

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): West Ham Park	Dated: 29 January 2026
Subject: Assistant Director's Report	Public report: For Information
This proposal: • 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 11 December 2025.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note 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 main tasks recently in the Park have been general maintenance duties, such as clearing leaves from the footpaths and lawns, along with seasonal lawn maintenance.
3. Hedge cutting across the Park began in October and will continue until the end of February, before the start of bird-nesting season. The internal hedges around the lodges, bandstand, tennis courts, outdoor gym, nursery and leaf yard are being reduced to maintain sightlines. The perimeter hedges will be cut in the new year.
4. The Team worked hard on border maintenance with cutting and dividing the herbaceous perennial plants. Suitable plants have been lifted and divided to fill gaps within the borders and elsewhere within the Ornamental Gardens.
5. Five overhead cross timbers have been replaced on the Rose Garden Pergola due to rot. The overhead cross timbers on the Arbor are also due to be replaced due to weak and rotten timber beams.
6. A full internal refurbishment of the toilet facilities near the playground began on 17 November. A Refurbishment and Demolition (R&D) asbestos survey was completed, and a pre-commencement meeting was held with the appointed contractors. The works are progressing well, and temporary toilets have been installed opposite the toilet block. The refurbished toilets should be completed by the end of January 2026.
7. The annual play safety inspection was carried out on all the play equipment, including the outdoor gym equipment in October 2025.

Tree Team

8. At the end of September, the Tree Team removed a large dead turkey oak from the north-west quadrant along the Ham Park Road fence line. A portion of the trunk has been retained to provide saproxylic habitat.
9. In early December, soil decompaction work was carried out on two London plane trees near the main office using an air compressor and geo injector. This forms part of the ongoing study into soil and tree health improvement. The trees will be monitored during the next and subsequent growing seasons to assess their condition.
10. The remaining three quadrant tree inspections were completed by the NLOS Tree Team, assessing the health and stability of large mature trees. This concludes the Park's tree inspections for the calendar year. A total of 16 work orders were recorded, including one dead holly and one decayed *Robinia* scheduled for felling and 14 trees requiring removal of large-to-medium-sized dead or *Massaria*-infected branches.

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

11. In addition to the 2000 spring flowering bulbs and daffodils which were added to the Ornamental Gardens, the Gardening Team applied for and received 500 spring bulbs from Bulbs for London. The free bulbs are given by the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association to sites across London to help enhance outdoor spaces. The additional bulbs have been planted in various locations within the formal gardens, which will provide year-round colour and enjoyment for everyone.
12. Additional planting in the Ornamental Gardens has included 27 *Lavatera x clementii* 'Barnsley' summer-flowering shrubs on the middle and bottom terraces of the Wall Garden and in the Rose Garden. Seven standard *Hibiscus syriacus* have also been planted on the top terrace of the Wall Garden.

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.

13. End-of-season cricket renovations have taken place on the grass pitch. This included target weed removal, spiking, seeding and top dressing.
14. The football season is underway. East London Ballers use the pitches as their home grounds and play regular weekend fixtures. Renovation work is being

carried out to pitch two, with particular focus on the goal mouth. The pitch will be spiked, scarified and reseeded, and will remain out of use until the grass seed has established.

15. Officers continue to meet regularly with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to discuss the tennis provision at the Park, to make it more accessible, to tackle barriers and ensure the sport is inclusive. The LTA has a mission to transform communities through tennis, promote the benefits of enhanced physical and mental health and wellbeing, develop new skills and support community cohesion.
16. Tennis and padel have experienced significant growth in recent years. In tennis, 5.8 million adults now play tennis at least once a year, which is up by 51% from January 2019, and 3.8 million children play tennis annually, which is over 40% of 4 -16-year-olds. There has also been a rapid growth in padel, from approximately 50 courts nationwide in 2019 to over 1000 in 2025, with annual participation growing from 15,000 to 400,000 players.
17. Based on local engagement and analysis of the current infrastructure, the LTA has developed a Local Delivery Plan for the London Borough of Newham, which has identified the following key priorities:
 - a. Develop and deliver an agreed facility development plan including covered court provision, floodlighting existing courts, ancillary facilities and padel.
 - b. Embed appropriate and sustainable park tennis programmes that provide opportunities for all Newham residents across the borough to access tennis in a way that aligns with their needs, including an appropriate workforce to deliver these opportunities.
18. Following the announcement by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport of £400 million investment into grassroots facilities over the next four years, the LTA are engaging with the Government to share insight from Local Delivery Plans as a rationale to develop these facilities.
19. West Ham Park is an area that has been identified as lacking accessible covered tennis and padel provision. The LTA are therefore keen to work with Officers to explore the funding and options to provide year-round opportunities for people to play tennis and padel. West Ham Park is already a hub for the local community, but this could further grow participation in tennis and padel and provide a range of activity for inactive and underrepresented groups.

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

20. The Friends of West Ham Park (FoWHP) held a festive food bank collection on the Bandstand on Saturday 29 November. Despite the inclement weather, many locals attended and contributed canned food, dry goods and toiletries. The FoWHP handed over several large trays of goods to the Newham Food Bank.

