Forest Buffer Land, as part of a wider Open Spaces project. In November, consultants from Land Use Consultants (LUC) were appointed to commence a feasibility study exploring opportunities to increase carbon sequestration across all the Open Spaces through changes in land management and habitat creation. This study is being led by research reviews, officer interviews and site visits as well as desk-based assessments including GIS analysis. LUC will be identifying opportunities that have concomitant increases in biodiversity and ecosystem services provision.
26. The Copped Hall project is being developed in detail. As part of this an Environmental Impact Assessment is being undertaken, which is required by the Forestry Commission for areas of tree planting over 2 hectares. The next version of the project design will be presented to your Committee.

27. There was an unsuccessful recruitment to the Carbon Project Manager post and this role continues to be covered by Open Spaces officers. A second recruitment campaign based on a revised job description and grading is underway.

Agri-environment Schemes

28. Contractors have completed wood pasture work for 2021 which started in September at the following sites: Bury Wood, North Long Hills, Chingford Wood, Warren Hill and Rushey Plain. These are major elements of the Countryside Stewardship grant delivery and accelerate the wood pasture restoration in these places which has created new pollards for the future, increased light around veteran pollards, increased the valuable deadwood habitat on site and will promote the re-establishment of ground flora. Contractors will undertake a second phase of wood pasture work from September 2022.

29. The in-house arborists started this phase of veteran tree management across various areas of the Forest in November. Work involves the crown reduction of lapsed pollards that haven't been cut since the late 19th century to stabilise and revitalise them, as well as increase light to promote ground flora establishment, or the repollarding of pollards last cut in the last 30 years to keep them in the pollarding cycle. This phase will continue until March 2022.

30. Intricate conservation work was undertaken by two small groups of volunteers in November at a Knothole Yoke-moss site. This moss species (now re-classified as *Codonoblepharon forsteri*) is the Forest's only Red Data Book plant species and Epping Forest is one of only three sites in the country with this rare moss that only grows on the trunks and root knots of beech. The work released the moss from competition and shading from other plants and cleared former host sites to allow recolonisation.

31. Volunteers have been essential in delivering the Countryside Stewardship grant. The Epping Forest Conservation Volunteers have undertaken 27 tasks and the Epping Forest Heritage Trust have undertaken 27 tasks in 2021. These groups will now be able to record the areas they work from 2022 using the ESRI Fieldmaps app which has been set up by Corporate GIS. This will ensure that delivery data is up to date and will assist with delivery planning. Thanks go to all the volunteers that have taken part in this work.

Grazing

32. In-calf cows started a phased return to fields with non-public access surrounding Great Gregories Yard in preparation for calving. To date 54 calves have been born, 23 Heifers and 31 Bull calves. In the meantime, some autumn grazing on the Forest continued into November at Fairmead and Chingford Plain. The cattle began to switch to more browsing, including browsing on young Holly in Bury Wood and taking Crab Apples across these areas. This autumn grazing is of key importance in helping to manage the wood-pasture mosaic and its structure as well as carrying on with grazing the late grass growth, especially around the vulnerable ant-hills. The supply of dung is also important for some beetle and late-occurring fly species, especially given the warmer temperatures..

33. A Longhorn bull named "Quaker" has been purchased from Scarborough, North Yorkshire. It was acquired from a private dispersal of the prestigious Raincliffe

herd, one of the oldest Longhorn herds in the country whose owner John Backhouse passed away this year.

Heritage

34. Historic England's Heritage at Risk Projects Officer visited the two Iron Age Hill forts in November. At Loughton Camp, Verderer Paul Morris and Epping Forest officers reviewed potential rampart features in the wider landscape that the Camp sits in, as part of improving our understanding of this ancient monument.
35. As part of preparations for a second Countryside Stewardship application on the Forest, Ambresbury Banks was also visited to understand the long-term management requirements for this site and to consider feasible objectives that might be delivered in a 10-year grant agreement.

