



**Oversight and Governance**

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**MOUNT EDGCUMBE JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Date:** Friday 15 November 2024  
**Time:** 10.00 am  
**Place:** Belvedere Room, Mount Edgcumbe

**Committee Members–**

**Plymouth City Councillors-**

Councillors Briars-Delve (Co-Chair), Blight, Gilmour, Allison, Morton, Ms Watkin and Wood.

**Cornwall Councillors-**

Councillors Alvey, Ewert, Lennox-Boyd, Pascoe, Tivnan, Worth and Seeva.

**Co-opted Members-**

Mr D L Richards and Mr Ben Church.

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

For further information on attending Council meetings and how to engage in the democratic process please follow this link – [Get Involved](#)

Tracey Lee and Kate Kennally  
Joint Clerks

## **MOUNT EDGCUMBE JOINT COMMITTEE**

### **AGENDA**

**1. APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by Joint Committee Members.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of items on this agenda.

**3. MINUTES** **(Pages 1 - 12)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2024 as a correct record.

**4. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

To receive reports on business, which in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

**5. CO-OPTED MEMBERSHIP** **(Verbal Report)**

For the Joint Committee to receive an update on Co-opted membership.

**6. FINANCE REPORT:** **(Pages 13-18)**

**7. PARK MANAGER'S REPORT:** **(Pages 19-23)**

**8. CAR PARKING BRIEFING PAPER:** **(To Follow)**

**9. FRIENDS OF MOUNT EDGCUMBE REPORT:** **(Verbal Report)**

**10. NATIONAL MARINE PARK UPDATE:** **(Verbal Report)**

**11. TRACKING DECISIONS** **(Pages 25 - 26)**

For the Joint Committee to review the progress of the Tracking Decisions Log.

**12. EXEMPT BUSINESS**

To consider passing a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it (they) involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 1/2/3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **PART II (PRIVATE MEETING)**

### **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO NOTE**

That under the law, the Panel is entitled to consider certain items in private. Members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting when such items are discussed.

- 13. PART II MINUTES** **(Pages 27 - 30)**  
  
To confirm the Part II Minutes from 12 July 2024 as a correct record.
- 14. MOUNT EDGCUMBE TENANCY AND LANDHOLDING UPDATE:** **(Verbal Report)**

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## Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee

Friday 12 July 2024

### PRESENT:

Councillor Briars-Delve in the Chair.  
Councillor Ewert, Co-Chair.  
Councillors Alvey, Worth, Blight, Allison, Morton, Ms Watkin and Wood.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Lennox-Boyd, Pascoe, Tivnan, Gilmour and Seeva.  
Mr D L Richards and Mr Alan Drummond.

Also in attendance: Iozef Lewis (Lead Accountant), Sharon Mercer (Head of Strategic Development Projects), Ben Church (Chair, Friends of Mount Edgcumbe), David Marshall (Business Development Manager), Dan Cooke (Head of Protected Landscapes), Chris Burton (Park Manager), Victoria Pomery (CEO, The Box), Rosie Brookshaw Williams (Democratic Advisor), and Elliot Wearne-Gould (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 10.01 am and finished at 12.26 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

### 1. Declarations of Interest

There was one declaration of interest in respect of items on this agenda:

Councillor	Interest Type	Description
Tom Briars-Delve	Personal (Registered)	Member of the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park, Horizons Board

### 2. Appointment of a Chair and Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2024/25

The Joint Committee agreed to note the appointment of Councillor Tom Briars-Delve as Plymouth's Co-Chair for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

The Joint Committee agreed to appoint Councillor Kate Ewert as Cornwall's Co-Chair for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

*(Proposed by Councillor Alvey, Seconded by Councillor Worth, and agreed unanimously)*

### 3. Committee Membership (Verbal Report)

Councillor Briars-Delve (Co-Chair) welcomed Councillors Seeva, Allison, Morton, Wood and Watkin as new members of the Joint Committee.

#### 4. **Chair's Urgent Business**

Councillor Ewert (Co-Chair) congratulated Rame Riders, a business situated within the park, on their attainment of a significant grant through Community Levelling-Up Funding. The funding would allow the development of an electric bike and scooter hire scheme which would be rolled out across South East Cornwall.

#### 5. **Minutes**

Subject to the correction of Councillor Daw's attendance, the Joint Committee agreed the minutes of 10 November 2023 as a correct record.

*(Councillors Allison, Morton, Wood and Watkin abstained from this vote as they were not present for the meeting held on 10 November 2023.)*

#### 6. **Questions from Members of the Public**

There were four questions from members of the public:

Question (D. Hoskin):	I thank the Joint Committee for their forward thinking, through the Dartmoor ponies being at Rame Head (for generations now!), for their breeds preservation, and the thriving of natural growth of wild flowers, increasing wildlife, through grazing. They've been a treasured part of the enriched landscape. When will they return?
Response:	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The Mount Edgcumbe Country Park team and Joint Committee believe that grazing ponies at Rame Head is the most appropriate form of conservation for the important Rame Head SSSI. The responsibility for the management of the SSSI habitat at Rame Head rests with any occupier (tenant) of the land. MECP has requested the restoration of appropriate grazing at the site as soon as possible to ensure appropriate long-term habitat management, and will continue to negotiate for this.</p> <p>Natural England has been made aware of the removal of the ponies. As the body responsible for designating and monitoring SSSIs, they can be contacted at: 'DevonCornwallandIslesofScilly@naturalengland.org.uk'</p>
Question (L. Reid):	Considering Mount Edgcumbe Country Park is a Grade I Park and Garden (the highest possible protection for heritage assets and outstanding significance), is owned by public bodies, was purchased using public monies, and is accessible to the public, what are the ME Joint Committee's routes of accountability to the public?
Response:	Thank you for your question.

