

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): West Ham Park Committee	Dated: 23 October 2025
Subject: Assistant Director's Report	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	-Diverse Engaged Communities -Leading Sustainable Environment -Vibrant Thriving Destination -Providing Excellent Services -Flourishing Public Spaces
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:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director Environment
Report author:	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 3 July 2025.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Assistant Director's Report aligns with the four strategic themes of the West Ham Park Management Plan (2025-2035). Additional matters of interest and importance will be addressed under the "Additional Relevant Matters" section as needed.

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

2. The warm, dry weather brought an increase in visitors to the park over the summer months. The main tasks were grass cutting and preparing the pitches for the grass cricket table, irrigating the beds and borders, weeding and adding organic mulch to the tree pits in the ornamental gardens.
3. The long grass areas will have their final cut in the next couple of months, after the later-flowering species have gone to seed, to continue with our management of long grass areas in the park and to increase the biodiversity within the park.
4. Hedge cutting will commence in October after the end of bird nesting season.
5. Various climbing shrubs (*azer palmatum* and a variety of azaleas) have been planted to make a feature of the increased number of tree stumps, which are in the gardens.
6. The team have started to cut back the herbaceous/perennial plants within the borders. This work will be carried out during the autumn. Suitable plants will also be lifted and divided to fill gaps within borders.
7. Lawn renovations are being carried out, which includes spiking, de-thatching and re-seeding.

8. Full internal refurbishment of the toilet facilities near to the playground will commence in the autumn. The City Surveyor's Department are in the process of organising a pre-commencement meeting.

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

9. Green Flag and Green Heritage judging took place on Tuesday 13 May 2025. The official announcement date of the awards was Tuesday 15 July, and we were delighted to be awarded both the Green Flag and Green Heritage Awards this year.
10. The Team carried out summer maintenance tasks of weeding and grass cutting to ensure the gardens were of high horticultural standards for London in Bloom judging on 30 June 2025. The results will be announced on 20 October at the award ceremony at RHS Wisley.
11. The Gardening Team had a Level 2 Amenity Horticulture Apprentice who completed their apprenticeship. They made a valuable difference to the gardens during her time at West Ham Park. The team has now recruited and appointed a new Level 2 Amenity Horticulture Apprentice. They will be studying at Capel Manor College and will be learning and working in the gardens alongside the Gardening Team. The gardens will continue to thrive and remain a place for quiet contemplation and relaxation for the local community, while providing a learning resource for upcoming open-space professionals.

Tree Works

12. A full north-east quadrant tree inspection was undertaken by the NLOS Tree Team on 27 August. This produced 10 work orders including one horse chestnut crown reduction and nine trees with large dead/massaria-infected branches to be removed. These works are deemed medium priority and will be addressed by the NLOS tree team across the next 12 months. The remaining three quadrants will see all large trees inspected in the next three months.
13. Between July and August, the Tree Team removed a medium-sized dead lime from north-east quadrant, a medium sized dead cherry and a large maple from the north-west quadrant, as well as dead wooding London planes at various locations in the Park. During this time, the Team carried out an oak processionary moth caterpillar survey on 31 July. Very low numbers of nests were recorded, with no nests on trunks or low branches. The Tree Team has not

removed nests as there is no hazard to public or staff; this also promotes the natural parasitoids found in the nests which help manage caterpillar numbers.

14. The reduced amenity mowing programme at West Ham Park has significantly exceeded its original target of 1.44 hectares, with a total of 4.2 hectares now managed under this regime. This expansion supports biodiversity, enhances soil health, and contributes to the park's broader carbon sequestration goals. Looking ahead, plans are in development for winter tree planting, including new hedgerows and the creation of a few copses. These initiatives are aligned with the opportunity areas identified.

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.