Forest Protection and planning matters

Town & Country Planning – Local Plans

36. The SAC Mitigation Oversight Group met on 21st October to consider a new draft of the proposed EFSAC SAMMS Partnership Agreement, that is to be present to your Committee at its 17th January 2022 meeting. Good progress was made with the details of the Agreement's Schedules and clauses and the in perpetuity period of 80 years was confirmed.
37. Following detailed consultations with the City Solicitor and Chamberlain, your officers were able to confirm that it was proposed that the City Corporation, subject to Members' approval, as the only Delivery Body would become a signatory and party to the Agreement. Further detailed work was done in November with the City Solicitor to scrutinise the Agreement and to create a financial audit and transactions Schedule with the guidance and advice of the Chamberlain. Comments and amendments were sent through to Natural England at the end of the month.
38. **Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Local Plan:** following your Chairman's response to the Planning Inspectorate of 23rd September no further information has been forthcoming about the Main Modifications process. An update of 2nd November on the EFDC Local Plan website confirmed that the Inspectors were in the process of considering the responses to the Main Modifications consultation and that a report from them on the outcome of their deliberations would be published in the first quarter of 2022.x
39. **London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) Local Plan:** the dates for the LBWF Local Plan examination-in-public were published during this period and the Planning Inspectors published their Matters, Issues and Questions consultation – with eight key questions around the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Local Plan.
40. In the meantime, discussions continued with LBWF's consultants in October on sections of the HRA dealing with the air pollution impacts and the urban effects of the proposed development on Epping Forest SAC. Both Natural England and your officers made clear their significant reservations about the HRA, particularly on air pollution but also on alternative greenspaces. During this period the HRA

had not been updated to ensure it was compliant with the Habitats Regulations. Natural England had further discussions with the consultants on air pollution and liaised closely with your officers on the issues being encountered.

41. The residential site allocation at Whipps Cross was the subject of a series of meetings between your officers, Natural England and LBWF planners to examine the mitigation offer in more detail. The conclusion of the series of meetings was the withholding of the objection to the proposals on the basis of a greater amount of mitigation. Further discussions on the details of the mitigation package are to continue in 2022 with LBWF and the applicant.

42. **London Borough of Enfield (LBE) Local Plan:** following your Chairman's response to LBE on its Regulation 18 consultation on 21st September no further response has been received from the Council. LBE is now deliberating on the consultation responses and a new version of the Local Plan for the Regulation 19 consultation is expected in Spring 2022.

Town & Country Planning – Development Control

43. In EFDC' area three objections were made, as follows:

- EPF 0220 21 – 158 Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill – 3 x 3 bedroom houses within 300m of SAC – no recreational impact HRA provided.
- EPF 2408 21 – 73 Lindsey Street, Epping – 10 residential dwellings, with 2km of EFSAC.
- EPF 2298 21 – Station Way, Buckhurst Hill - former council garage block, with proposed 4 x 3 bedroom houses. HRA concluded no impact on SAC, but an Appropriate Assessment (AA) was not provided.

44. In LBWF area two objections were made, as follows:

- LBWF 213212 – 83 Whitehall Road, Woodford – demolition of existing houses (two bungalows) and replacement with 8 dwellings (6 x 2 bed & 2 x 3 bed). Is within 150m of EFSAC, no Air Pollution or Recreational Impacts assessed at all.
- LBWF 213153 – Hawksworth. Former farm and single property (has been a vacant plot for a significant time. Proposed 21 dwelling development, site borders the EFSAC.

Land Registration, Access Audit & Wayleaves

45. No further Land Registrations were made during the period.

Operations

CSS Works

46. In-house teams commenced work on the new seasons pollarding as part of the ten-year CSS program. The delay in agreeing the CSS contract has meant that we started the year without being able to commence works in January and February and hence have a backlog of trees to catch up on. Progress by the

team has been good towards meeting the backlog with *circa* 100 trees worked out of a total of 175 required in this period. Additional resources are being sought to eliminate the backlog during 2022.

47. Staff commenced the first phase of a ten-year program to sensitively remove encroaching scrub on and around the Loughton Camp Scheduled Ancient Monument. This work is funded under the CSS program.

Insurance works

48. No specific site management actions were required during this period. The Head of Operations is however working with the insurance team to prepare for a liability claim planned for court in February 2022.

Risk Management Works

49. Tree Safety: The main focus of work during the period continues to be the works on the 400 or so London Plane trees in the Wanstead Flats area. The trees have been especially badly impacted by *Massaria* disease and almost every tree is requiring works with most requiring work on the edge of busy highways. To help reduce the previously reported backlog of work arising from staff shortages, two Agency arborists are being sought. Work is also underway to prepare a number of work packages in high-risk zones where it is hoped to secure resources to contract out the works early in 2022.

50. Highway verge cutting work on highway verge cutting was completed by our new contractor in October. In addition, in-house staff have worked the roadside vegetation along Bell common which helps to maintain the open vista on the common and keeps the elm growth in check.

51. Reservoir works: In-house staff undertook exploratory clearing of vegetation areas on the west of the Heronry Pond at Wanstead Park. The aim of these were to locate two piped water inlets to the pond. An inlet from the Shoulder of Mutton Pond was rediscovered and, coincidentally, for the first time in a few years due to the wet weather has begun to flow quite freely helping to fill water levels in the Heronry Pond. A second inlet bringing water from Northumberland Avenue proved more elusive despite opening a relatively large area. Colleagues from the City Surveyor's Department have subsequently located this inlet which appears blocked and this inlet will be the subject of future investigations to see if the feature can be reinstated to a more active condition.