	<p>The Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee is a Joint Committee of the Cabinets of Plymouth and Cornwall Councils. The Joint Committee operates under the regulations of the 1972 and 1985 Local Government Acts, as amended by Localism Act 2011. As such, every committee meeting is open to the public, and receives published agendas and minutes (except for a minority of confidential items of business). Members of the public are also able to submit public questions to the Joint Committee and receive an answer at public meetings.</p> <p>Under this structure, the Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee is directly accountable to the Cabinets of each Council (Plymouth and Cornwall). The Joint Committee is also overseen by the relevant Cabinet member from each Council, who holds portfolio responsibility for Mount Edgcumbe. Members of the public are able to engage with these cabinet members directly, and ask public questions at Cabinet, and Council meetings. Councillors and the Executive (Cabinet) are accountable to their electorate, and are held to account through voting in elections. Other routes of accountability across the Councils include direct contact with Councillors/Officers, petitions, and pressure groups.</p> <p>As agreed at the last meeting, the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee are currently being updated to enhance governance and accountability. The inclusion of the Conservation Management Plan will enable the Joint Committee to better scrutinise and assess the performance of the Park, and will require the Cabinets of Plymouth and Cornwall to consider and approve the plan in 5 yearly review cycles. The plans are also undergoing a robust period of public consultation prior to implementation.</p> <p>The Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee is proud that the Mount Edgcumbe Country Park is a Grade I Park and Garden, offering free public entry to around 250,000 visitors per year, including 8,000 school children. The Park has attained the Trip Advisors 'Travellers Choice award for three consecutive years, placing it in the top 10% of the world's attractions.</p>
Question (M. Cross):	Has the Joint Committee considered how the recommendations of the Conservation Management Plan now being prepared will be funded?
Response:	Thank you for your question. The Strategic Management and Development Plan (Conservation Management Plan) will enable the Joint Committee and operational team to better analyse and assess the Park's varying needs and demands in terms of maintaining and enhancing the historic and environmental assets of this important listed landscape, against

	<p>available funding streams. This will enhance the prioritisation of works and projects, as well as long-term planning and monitoring of performance.</p> <p>As the plan is still in development and public consultation is currently underway, the Joint Committee is unable to assess the full extent of needs and funding (both revenue and capital) required at this time. However, costs will be met through the standard budget procedure for MECP: The Park is expected to operate a Net-Zero, self-sufficient budget (on current annual operating costs of c.£1m), and any remaining 'overspend' is split equally between Plymouth and Cornwall Councils. The Joint Committee must ensure that value for money is achieved with public funds.</p> <p>Over recent years, the Park management team has achieved great successes at attracting and maximising income streams to meet Park revenue and capital demands. However, the Committee recognises that not all items highlighted on the management/conservation plans will be achievable in the short term, unless additional funding becomes available. Sourcing additional external funding continues to be a high priority for the Park, with approximately £1.4 million secured this year alone, and the Joint Committee will assess available resources against Park needs once the new plan is agreed.</p>
<p>Question (T. Steenhagen)</p>	<p>According to its own constitution the Joint Committee is responsible to "carry out an appropriate inspection of the house and country park on an annual basis". Where can I find the annual reports that cover these inspections for the last 5 years, including its conclusions and recommendations?</p>
<p>Response:</p>	<p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>The Joint Committee does indeed conduct an annual inspection of the Park, as per its Terms of Reference. This is usually conducted on the first meeting of each Municipal Year. The annual inspection for the municipal year 2024/25 will be conducted after the meeting today.</p> <p>The only exception to this was the inspection scheduled for 20 November 2020. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, a park inspection by Committee members was not possible. As there was a constitutional requirement for an annual inspection to take place, the Joint Committee delegated the undertaking of an appropriate inspection to officers.</p> <p>During the annual inspection, Joint Committee members are invited</p>



	<p>to view the latest developments within the park, such as new house displays, renovations, and developments. At the annual inspection 2023/24, members were invited to view new displays within the House, as well as the Garden Battery developments due to its successful Heritage Lottery Funding.</p> <p>As the inspection takes place following the close of a meeting, there are no documents available detailing the Committee's inspection, nor is there a requirement for this stated within the Terms of Reference. Any observations from this inspection are brought back to the next meeting verbally, or communicated to officers for further action.</p>
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7. **Co-opted Member Review** (Verbal Report)

Elliot Wearne-Gould (Democratic Advisor) provided the following updates to the Joint Committee:

- a) The Joint Committee was required to review its Co-opted membership annually. Currently, there were two Co-opted members; Mr D L Richards and Mr Alan Drummond;
- b) Mr Alan Drummond had recently resigned as Chair of the Friends of Mount Edgumbe Committee due to personal reasons. Mr Ben Church had now been appointed to the Chairman role.

