

Committee	Dated:
West Ham Park Committee	10 July 2023
Subject: Assistant Directors Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 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
Report of: Juliemma McLoughlin, Executive Director Environment Department	For Information
Report author: 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 May 2023. The funding for the work stated is met through the West Ham Park local risk budget (City's Cash).

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of the report.

Main Report

Nature recovery and Park management

1. The park team are currently working closely the NLOS tree team to improve the tree maintenance in West Ham Park. Training will be given, over the next few weeks to several park staff on the Tree Plotter application that helps track tree health and maintenance of the parks tree stock.
2. The park will be judged for London in Bloom on 23 June where assessors will see first-hand the wonderful ornamental gardens. Opposite the Japanese Acer bed new planting with shrubs native to the far-east is making gardens more sustainable and drought tolerant.
3. An annual plan was developed in line with the strategic priorities identified for the Natural Environment Division (Appendix 1).

Friends of West Ham Park (FoWHP)

4. The Friends assisted the keepers in maintaining the wildlife garden on Sunday 26th March 2023. A cornflower meadow has been planted on the mound within the wildlife garden to encourage more insects and birds into the area. This will also be great for the school groups to conduct insect sweeps and investigate which insects are commonly found around the flowers. Other maintenance items like removing the pond net and cutting back ivy were carried out on the day.
5. The Vegetable Garden team have had several new recruits who have been eagerly digging over beds and digging in manure to support the growth of vegetables over the coming months. On 6 May, The Friends of West Ham Park Held a “Create your own five a day fruit and vegetable crown” event funded by Newham Council’s King Coronation Grant. Over 150 children participated in the event.

Sport and physical activity

6. The keepers and gardeners have been busy with spring jobs including turf management/grass cutting, strimming, pruning, and marking and preparation of the cricket square. After the Easter holidays, the 400m running track will be marked out for athletics training and sports days.
7. The City of London is preparing a Sport and Engagement Strategy for the Square Mile and the Natural Environment Division is preparing a complementary Sports Strategy which will align its strategic approach to sport and participation and will help maximise opportunities to develop sport facilities and increase participation at CoL sites.

Events and engagement

8. On 21 March, a *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (giant redwood) was planted on the front lawn of the Ornamental Gardens as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy campaign. The planting was assisted by pupils from Park Primary School. The day concluded with the official opening of the refurbished playground. The Fothergill story panel that is situated by the ship was unveiled by the Friends of West Ham Park.
9. A Fairground ran from 11 May to 14 May and was very well attended. The HAFs community Fair is planned for 14-16 July.
10. Since the new year, the Park has hosted volunteering days with three companies over five days. The companies were the Dual Group, Lexis Nexis and two days with the FCA. Tasks included weeding and planting in the playground, mulching, pruning and hedge planting in the Linden wildlife garden, and general maintenance in the wildlife education area. The groups were able to support the Park with nearly 400 hours of volunteer time. All groups enjoyed their experiences in the Park and are looking forward to their next sessions later in the year.
11. Five drawing courses for adults are being organised during June and July where keen artists draw and paints flowers, plants and landscapes from our beautiful garden. As part of the “From the Ground Up” community project, funded by City

Bridge Trust and to be launched on 22 July, QR codes will be positioned in key areas of the gardens to share images from nature. The photos were taken by vulnerable adults who engaged in garden activities and were taught about creative photography.

Learning programme

12. The learning programme continues to be strong with hundreds of children involved in activities in the Park.
13. Despite teacher strikes and bad weather, during March, 5 sessions were held with 135 children, as well as 7 Nature Learning sessions with 43 children.
14. In April, sessions for Newham Young Carers and Capital Kids Cricket were delivered, including sessions during the Easter holidays (10 sessions with 30 children per session).
15. 17 sessions were delivered during May, with a further 40 sessions booked for the summer months.
16. In addition to organised sessions, there are 5 local schools / nurseries that use the teaching gardens on a regular basis every week.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

Strategic Implications

17. The works and activities outlined in this report contribute towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporate Plan 2018-23. Contribute to a flourishing society (1-4), Support a thriving economy (5) and Shape outstanding environments (9-12).

Financial Implications

18. N/A.

Legal Implications

19. N/A.

Risk Implications

20. Risks are recorded and monitored via the Departmental Risk Register.

Equality Implications

21. N/A

Climate Implications

22. The City of London Corporation has a Climate Action Strategy which seeks to achieve Net Zero by 2037. There will be a range of measures implemented to realise this including increasing carbon sequestration and storage across the Open Spaces alongside biodiversity enhancement and resilience measures including relaxing grass cutting regimes and hedge planting.

Conclusion

23. The Park is proving to be a great asset for community participation with successful engagements of businesses and schools. The Friends of West Ham Park continue to be a key partner to keep the Park well managed and to involve the local communities. Staff are remaining engaged in the implementation of the wider Natural Environment strategic framework which includes nature recovery and community engagement.

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