Access Works

52. Work completed on opening up the path on either side of Baldwins Pond. This has significantly opened the path to the drying effects of sunlight and air movement and will be helpful over the winter to reduce some of the very poor accessibility of this path. In 2022, it is planned that this path will be upgraded as part of repair works on the dam forming Baldwins Pond.

53. Viewpoints: The Charity has been made aware of a 38 Degrees online petition seeking 'the restoration of the lost views of London from Pole Hill'. So far, the petition has attracted 54 signatures. Work was already underway by the Operations and Visitor Services teams on assessing the Forest's most significant viewpoints with a view to preparing a phased programme for restoring views within the current consent's regimes.
54. Car Park signage: In-house teams installed the second phase of car park signage during this period. Works were delayed due to wood supply problems from France and our supplier provided a discount by way of acknowledgement of the issues. Staff installing the signage have been faced with vigorous public opposition to the car park charging project.

Visitor Services

Learning and Education (Learning Team)

55. The Learning Team ran a successful school term programme, with 587 children booked in for facilitated workshops at the Forest and the Tudor Hunting Lodge. The sessions enable the students to develop key skills including team working and problem solving, and to build their understanding of the heritage and environment of Epping Forest. A new 'festive forest' workshop was introduced to provide an opportunity for children to be creative and explore the forest, collecting natural materials and designing and making natural crafts.

Chingford Golf Course

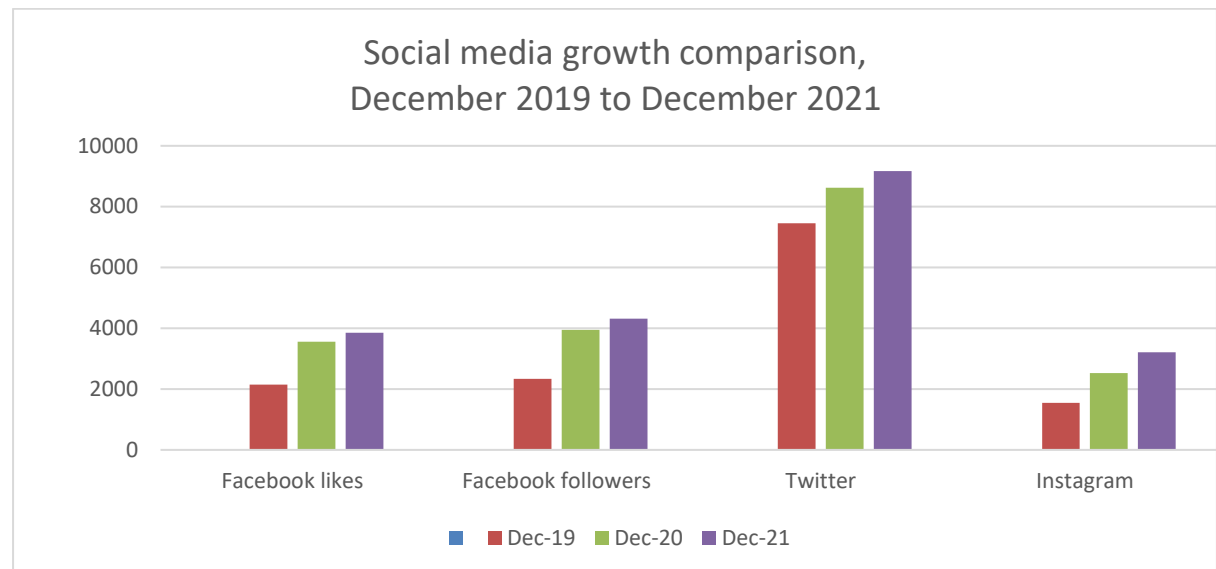
56. Total income generated from green fees and shop-related sales amounted to £35,713.00 for October & November compared to £27,644.00 in 2020; an increase of £8,069, reflecting last year's four-week national lockdown across November 2020. Online bookings increased this financial year compared to the previous year by £2,693.
57. Ground staff have been carrying out regular cutting requirements when the weather allowed to tees, fairways, rough, aprons and greens in order to keep the course set-up for play. Leaf clearance across the course and from ditches was carried out to improve playability and drainage. Greens were sprayed 4 more times with plant feed and a preventative fungicide both to improve the quality of the surfaces and to help prevent greens suffering from winter turf disease. All machinery went through HAV's testing to ensure safety for operators is followed.
58. An industry-wide consent was provided by the Environment Agency for the use of the insecticide Acelepyr™ to help with treatment on greens for chafer grubs and leather jackets which both cause significant economic damage to fine turf areas resulting in loss of grass coverage. Staff applied the insecticide on all greens and aprons in November to control first and second instars.