The Joint Committee agreed to:

1. Provide their thanks to Mr Alan Drummond for his service as Chair of the Friends of Mount Edgumbe and for his support to the Joint Committee;
2. Remove Alan Drummond as a Co-opted Member of the Joint Committee;
3. Co-opt Mr Ben Church to the Joint Committee, in the capacity of Chair of the Friends Committee;
4. Note that Mr D L Richards remained a Co-Opted member.

*(These recommendations were proposed by Councillor Briars-Delve, seconded by Councillor Ewert, and agreed unanimously.)*

Councillor Briars-Delve (Co-Chair) proposed an additional recommendation:

5. To extend invitations to appropriate organisations and bodies, to put forward nominations for Co-option to the Joint Committee, in order to provide appropriate advice, specialist expertise and enhance democratic engagement. These bodies would include organisations such as Natural England, Parish Councils & Protected Landscapes.

*(This recommendation was proposed by Councillor Briars-Delve, seconded by Councillor Ewert, and agreed by the Joint Committee with two abstentions; Cllrs Wood and Watkin.)*

#### 8. **Mount Edgumbe Revenue Outturn 2023/24**

Jozef Lewis (Lead Accountant) delivered the Mount Edgumbe Revenue Outturn Report 2023/24 and discussed:

- a) Section one of the report highlighted an adverse variation of £90,000 in the budget for the Park in 2023/24, of which costs were split equally between Plymouth and Cornwall Councils;
- b) The adverse variation had been primarily caused by high energy costs, increased staff costs, reduced holiday let income, and unavoidable one-off repair and maintenance cost pressures;
- c) Unexpected repair and maintenance costs had included sewage repair works and replacement of play equipment due to health and safety concerns;
- d) The Joint Authority Subsidy had been removed in 2023 and a net-zero budget position would remain an ongoing target. This would rely on maximising opportunities for existing and future income streams;
- e) Work was ongoing between the Mount Edgumbe Team and Plymouth City Council Finance Team regarding approved and pipeline capital projects. These included works to refurbish the Orangery toilets as well as market development plans;
- f) Section four of the report identified risks to the 2024/25 revenue budget; these were largely based on previous year's outturn performance. An updated financial position would be provided at the next Joint Committee meeting in November 2024.

In response to questions, the Joint Committee discussed:

- g) For 2023/24 there had been approximately 8 Wedding Marquee Receptions and 25 Wedding Ceremonies held within the House. Prices had been benchmarked against comparable market rates and limited by the services the Park could offer;
- h) There was a small income from TV and Film however, this was sporadic and unpredictable;
- i) The £38,000 adverse variation for Holiday Let income was reflective of national trends, with the sector struggling due to cost of living pressures and poor weather. The Parks occupancy levels performed well in comparison to national averages.

The Committee agreed to:

- I. Note the financial position contained within the report along with the risks, issues and mitigating actions;

2. Note the Capital Programme.

9. **Strategic Management and Development Plan (CMP) for Mount Edgumbe Country Park**

Dan Cooke (Head of Protected Landscapes) delivered the Strategic Management and Development Plan (CMP) for Mount Edgumbe Country Park and discussed:

- a) Following the challenge of being set a net-zero budget, Park management had delivered brilliant work under a series of business and development plans. Building on this work, the Joint Committee had recently requested the development of a formal Conservation Management Plan (CMP);
- b) Through engagement with Historic England, the Management Plan would have a particular focus on inclusivity, and target engagement with underserved audiences. The CMP would cover a 10 year period from 2025-2035;
- c) Phase One of the CMP had been commissioned and would shortly begin, including surveys of 'non-formal' landscapes and 'roofless historic built assets' in the Park. The outcome of Phase One would be a full report detailing recommended priorities for the ongoing management of these assets;
- d) The completion of Phase One would help Mount Edgumbe secure Countryside Stewardship Funding, among other sources, for the financing of the required work;
- e) LandUse Consultants were the successful tenderer, and were therefore chosen as the delivery partner. This would enable the creation of a high tier Countryside Stewardship Agreement for funding via natural England. The cost of Phase One of the CMP was £50,000, with funding secured from National England and the Rural Payments agency;
- f) Phase One was anticipated to commence around the 01 August 2024;
- g) Phase Two of the CMP would be commissioned in around autumn 2024, with approximately £50,000 funding required. This phase would see surveys undertaken of everything not examined in Phase One, including the formal gardens, historic buildings and assets, and a documentation review including governance and future priorities;
- h) At the end of Phase Two, a full CMP would be complete, which would hopefully return to the Joint Committee in Summer 2025;
- i) Early consultation had already been undertaken including a survey hosted on 'Let's Talk Cornwall' and engagement with Parish Councils;
- j) An application for £50,000 to facilitate the commencement of Phase Two of the CMP was under development with the National Lottery.