15. The Team continues to have regular meetings with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to discuss, develop and maximise the tennis provision and participation at West Ham Park. Padel and pickleball were on the meeting agenda and discussed in June. Pickleball is overseen by Sport England, not the LTA, so Officers are now in the process of arranging a meeting.
16. End of season cricket renovations are now underway on the grass pitches with spiking and targeted weed removal. Regular maintenance was carried out on the cricket square. The last grass wicket game was held on 6 September and the last game on the non-turf cricket pitches will be held on 24 September.
17. A specialist contractor has been appointed to carry out full resurfacing works and shockpad repairs to three of the non-turf cricket pitches. They were last resurfaced in 2005-6. Given the age of the surface, the extent of the damage and the popularity of them, Officers decided to instruct a full resurface and replacement. The new surface is the new NottsGrass Ultra, which is an ECB-approved system and is proven to last up to six times as long in surface abrasion tests as the old Wilton woven-surface technology. This work will commence in September.
18. Capital Kids Cricket (CKC) ran a summer camp in the park from 4 August to 29 August to teach and coach cricket. It is a popular annual event, which attracts many children from the local community. A summer of cricket activities were enjoyed by many children of all ages and abilities.
19. The Park hosted eleven local schools for their sports days during the summer school term. The days were busy but enjoyed by everyone.

20. The football season began on 7 September with East London Ballers playing their first home game of the season. Maintenance work was carried out on the football pitch, the goal posts were installed, and the pitch was marked out in preparation for the first game of the season. Renovation work will also be carried out to pitch two as soon as the ground conditions are suitable.
21. The London to Southend Bike Ride is 52 miles and was held on 6 July 2025, starting from West Ham Park in Newham and ending in Priory Park, Southend. Approximately 900 cyclists took part in the annual event, raising lots of money for various charities.
22. Repairs are being carried out to the surface of the playground by a specialist contractor. Approximately 55 SqM of Tiger Mulch material is being laid in areas where it has eroded. This includes under the swings, roundabout and slide. The Park Team has also added 17 tonnes of woodchip to the playground to ensure the depth meets play safety standards and is suitable for children to access, play and enjoy.
23. The water play feature will be turned off and winterised after the October half term. It is one of the most popular play equipment features within the playground and is enjoyed by children of all ages.

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

24. Following the success of the 150th anniversary celebrations last July, the Friends of West Ham Park, with support from the Park Team, organised another community event called 'ParkFest '25'. It was held on Sunday 13 July. The event celebrated the Park's 151-year anniversary as well as the Friends of West Ham Park's 20th year. The event included workshops, family entertainment, sports coaching and activities, arts and crafts, food stands and live music on the bandstand. The day was a huge success with large numbers of visitors enjoying the event throughout the afternoon.
25. The Friends organised community planting days, which included the hedge and pollinator shrub planting on the mounds in spring. Pollinator-friendly shrubs including buddleia, daphne, wild privet, berberis and common elder were planted. The Team ensured the hedge and planted shrubs were maintained and watered

throughout the hot, dry, summer months. The shrubs are establishing and starting to thrive.

26. The Friends organised and led a bat walk on Friday 29 August, which was very successful. Approximately 100 people attended. The attendees were given a short talk on bat ecology and a walk around the park. There were many sightings of bats in flight, and many attendees were not aware of the Park's importance for bats. The Friends will be leading another bat walk on Friday 26 September, due to its popularity with the local community.
27. The Learning Team and Park Team are working together to create a Spooky Autumn Trail for families to follow and enjoy on Friday 31 October. Families are invited to explore the enchanted ornamental gardens, solve magical clues and enjoy the season. Last year was very successful and proved very popular with the local community and attracted families with children of all ages.
28. Newham's Biggest Leaf Pile is planned for Sunday 16 November. It is the biggest and best community event of the year, but of course the date is dependent on leaf fall.