Communications

59. As of 15 December 2021, Epping Forest social media following is:

- Twitter followers: 9,170 (an increase of 6%)
- Facebook likes: 3,851 (an increase of 8%)
- Facebook followers: 4,321 (an increase of 10%)
- Instagram followers: 3,212 (an increase of 27%)

60. The chart shows a comparison of our social media followers at the same point in 2019, 2020 and 2021:



61. Top posts on social media for October 2021

- Twitter (8,635 engagements) Introduction to Quaker the bull.
- Facebook: (38,295 reach – hugely successful) Promoting message not to dump pumpkins in Epping Forest & the biodiversity importance of Epping Forest through designations.
- Instagram: (207 likes - our highest ever number of likes on Instagram to date) An image of Grimston's Oak.

62. Top posts on social media for November 2021:

- Twitter (3,821 impressions): A view of the Hunting Lodge through the trees, promoting importance of veteran trees in Epping Forest
- Facebook: (Reach of 6,687) Notification of Phase II car park charges.
- Instagram: (200 likes) Misty light through trees near Debden Camp.

63. Epping Forest news - Forest Focus continues to be distributed digitally each month, with positive feedback received.

64. Two releases went out in October, promoting the new carbon-cutting project at Patmore's Field and a warning re. prosecution of fungi collectors in Epping Forest

– both of which were very well received. The fungi release resulted in TV coverage by ITV news.

One media release went out in November, regarding successful fly-tip prosecutions, which was very successful.

65. Signage - A suite of further car parking signage was produced in advance of the roll-out of Phase 2 charges, implemented in November. Vandalism of the signage has necessitated further orders of replacement signage since the implementation date.

Wanstead Flats

66. Football continued welcoming a total of 306 matches over Harrow Road and Aldersbrook Road for October & November.

67. Ground staff carried out cutting duties when weather allowed, pitch maintenance repairs ensuring all pitches were ready for play now the site area has been reduced. Litter picking and pavilion cleaning was carried out after each match day. The Capel Road sport pavilion walls were again painted to cover graffiti.

68. Parkrun attracted 1,697 runners in the October & November with an average of 13 volunteers helping each week.

Horse Riding

69. Total income from horse riding licences for October & November amounted to £213 compared to £684 the previous year.

70. The Open Horse-Riding season was closed by notification to all riders on 12 November, reflecting the very wet condition of the Forest.

Visitor Numbers

71.

Visitor Numbers	QEH L 2021	2020	View 2021	2020	Temple 2021	2020	High Beach 2021	2020	Total 2021	Total 2020
October	91	0	2058	1239	0	0	752	0	2901	1239
November	60	0	1826	160	0	0	536	0	2422	160

72. Visitor Figures for October - November 2021 & 2020. Visitor numbers to the centres remain lower than pre-pandemic, however there is a recovery from 2020.

73. The Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge has been illuminated during November and will be though December and January as part of Waltham Forest's *Spectrum*. Working in conjunction with the local authority, a number of historic buildings across the borough were illuminated with a series of changing patterns and colours to highlight their importance and architectural beauty.

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/events/light-waltham-forest-presents-spectrum>

74. The courtyard at The View, has been decorated for the season using holly and shrubbery from the Forest. Christmas retail lines were in place from late November.
75. During the last week of November, the View hosted an exhibition of local furniture and print makers, this proved popular with visitors as an addition to the popular 'Bee' exhibition which began in October which used more traditional framed art works. Both exhibitions promoted the artists' links to the Forest as a source of inspiration and highlighted links to the natural world in our everyday objects.
76. Patrick Wiley, University College London, a researcher on gypsy and traveller history was given facilitated access to archival material from 1890s held in the Warren.

Major incidents

77. The designation of an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone across the UK from 3 November reflects international concern regarding the spread of the HPAI H5 strain of avian influenza in wild bird populations. There is evidence that there have been significant changes in HPAI H5 epidemiology in Europe to warrant increasing the risk of incursion of HPAI H5 via wild birds in UK from LOW (event is rare but does occur) to MEDIUM (event occurs regularly). While there have been no further HPAI H5N8 outbreaks in captive birds in north-east France, Belgium, and Luxembourg, HPAI H5N1 is spreading in wild birds across Europe, that will be migrating to the UK during the autumn and early winter.
78. DEFRA Higher Risk Area mapping of HPAI H5 risk includes the south of Epping Forest in its assessment, so continued vigilance by staff will remain important alongside cooperation with Local Authority Public Health Teams. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has said that avian influenza is primarily a disease of birds and the risk to the general public's health remains very low.

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