In response to questions, the Joint Committee discussed:

- k) Early survey responses from public engagement had identified three clear priorities for the Park, and consultation would be ongoing;
- l) Engagement with underserved audiences would include communicating with veterans groups, school groups, disability groups, and community groups who were unable to access transport to the park.

Councillor Briars-Delve (Co-Chair) added:

- m) While it was essential that work on the CMP was prioritised, there was an acute need to ensure the work was of quality, that there was adequate public engagement, and that funding challenges were overcome. At the last meeting, the Joint Committee had set a provisional target of completion by November 2024 however, with the required steps identified, this target no longer looked feasible. As a result, there was a requirement for flexibility, with potential to hold an extraordinary meeting next spring/summer to scrutinise the development.

The Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the update;
- 2. To extend initial timescales for production of the full CMP to allow for necessary public engagement, attainment of funding, and required process to be undertaken;
- 3. To hold an extraordinary meeting in/around March 2025 (as required), to examine draft reports of the full CMP.

*(These recommendations were proposed by Councillor Briars-Delve, seconded by Councillor Ewert, and agreed unanimously.)*

## 10. **Park Manager's Report**

Chris Burton (Park Manager) delivered the Park Manager's report to the Committee and discussed:

- a) The size, assets, and protected status of the Park;
- b) Public engagement with the Park and visitor numbers, which would be re-surveyed through National Marine Park funding;
- c) The attainment of £1.4 Million in grants for the Park in the 2023/24 financial year alone, including £942,000 confirmed for repair of the Garden Battery, £320,000 for repair of the English Garden House, £50,000 for Phase One of the CMP, and £60,000 for repair of the Orangery toilets;
- d) Operational Park costs were around £1 Million per annum. While this had originally cost both constituent councils around £300,000-£500,000 per year, the Park was now largely self-funding;

- e) The Park had attained TripAdvisor's Travelers Choice of the Year Award for the third consecutive year;
- f) 734 voluntary days had been contributed since Christmas 2023, including significant partnerships with the Royal Navy (HMS Raleigh), Secure Forests CIC, and other corporate organisations;
- g) Replacement of the deer fencing was ongoing and would be completed by around Summer 2024, creating a Deer Park;
- h) The Woodland Management Plan had influenced planting and management within the Park, including grass cutting cycles, tree canopy thinning, and animal grazing;
- i) Stewardship negotiations were ongoing, and following completion of Phase Two of the CMP, would hopefully result in an income from DEFRA;
- j) The use of drones was being explored within the park for efficiently surveying the gardens and deer populations, as well as monitoring and cliff erosion. Staff were currently being trained on their use;
- k) Climate resilience was an emerging priority for the park. The East Lawn had recently been replanted with pest and drought resilient plants. Climate changes presented many challenges for the park, leading to extra works and expenses;
- l) The Cornish Black Bee project was performing well, and was popular amongst volunteers;
- m) Heritage Lottery funding had been secured to renovate the Garden Battery. Once finished, the battery would offer free public entry, detailing the history of Mount Edgcumbe, Cornwall and the Plymouth Sound;
- n) Funding from DEFRA, Historic England and the Friends of Mount Edgcumbe had been secured to facilitate restoration of the English Garden House. Repairs to the French Garden House would also be undertaken this year, and extensive repairs had been completed on the Main House roof;
- o) Weddings generated an important income for the park to help fund maintenance of the historic assets. It was recognised that the current marquee was nearing the end of its usability, and options were being explored for its replacement. Consultation was ongoing with Historic England to ensure designs were appropriate for the location;
- p) Around 20 events had been held this year including the Triathlon, Arm Chair Adventure Festival, Night Run, Caribbean Weekend and Doggy Days Out;
- q) Pressures for the park included Ash Dieback, storms and heavy wet weather;
- r) A working horse 'Duchess' had been introduced to the park in partnership with Deerfield carriages, who assisted with woodland management and tree removal. Another horse was expected shortly.

In response to questions, the Joint Committee discussed:

- s) Car parking charges had been reviewed and agreed by the Joint Committee in November last year. The new charges were not yet implemented due to the length and complexity of the process however, a 30 day period of consultation would shortly begin;
- t) As part of a review, Cornwall had recently handed over responsibility for cleaning/operation of the Cremyll toilets to the park. Options were being explored to transfer complete ownership of the block however, some maintenance was first required.

The Joint Committee agreed to-

- 1. Note the report;
- 2. Request a briefing paper on parking charges and enforcement.

11. **Friend's Of Mount Edgumbe Report** (Verbal Report)

Ben Church (Chair, Friend of Mount Edgumbe) delivered the Friend's Of Mount Edgumbe Report, and discussed:

- a) The vision of the Friends was to work in partnership with park management to fund joint or independent projects within the park and to support the park for the benefit of the public;
- b) At the AGM in April, Alan Drummond stood down as Chair due to ill health however, remained on the committee;
- c) During 2023, the Friends supported six projects, with a financial commitment of over £85,000. This included funding for bedding plants, statue repairs, the children's play module, deer park fencing, the formal gardens entrance, refurbishment of the Orangery toilets, and restoration of the English Garden House;
- d) Membership of the Friends continued to grow, standing at 800+ members;
- e) The Easter Egg Trail had proved a success, with over 400 children + parents attending. Plans were in place for the Annual Classic Car Show and Summer Fayre;
- f) The Friends continued to promote recruitment and voluntary activities, and a new membership enrolment system was being developed.