21. Park in the Dark took place on Friday 5 December, which was a huge success. The Friends led an after-dark lantern walk from South Gate through to the Bandstand, where attendees were able to make colourful lanterns for the procession. Approximately 280 people attended, and participants were met with refreshments and festive tunes from Park Primary School choir.

22. Year 12 students from St Bonaventure's Secondary School have been volunteering in the Park. They have carried out tasks such as litter picking, leaf clearing and planting in the ornamental garden, as part of their enrichment programme.

Learning Team update:

23. The school learning programme has continued to flourish, with 500 students participating in sessions in West Ham Park during November, and multiple sessions already booked for December and January. In addition to the primary school programme, the Learning Team hosted a series of enrichment sessions for local secondary school students, working with the West Ham Park Team to involve them in caring for the Park through tasks such as planting and leaf-raking. Students also had the opportunity to engage creatively and develop new skills through Park-based photography workshops.

24. The SEND project (for children with special educational needs and disabilities) also continues to thrive, providing tailored, long-term, nature-based learning experiences. This marks the third and final year of support from the City of London Corporation's Cultural and Creative Learning Fund, which has funded staffing and resources for the project. Feedback from teachers has been very positive and highlights the value of the programme.

Events

25. A provisional events programme for 2026 has been drafted:

- **5 March** – World Book Day Schools' Event and Little Book Library Launch
Hosted by Learning Team and Friends of West Ham Park
- **22 March** – Eid al-Fitr
- **19 - 23 May** – George Irvin's Spring Fun Fair
- **26 May** – Eid al-Adha

- **12 July** – West Ham Parkfest
Hosted by Friends of West Ham Park
- **19 July** – London to Southend Bike Ride
Organised by Bike Events
- **17 - 26 July** – George Irvin's Summer Fun Fair
- **30 October** – West Ham Park Spooky Autumn Trail
Hosted by Learning Team
- **November** – Big Leaf Pile
Hosted by Friends of West Ham Park
- **December** – Park in the Dark
Hosted by Friends of West Ham Park

We will continue to consider new applications for community and commercial events, however currently there is limited capacity within the onsite team to manage any significant number of additional events.

Online Engagement

26. Following enquiry at the previous Committee meeting, Officers have undertaken a brief review of social media engagement data alongside visitor numbers. Analysis indicates that current levels of social media followers and interaction are comparatively low and are therefore assessed as having only a limited direct influence on visitor attendance. Visitor numbers continue to be more significantly affected by peak periods such as bank holidays and school holidays, and also events, which are featured on social media as well as onsite signage.

27. Officers are developing a social media dashboard to support improved monitoring and to encourage increased levels of online engagement across the West Ham Park social media channels. This dashboard will be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

Additional relevant matters

Anti-social behaviour and criminal activity

28. As previously reported to this committee, anti-social behaviour has significantly decreased following an increase in anti-social behaviour and criminal activity in the Park during the summer and autumn months.

29. In response, and among other actions taken, four additional security guards from Parkguard were appointed from 29 September to 7 December. Two security guards have now been removed following positive results from actions taken by Officers and other relevant stakeholders and partners to address the situation.

Two security personnel have been retained from 8 December until the end of March 2026 to provide a consistent security presence.

30. Officers meet fortnightly with Parkguard to review the anti-social behaviour and security needs. This ensures the correct number of guards to ensure we maintain a safe and welcoming environment for our Park users and visitors. The Senior Ranger continues to attend meetings with the Met Safer Neighbourhood Team.
31. As a result of the incidents involving the Met Police around the gates, work has been carried out to review the CCTV provision on all the gates and ensure the security and access to tied accommodation is suitable and safe. Working in liaison with the City Surveyor's Department, part-funding has been secured through the City Corporation's Insurance Team to assist with increasing and updating the CCTV system.
32. Additional poles will be installed at Nursery Gate, Linden Gate and South Gate with at least two cameras on each pole covering all the blind spots including Country Gate. This work will take two to three weeks and will be completed by March 2026. The work will also include upgrades to the existing cameras, so all seven access points will be covered by CCTV. The Wi-Fi link and CCTV recording system will also be upgraded.
33. Additional fencing has also been installed at Linden and Margery Cottages to ensure better security for residential staff.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

34. The content of this report furthers relevant strategic objectives of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan, Natural Environment Division Strategies, and West Ham Park Management Plan.

Financial implications

35. Additional costs will be incurred as a result of the additional external security provision in the Park. Officers are liaising with Chamberlain's to address an expected overspend in fiscal year 2025-26 directly due to the actions taken to ensure public and officer safety in the Park, as reported to this Committee.

Resource implications

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

Legal implications

37. No implications.

Risk implications

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

Equalities implications

39. No implications.

Climate implications

40. Included within the Business Plan for 2025-26 are a series of projects which contribute towards achieving the City 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

41. Security implications are monitored and recorded thought the Departmental Risk register. Officers continue to monitor ASB and criminal activity in the Park, and to liaise with partners as necessary to take appropriate and necessary action.

Conclusion

42. This report provides Members with an update on matters relating to West Ham Park since the last committee meeting on 11 December 2025.

Appendices

- None

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