

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
West Ham Park Committee	6 October 2022
<b>Subject:</b> Assistant Director Update	Public
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment Department	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Ricky O'Garro, West Ham Park Acting Supervisor	

### Summary

This report provides an update to Members of the West Ham Park Committee on management and operational activities at West Ham Park since the Committee's last meeting which took place on 7 July 2022. The funding for the work stated is met through the West Ham Park local risk budget (City's Cash), apart from the Playground Project, which has been funded through a capital bid.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of the report.

### Main Report

#### Current Position

1. The hot, dry weather has been demanding this summer in relation to grounds maintenance and the management of the park, particularly for the maintenance of the gardens. The keepers and gardeners have continued to remain busy ensuring the beds in the ornamental gardens have been watered using sprinklers and watering by hand.

## **Awards**

2. Since the last Committee meeting West Ham Park has achieved several awards, testament of the hard work of the staff and volunteers. The Park received Green Flag accreditation and a Gold Award for London in Bloom, winning in the Large Park (above 25 acres) category. The Park was also voted favourite local parks in the UK Fields in Trust. The latter is a competition where West Ham Park was nominated and voted for against over other 300 parks and was the winner for the London Parks. More information about this award can be found online <https://www.fieldsintrust.org/favourite-parks/local-favourites>. This is an amazing achievement that shows the commitment and hard work that all the staff, volunteers and the Friends of West Ham Park put in to making West Ham Park the success that it is.

## **Visitor Numbers**

3. Visitor numbers have been relatively high during the summer with a considerably visible increase in visitor numbers when the newly built playground was re-opened. Many families were enjoying picnics and parties in the park and taking the opportunity to cool down in the waterplay area in the playground.

## **Friends of West Ham Park**

4. During August the Friends of West Ham Park ran a series of Sunday afternoon litter picks with the public. These events were used to raise awareness of the consequences of littering and its impact upon the environment, the natural scenery and wildlife. All of the events were well attended.
5. On 26 August the Friends of West Ham Park organised Bat Walks in the park and another one is planned on 30 Sept. These events are popular and well attended. The bats put on a brilliant flying display which was enjoyed by hundreds of people, most of them children. The participants were given a short talk on bat habits, what they eat, where they roost and echo location.

## **Sports and culture**

6. The 2022/23 football season has begun, currently there are two teams using West Ham Park as their home ground. Due to the harshness of the hot weather over the summer months the football pitches are not up to the usual standard that would be expected. Matches have been postponed and pushed back a month. This will enable the keepers to carry out renovation works to the pitches. This has been a common issue which many green spaces have encountered in the south UK regions.
7. The Family Arts Workshop held eight art events in the ornamental gardens. The project that was run in conjunction with West Ham Park, Forest Gate Library and Forest Gate Community Garden was aimed to raise awareness to the benefits of art and open spaces. The subject of the art was Dr Fothergill and his plant collection. This showed that the ornamental gardens not only are a space for relaxation and enjoyment but also a cultural asset for our local communities.

## **Playground**

8. The playground opened on 5 August 2022 and was welcomed by an enthusiastic and excited large crowd waiting by the gates. Staff have continued to receive positive feedback from members of the public. The water play area was very busy with children during the heatwave. Planting of the beds is still to be completed shortly when the season is right with the assistance of the Friends of West Ham Park.

## **Events**

9. West Ham Park hosted a second funfair this year from the 15 to 17 July. The event organiser, George Irvin Funfairs co-hosted the event in conjunction with HAFS Academy. The event was a collaboration of the fun fair and community and food stalls and well attended.
10. A London to Southend cycle ride starts from the park on the 25 September at 6am. Up to 1,000 cyclists take part in the leisurely bike ride heading towards Southend with a staggered start to avoid congestion.
11. On the 23 September a group of 10 corporate volunteers from the insurance recruiters, WPR Group were tasked with pruning, weeding and mulching the wildlife area at South Meadow.
12. Future events in the park include:
  - Newham's biggest leaf pile - 6 November 2022
  - Corporate volunteers from Chubb on the 13 October will be tackling tasks in the wildlife area behind the playground and planting tasks in the ornamental gardens.
  - Discussions with Newham are in place to reschedule the Newham unlocked event that was cancelled during the Queen's mourning period.

## **Learning Team**

13. The Learning Officer has delivered the following session in West Ham Park since this Committee's last meeting engaging with hundreds of children.

July 2022 – 11 sessions delivered to 315 children

August – School holidays – 7 sessions to 85 children delivered to charity's "Ambition Aspire Achieve" and "Capital Kids Cricket"

September – 11 sessions coming up during this month, including Habitats, Eco-art and Wellbeing sessions.

14. This term the Learning Team has 3 schools taking part in the weekly Nature Learning programme (for SEND pupils), 2 lead by the Learning Officer and one

school continuing their self-led visits. The learning diary is almost full for the autumn term already, with plenty of schools set to visit the park

### **Corporate and Strategic Implications**

15. 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**

16. None.

### **Conclusion**

17. The receiving of a Green Flag Award and a Gold category winner in the London in Bloom Awards (Large Park above 25 Acres) demonstrates that the hard work of officers and volunteers, support the delivery of a quality open space. High standards continue to be maintained in a period of transition. The Park continues to be a great asset for the community for the number of services, events and activities it has to offer and it is good to see that visitor numbers and children’s engagement continue to be high

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