The Joint Committee agreed to note the report.

12. **National Marine Park Update** (Verbal Report)

*(Councillor Briars-Delve declared a personal (registered) interest as a member of the National Marine Park Horizons Board)*

Sharon Mercer (Head of Strategic Programmes) delivered the National Marine Park Update to the Joint Committee, and discussed:

- a) The purpose of the project was to create the UK's first National Marine Park. As part of the project there were three largescale gateways: Tinside Lido, Mount Batten and Mount Edgcumbe (Garden Battery);
- b) The project featured two Community Access Points: Ernesettle Creek and Firestone Bay. Engagement and work with communities was ongoing;
- c) As part of the nature boost programme, the Marine Park would host Species, Habitat and Carbon Credit programmes, as well as a Community Grass Programme;
- d) The National Marine Park would have a heritage and education focus, including a digital element to promote accessibility;
- e) The scheme also featured a large activity programme, promoting engagement and conservation of nature and the environment. As part of the Schools programme, 15 schools would be engaged with every year, and the Inspire programme would promote careers within the National Marine Park;
- f) Three rangers had recently been recruited, one of which would be predominantly based at Mount Edgcumbe;
- g) As part of the governance of the Marine Park, a collaboration agreement would be drawn up for Mount Edgcumbe;
- h) In each of the five years, a thorough evaluation would be undertaken to analyse successes and areas for improvement to engage further populations;
- i) Work at Mount Edgcumbe would begin in around May 2025. These delays were largely due to the Bat hibernation period. Prior to work commencing, it was necessary to complete engagement with design teams, conduct drainage survey and attain a Bat license;
- j) Children from South East Cornwall schools were currently conducting an archaeology camp at the park;
- k) The Marine Park would also facilitate an updated survey of visitor numbers;
- l) Engagement would be undertaken with the public to shape the nature and content of displays within the Garden Battery.

In response to questions, the Joint Committee discussed:

- m) The importance of multi-organisation engagement and collaboration in the National Marine Park to maximise opportunities.

The Joint Committee agreed to note the report.

**13. MEJC Tracking Decisions Log**

Elliot Wearne-Gould (Democratic Advisor) delivered an update on the Tracking Decisions log and discussed:

- a) A draft update to the Terms of Reference for this Committee had been completed, but would be subject to review and likely amendment during production of the Conservation Management Plan. As a result, the new Terms of Reference would be introduced following completion of the CMP;
- b) The new Off-street Parking Order was undergoing formal consultation before final approval;
- c) The remainder of tracking decisions could be marked complete.

The Joint Committee agreed to note the progress of the Tracking Decisions.

**14. Exempt Business**

The Joint Committee agreed to pass a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1,2&3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**15. Part II Minutes from November 2023**

The Joint Committee agreed the minutes of 10 November 2023 as a true and accurate record, subject to the amendment of one grammatical error.

*(Councillors Allison, Morton, Wood and Watkin abstained from this vote, as they were not present for the meeting held on 10 November 2023.)*

**16. Land and Tenancy Update (Verbal Report)**

This item was discussed under Part 2.

*(Please note, there is a sensitive part to this minute.)*

**17. Mount Edgcombe Country Park Annual Inspection**

*(Please note: the annual Mount Edgcombe Country Park Inspection took place after this meeting.)*



# Mount Edgumbe Joint Committee



Date of meeting:	15 November 2024
Title of Report:	<b>Mount Edgumbe Budget Monitoring 2024/25</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	Karime Hassan (Interim Strategic Director for Growth)
Author:	Christopher Burton, Mount Edgumbe Park Manager
Contact Email:	Chris.Burton@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	2024/25 Q2
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

This presents the Q2 position of Mount Edgumbe for the financial year 2024/25

## Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that Joint Committee:

- Notes the financial position contained in the report along with the risks, issues and any mitigating actions.
- Notes the capital programme

## Alternative options considered and rejected.

None

## Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This monitoring report links to delivering the priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan.

## Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Former years joint authority subsidy budgets were removed 2022/23 onwards.

The target budget ongoing remains a breakeven position, whereby circa £1.1m of income is currently budgeted to meet £1.1m of costs.

Opportunities to maximise existing and future income streams continues to be balanced against the need to meet rising costs.

## Financial Risks

A forecast 2024/25 £0.080m adverse variation would be subsidised equally by Plymouth CC and Cornwall CC. There are further risks that may increase the forecast level of overspend. Details are summarised in the report.

## Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None

## Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

## Appendices

\*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report title							

## Background papers:

\*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Sign off:

Fin	DJN. 24.25. 118	Leg	LS/00 0019 66/1/ AC/5/ 11/24	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Asset s	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Karime Hassan

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 06/11/2024

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications)

Date approved: 07/11/2024

**Section I****I.1 Q2 Revenue Position 2024/25 - Financial summary**

Business Type	2024/25 Budget			2024/25 Forecast			Variation to net Budget	Comments
	Income	Expenditure	Net	Income	Expenditure	Net		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		
Staffing & Operations	(15)	637	622	(15)	634	619	(3)	Salary savings
House	(27)	62	35	(36)	64	28	(7)	Insurance claim income
Gardens	0	14	14	(6)	20	14	0	
Grounds	(27)	158	131	(16)	152	136	5	Grant funding
Trading Activities:								
Alpacas	(9)	8	(1)	(8)	7	(1)	0	
Conferences	(1)	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Rents	(179)	45	(134)	(179)	60	(119)	15	Electricity cost
Chalets	(387)	0	(387)	(387)	0	(387)	0	
Parking	(108)	7	(101)	(86)	12	(74)	27	Adverse weather and delay in planned fee increase
Special Events	(27)	14	(13)	(27)	14	(13)	0	
Holiday Lets	(231)	125	(106)	(200)	122	(78)	28	Booking/Income pressure
Glamping	(16)	11	(5)	(10)	10	0	5	Forecast to not achieve net income target
Weddings	(70)	15	(55)	(60)	15	(45)	10	Booking/Income pressure
Filming	(1)	0	(1)	(1)	0	(1)	0	
Misc. Activities	(2)	3	1	(2)	3	1	0	
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>(1,100)</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,033)</b>	<b>1,113</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	
<b>Subsidy</b>								
Cornwall CC			0			40	40	
Plymouth CC			0			40	40	
<b>Total Deficit / (surplus)</b>			<b>0</b>			<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	

## 1.2 Commentary

The breakeven target budget, whereby circa £1.1m of income was budgeted to meet £1.1m of costs, is currently forecast not to be achieved in 2024/25.

A forecast £0.080m adverse variation will be subsidised equally by Plymouth CC and Cornwall CC. This £0.080m variation is largely due to increased energy cost, Holiday let income and parking pressures. Poor weather at key periods and delays in a planned fee increase has resulted in parking income targets being unachievable this year.

The context for this adverse position is that tourism in the South West is down. This downturn has particularly impacted outdoor based attractions with tourists instead preferring to plan activities not impacted by unreliable weather.

## Section 2

### 2.1 Revenue budget planning 2025/26

Initial budget planning work is underway for 2025/26. The joint authority subsidy was removed for 2022/23, and this will be the target ongoing. Opportunities to maximise existing and future income streams continues to be balanced against the need to meet rising costs.

## Section 3

### 3.1 Approved Capital Programme

Project	Funding	Prior Year	2024/25	2025/26	Total
		£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Mount Edgcumbe Orangery Toilets	Service Borrowing & FOME Contribution	122	13	0	135
Mount Edgcumbe Play Park	FOME Contribution & Revenue Contribution	20	0	0	20
Mount Edgcumbe Deerfield Carriages	Service Borrowing	5	53	0	58
Mount Edgcumbe English Garden House	FOME Contribution, Historic England Grant & DEFRA Grant	0	326	0	326
Mount Edgcumbe Marquee	Development Funding	0	20	0	20
		<b>147</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>559</b>

### 3.2 Capital Commentary

Mount Edgcumbe have a Capital Receipt available of £198k from the sale of a chalet. £9k of this was used for the purchase of a Mower, leaving £189k remaining for use. The Capital Receipt has been ringfenced to be used as match funding for a bid put forward for a new Marquee. However, £12,500 of this Capital Receipt had to be used to purchase a new flatbed truck. This is not yet on the Capital Programme as it is currently going through the CPOG Approval process. This then leaves £176,500 of Capital Receipt available. £20k of Development Funding has been approved to cover the cost of works required to submit a grant funding bid for a new wedding marquee. If successful, the project will be financed by Grant and the remaining Cap Receipt. It must be noted that Development Funding must be repaid once the grant bid is successful. If the project is unsuccessful, all costs related to the project will be classed as abortive costs and will be charged to revenue.

Approval was granted for works to begin on the Orangery Toilets in preparation for the 2024 wedding season. This project has been financed by £60k of Service Borrowing and a £60k contribution from the Friends of Mount Edgcumbe (FOME). The Service Borrowing repayments will be financed by the income generated from the weddings booked. It was decided that there would be a risk of loss of wedding bookings due to the current state of the Orangery Toilets.

A new Play Park was installed in the Barrow Centre due to the previous equipment being deemed unsafe and unusable. The new Play Park is made from carbon fibre, meaning that the asset will have a longer life than the previous equipment which was made from wood. The project has been financed by a £8k contribution from FOME and the remaining £13k has come from a revenue contribution.

Works have now begun on the Deerfield Carriages project. Two horses have now been purchased and the stables have been built. This project has been fully financed by Service Borrowing with the loan repayments being paid for by the income generated from the Deerfield Carriage rides.

The English Garden House project was approved in September 2024 and works are currently underway. This is being financed from a £20k contribution from FOME, £50k grant from Historic England and £256k grant from DEFRA. This project must be completed by 31st March 2025 as per the grant terms & conditions.

## **Section 4**

### **4.1 2024/25 Risk Register**

Risks are recorded below to reflect those activities that may happen and could affect the monitoring position.

