

## City of London Corporation Committee Report

<b>Committee(s):</b> West Ham Park Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 6 February 2025
<b>Subject:</b> Assistant Director's Report	<b>Public report:</b> For Information
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> </ul>	-Diverse Engaged Communities -Leading Sustainable Environment -Vibrant Thriving Destination -Providing Excellent Services -Flourishing Public Spaces
<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>	Katie Stewart, Executive Director Environment
<b>Report author:</b>	Bill LoSasso Assistant Director (Superintendent), North London Open Spaces

### Summary

This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to West Ham Park since the last Committee meeting on 10 December 2024.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of the report.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. This report format has been amended to align reporting with the four strategic themes of the West Ham Park Management Plan (2025-2035).

**Caring: We continue to care for the Park to ensure it fulfil its many functions for the benefit of the community, heritage and the environment, now and for future generations.**

2. A new 10-year management plan has been developed and written, which has identified the short, medium and long-term objectives for the Park. External consultants, Land Management Services, were appointed and tasked with writing the management plan and consulting with key stakeholders.
3. A Green Flag and Green Heritage application will be submitted for West Ham Park. The new Management Plan has taken the judging criteria and previous judges' reports into account and addressed the historic features of the park.
4. The Friends of West Ham Park have organised their first public planting of the hedgerow around the playground on Sunday 19 January 2025. This will cover 50m of hedging and will be followed by planting activities by Park Primary and St Bonaventure's Schools along with the Cub Scouts. Each will plant a 50m length, so when finished, a new 200m native hedge will have been planted. Plans are underway to organise another public planting event in early spring. This will be to plant new shrubbery plants around the 'mounds area'.

**Excellence: We maintain the highest environmental, conservation, heritage and horticultural standards.**

5. West Ham Park remains popular with visitors throughout the winter months. The main tasks have been hedge cutting, tidying shrubs and borders in the formal gardens, weeding and leaf clearance from paths and play areas to maintain clear, safe access, and clearing drains, gullies and ditches.

6. The gardening team has been carrying out seasonal herbaceous border maintenance, cutting back the herbaceous and perennials, and tasks in the ornamental gardens such as weeding and leaf clearance.
7. A total of 715 trees have been inspected this year across the four quadrants of the Park. These inspections were undertaken by the in-house Professional Tree Inspectors during three site visits on 29 October, 5 November and 14 November.
8. A VOGT Geo Injector machine is being purchased with Climate Removals Project to decompact soils around tree roots, with works to start in spring. The machine works by creating aeration pockets which are then injected with a granular material.
9. The frequency of high winds resulted in all the leaves being down before Christmas. The leaves are collected from pathways, lawns, beds and borders and taken to the leaf tip yard, where they are then collected by a local farmer who spreads the decomposed organic matter on his fields.
10. To ensure the safety of officers and the public, the Park was part or fully closed 16 times (six in full) in 2024 due to high winds of over 40mph and once at time of writing (1 January) in 2025. During high winds and whilst the Park is closed to members of the public, the staff carry out a range of tasks such as site patrols, cleaning tools, machinery and equipment, cleaning the tool shed and staff areas as well as administration and office work. When the winds ease, patrols are carried out to check the Park for signs of damage and tree failure. Officers continue to monitor best practice in extreme weather management and are again reviewing the existing policy in 2025.
11. Below are the dates and times Park closed due to high wind speeds (over 40mph)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Wind speed prediction</b>	<b>Wind speed actual</b>	<b>Length of time closed</b>
02 January 2024	40+ mph	54.1mph	Closed at 13:00hrs
03 January 2024	N/A	N/A	Opened at 10:00hrs after checking site and clearing debris from previous day
21 January 2024	40+ mph	47.2mph	Closed at 14:00hrs
28 January 2024	37+ mph	44.9mph	Closed at 14:00hrs