Learning Team Update

29. The summer term has been a productive and inspiring period for the Natural Environment Learning Team. A key success has been the trial of a new summer staffing model, which enabled the team to double school summer term participation, engaging over 3,374 primary school pupils in our outdoor learning programme.
30. Our SEND project (for children with special educational needs and disabilities) continues to thrive, offering tailored, long-term, nature-based learning experiences. These sessions allow children to explore, play, and benefit from the wellbeing advantages of time spent in nature. This is the third and final year that the project is being supported by the City's Cultural and Creative Learning Fund, which has provided vital staffing and resources.
31. The Learning Team Youth Programme has also had a strong summer; engaging 85 young people in enriching outdoor activities such as pond dipping, map trails, and shelter building. We were pleased to welcome regular groups from 'IntoUniversity'—a charity helping young people from disadvantaged communities achieve their aspirations—and 'Ambition, Aspire, Achieve', which supports vulnerable young people in Newham.

Additional relevant matters

32. The recruitment and selection process for the vacant Operative Ranger position was successful. He will join the team and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in grounds maintenance and fine turf, having previously worked at West Ham Park and Epping Forest.
33. George Irvin's Summer Fun Fair was in the park from 21 July to 29 July. It was a huge success and well attended by the local community.

Anti-social behaviour and criminal activity

34. As Members are aware, there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour in many of our open spaces in recent years. Officers have actively taken measures to proactively address this, including updating policies and procedures, hiring external security staff, and reviewing the provision of CCTV in West Ham Park.
35. At West Ham Park this year, there has been an increase in both anti-social behaviour and serious criminal behaviour. This includes two separate serious knife-related incidents, on 29 June (a stabbing) and 4 August (a robbery at knifepoint). In addition, there has been an increase in drug dealing and drug users congregating in the Park, as well as incidents of sexual and indecent activity.
36. As part of the ongoing efforts to support Officers to provide a safe greenspace for staff, volunteers and the public, we have hired an additional two security officers from Parkguard to provide security provision seven days per week. These security officers patrol the Park, liaise with users, enforce byelaws, and assist with locking up the Park. As of 11 August, there are four security guards who provide vital support to the Park Team, and this arrangement will remain in place for the foreseeable future. They have been invaluable in supporting staff, proactively moving on problem individuals, and providing information to the Met Police relating to criminal behaviour.
37. Officers have also liaised with the London Borough of Newham Community Safety Team, who report an appreciable increase in criminal and anti-social behaviour in the area and who have provided episodic patrols through the Park as well. Officers will continue to engage with the Council.

38. As a result of incidents, including involving the Met Police, around Linden Gate, the provision of CCTV in the Park for all gates has been reviewed and Officers are seeking funding for necessary improvements and additions. Officers have also taken measures to help ensure the security of on-site accommodation and have carried out tree and vegetation work to improve security and sightlines. The number of anti-social and criminal incidents is recorded and security provision is regularly reviewed with Officers and Parkguard so that the likelihood of any potential risks can be reduced. Officers continue to meet with the Met Safer Neighbourhood Team to gain advice and support. The issues and incidents in the Park are being logged, reported and reviewed weekly, and Officers are compiling data to inform future decision-making.

39. In addition, Officers are strategically closing gates in the Park near the hotspots for criminal activity as a temporary measure to try to prevent criminals from entering the Park and to prevent criminal activity from becoming established there. All relevant stakeholders have been informed of these actions, and while any impact of temporary gate closures on legitimate users is of course regrettable, Officers believe that this is a necessary and critical step to stay ahead of things and prevent the activity from becoming entrenched in the Park and area.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

40. No implications.

Financial implications

41. Additional costs will be incurred as a result of the additional external security provision in the Park.

Resource implications

42. Officers continue to spend time on responding to and planning for the increase in criminal and anti-social behaviour in the Park.

Legal implications

43. No implications.

Risk implications

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

Equalities implications

45. No implications.

Climate implications

46. Included within the business plan for 2025-26 are a series of projects which contribute towards achieving the City of London Corporation'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

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

Conclusion

48. This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to West Ham Park since the last committee meeting on 3 July 2025.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Presentation on Cyclical Works Programme from City Surveyor's Department

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