<b>Mt Edgcumbe financial risks</b>		<b>£'000s</b>
Achieving the 2024/25 target break-even budget	There are further risks that may increase the forecast level of overspend. This includes repairs and maintenance, with most budgets having been exhausted at this period of the year.	tbc

## **Section 5**

### **5.1 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Joint Committee:

- Notes the financial position contained in the report along with the risks, issues and any mitigating actions.
- Notes the capital programme.

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# Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee



Date of meeting:	15 November 2024
Title of Report:	<b>Park Activity to November 2024</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader of the Council, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	Karime Hassan (Interim Strategic Director for Growth)
Author:	Chris Burton (Park Manager)
Contact Email:	chris.burton@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	n/a
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

The report provides an update on activities in the park from July 2024 to Nov 2024

## Recommendations and Reasons

The Joint Committee will be asked to note the update.

## Alternative options considered and rejected

n/a

## Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

In line with the Council's priorities, the Park provides a vibrant cultural offer.

## Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

None. The financial implications are set out in the revenue monitoring report, which is included as a separate agenda item.

## Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

n/a

## Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

n/a

**Appendices**

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Park Manager's Report							

**Background papers:**

\*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

Fin	N/A	Leg	LS/0 0001 966/ 2/AC /5/11 /24.	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Asset s	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: David Draffan											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes, Karime Hassan Date agreed: 06/11/2024											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader of the Council, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) Date approved: 05/11/2024											



## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This report informs members of the major new works and activities conducted since July 2023.

## **2.0 Park Matters**

- 2.1 The Park has seen a busy summer season with over sixteen events. Sadly, it has not been the best of summers weather wise, and this always impacts on visitor numbers at the Park. This has been reflected nationally with a downturn of around 20% in visitor numbers and holiday let stays within the Southwest region. This combined with the cost of living crisis has meant a challenging summer season for the Park and its business partners.
- 2.2 The Park won the Trip Advisor 'Peoples Choice' award for the third year running which put us in the top 10% of attractions in the world.
- 2.3 The Park has completed a major refit of the Orangery toilets, which allows them to remain open to the public and event guests during private functions, and has provided a much-needed face lift after 30 odd years. The build was a challenging one but was delivered on time before the wedding season. The Friends of Mount Edgcumbe Country Park (FOMECP) contributed to almost half of the costs, and it would not have been possible without their financial assistance. The space is now welcoming, bright and easier to clean being fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- 2.4 Work on the English Garden House (a Grade II\* Listed Georgian 'Pleasure House') has commenced thanks to funding from DEFRA, Historic England and FOMECP. Initially works will focus on roof repairs and will run into the New Year, during which the building will be scaffolded and covered. Bat mitigation works are also in place along with guidelines from Natural England for the works. The building will be sympathetically restored in partnership with Historic England appointed Conservation Architects.
- 2.5 The Park has appointed consultants, funded through Natural England, to produce an application for Higher Level Stewardship (now known as the Environmental Stewardship Scheme) that will go forward for consideration this spring. This will provide a ten-year plan for the historic Grade I Listed landscape, taking note of both nature conservation and the importance of the historic structures in the Parkland, and providing funding on an annual basis for the management of those assets. The Ranger Team and Management Team have been working closely with the consultants LUC, on what is a key bit of work for the Park over the next few months.
- 2.6 The Park will take over the countryside stewardship scheme payments of the Deer Park with a new scheme from next year and will work with the existing grazier to keep this site in favourable condition. This will form part of the deer park Stewardship application that will involve capital investment on non-roofed structures and revenue for maintaining the woodland pasture landscape. Sadly, stewardship money does not pay for roofed structures and formal gardens and funding for those will need to be sourced elsewhere.
- 2.7 The Ranger Team has almost completed the fencing of the Deer Park. This has included the building of several new gates and deer leaps. This work has been boosted by help from Royal Navy recruits through a partnership with Secure Forests and HMS Raleigh. The fence is heading towards completion now with an aim to complete by the end of the calendar year. A deer census took place in the winter of 2023, in order to assess population and inform management. There has been a deer herd at the Park since 1515 and it is an integral part of the landscape. The existing deer fence was in a very poor state for many years.
- 2.8 Drainage work has been completed on the Garden Battery and despite predictions against it ever working again, the drains have been cleared and probably work for the first time in 50 years! The Garden Battery is a National Lottery Heritage Fund project; It was awarded £942,000 this year as part of the National Marine Park New Horizons gateway site to Plymouth's National Marine Park and will act as a 'Heritage Hub' for the whole Marine Park.

Public consultation will take place in the New Year about what stories the Garden Battery can tell.