09 April 2024			Closed between 12-16:00hrs
15 April 2024	40+ mph	46.1mph	Opened at 17:00hrs
22 August 2024	43 mph	23mph	Opened at 12 noon
23 August 2024	43 mph	29mph	Opened at 11:30hrs
23 November 2024	50+ mph	41.5mph	All day
24 November 2024	50+ mph	44.9mph	All day
06 December 2024	N/A	N/A	Closed all day to check for damage from high winds (41.5 mph) the night before
07 December 2024	57 mph	49.5mph	All day
08 December 2024	51 mph	49.5mph	All day
18 December 2024	43 mph	49.5mph	Closed until 10:00hrs
22 December 2024	46+ mph	39.2mph	All day
31 December 2024	45 mph	34.6 mph	Closed at 14:00hrs
1 January 2025	53mph	44.9mph	All day

**Inclusion: We ensure that the Park and its facilities are accessible to all and inclusive, so that all can enjoy the benefits of enhanced physical and mental well-being.**

12. The Head of Operations and Parks continues to have regular meetings with the Lawn Tennis Association to discuss the tennis provision and ways to increase participation at West Ham Park in relation to the London Borough of Newham. A meeting was held on 15 January 2025 to explore ways of driving both pay & play bookings and the membership offer. This will be done through collaboration with the current coaching provider and increasing local people’s awareness and interest in tennis through methods such as Free Park Tennis sessions, Barclays Big Tennis Weekend, Local Tennis Leagues, outreach programmes and bespoke community programmes.

13. Meetings have been arranged with Stratford Padel Club and other local Padel providers to fully explore Padel at West Ham Park and understand all the requirements. The disused basketball court is a potential location, but there are limitations to introducing Padel, such as gaining planning consent, the opening and closing times of the park, security, floodlighting and the impacts upon the

ecology of the park and the habitats and species it supports, such as European protected bats.

14. The football pitches are in use by clubs and groups for football training and matches at the weekends. The season is underway and East London Ballers Football Club continue to use the park as their home ground. Renovation works have been planned and are due to take place on one of the football pitches and the football gravel pitches in the New Year.

**Community: We work in partnership with our local community and engage visitors and the local community in understanding and caring for the Park.**

15. The Army Reserves, based in the TA Centre, carried out an after-hours training drill in the Park on Tuesday 19 November, which is the second time they have used the Park for training.
16. The Friends of West Ham Park ran their annual 'Park in the Dark' event on Friday 5 December 2024. It was attended by over 250 people and included the fabulous singers from the Park Primary School choir. Swapping an "entry fee" of a non-perishable food item for a glowstick, the Friends were also able to collect items for the local food bank. Morrisons also kindly sponsored the hot chocolate and mince pies, which were enjoyed by everyone.
17. The Friends of West Ham Park will be running a bird watching walk on Saturday 18 January for up to 25 members of the public and a star gazing event called 'Eyes to the Skies' on 19 January 2025 for up to 50 members of the public.

**Income Generation**

18. Income generation at West Ham Park remains aligned with past practice, relying primarily on user fees and charges for sports pitch hire, bandstand hire, and small events. The annual review of fees and charges is included in a separate report to this committee, on 6 February 2025, for decision.

**Financial implications**

19. No implications.

**Resource implications**

20. No implications.

**Legal implications**

21. No implications.

**Risk implications**

22. Risks are monitored and recorded through the various risk registers, including the Division and Departmental Risk Registers.

**Equalities implications**

23. No implications.

**Climate implications**

24. Included within the business plan for 2024-25 are a series of projects which contribute towards achieving the City of London's Climate Action Strategy, which was launched in October 2020. A key part of the strategy is conserving and enhancing biodiversity alongside reducing carbon emissions.

**Security implications**

25. Security implications are monitored and recorded through the Departmental Risk register.

**Conclusion**

26. This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to West Ham Park since the last committee meeting on 10 December 2024.

**Author**

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