- 2.9 The Park will shortly be submitting a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) which if successful, will commence in Summer 2025 and likely take 9-12 months. This will allow time to undertake a programme of public consultation to inform the 10 year plan. The CMP will consider the historic significance of MECP and provide an integrated approach, including other park management objectives such nature recovery and opportunities for more people to enjoy the Park. It will guide day-to-day management, maintenance, conservation and restoration, visitor access and facilities, business planning and a longer-term vision. This will guide the management of this important Grade I Registered Park & Garden with Grade II\*/II Listed buildings landscape for the next decade, and will help set priorities for both the built and natural landscape. The CMP will consider the historic significance and provide an integrated approach, including other land management objectives such as the interests of wildlife, habitats, environmental gain and opportunities for people to enjoy the Park. We will undertake a programme of public consultation to inform a 10-year plan for the whole of MECP to guide day-to-day management, maintenance, conservation and restoration, visitor access and facilities, business planning and longer-term vision.
- 2.10 The Garden Team have planted new formal beds on the east lawn; these will be both drought and deer resistant. The new beds reflect the sea with silver and blues and will be fully established over the next couple of seasons. They have been planted to also extend the blooming season and provide some colour all year round.
- 2.11 The Park now has a fully trained forestry horse called Duchy who is working with the Ranger Team to extract wood and help manage the woodlands according to the woodland management plan. She is able to sensitively manage woodlands for amenity rather than commercial forestry by getting into places where otherwise clear fell would be needed to get a tractor or machine in.
- 2.12 The Park has been recording our world-class assemblage of Wax Cap fungi. To put this into context to be internationally important a site has to have 22 species we have 28 so far identified in the Park. We have a species which is on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list and another that is threatened with global extinction. A species-specific management plan is underway to help the Park manage this very important habitat.
- 2.13 The Park has 8 new Jacobs lambs born this spring and will be using those as a conservation grazing flock throughout the Park. The Park now has pigs, alpacas and horses all performing services to and for the Park. They are always a very popular attraction to the Park's visitors, and this is reflected in Trip Advisor reviews.
- 2.14 A major section of Drystone wall or 'Cornish Hedge' has been completed in partnership with Secure Forests by the Artists Platz. This is part of the old wall line that framed the lower gardens, and has been a great partnership and an opportunity for local ex-servicemen and Park Rangers to learn new skills. This is one of a number of small-scale projects in which the Park has been able to utilise a workforce from Secure Forest training courses and students.
- 2.15 We have completed 3,750 volunteer hours over the last reporting period. This demonstrates the huge value of volunteers to the Park as well as the importance the Park has for people's wellbeing, whether they are part of a city business on an away day, an individual volunteering, or a group undertaking an arranged activity. We have had particular success with local businesses having team building and away days such as EE, DWP, Babcock and the Land Registry.
- 2.16 Ash Die Back surveys were completed again this summer with work already taking place on many trees around the Park. Trees that need to be felled will be removed and those that are infected monitored for the level of infection. It is a sad fact that we will lose many of the ash

trees, but these will be replaced where possible with other species. All of the major Estates are struggling with this at the moment.

- 2.17 Rhododendron removal continues to take place throughout the Park, with a particular focus on the Penlee area over this winter. This has proved a popular task with our Royal Navy Volunteers, and young fit bodies are a big help to us in this regard.
- 2.18 The National Camellia Collection has received some new planting of some particularly rare cultivars and will be the subject of a major overhaul next year.
- 2.19 Work on the main House has included roof restoration work on all four turrets along with drainage improvements to help cope with sudden large downpours that are now an all too regular occurrence as the climate changes.
- 2.20 The maintenance team have carried out a series of major repairs to the upper floor windows of the Barrow Centre this has involved scaffolding, removing the windows and replacing frames. This window work has been the large part of their work in this reporting period along with the phased replacement of benches and upper turret room revamps in the main house.
- 2.21 The House has now closed for the season with visitor numbers slightly up on last year but more importantly, we have been able to run on a guided tour system negating the need to pay two stewards. This has been challenging once or twice due to staff illness but on the whole has worked.
- 2.22 It has been a poor year in terms of weather, and this has impacted on the Parks 'Events Programme' quite considerably. Some events had to be cancelled, and many were poorly attended due to weather. This does demonstrate the validity of passing on the 'risk' of events to an events organiser though. A shining success however was the Armchair Adventure Festival which blessed with better weather, saw larger numbers than ever over 4,000 tickets sold and was able to generate a bigger income for the Park.
- 2.23 Car parking was reviewed last year with a view to increasing hourly rates. This is undertaken on a five yearly basis rather than yearly because the process is slow and onerous. Following complications with the governance and legal approval process to approve the new charges, the process is expected to be completed on 3 December 2024, following public consultation.
- 2.24 This year's wedding season will see 8 marquee receptions and 25 house ceremonies proving to be a successful year despite the challenges faced with a degraded marquee, and the cost-of-living crisis. All told, that is a similar year to last year. Next year is looking very challenging however and the whole wedding market has seen a reduction across the South West.

### **3.0 Summary**

- 3.1 The Park has had a good year in terms of fundraising and addressing some of the buildings, and built heritage issues, notably the Garden Battery, English Garden House, and Orangery toilets. The CMP will be a significant piece of work during 2025 but will encompass and update the many management plans that we have at present. It will provide direction and set priorities for the next ten years.
- 3.2 The Park has been impacted by the cost of living crisis, through energy bills and wage rises. Business has been difficult with such a poor summer impacting on holiday let and parking revenue. However, we are still very close to achieving the ambition of the Park being substantially self-sufficient and have raised nearly £1.4 million in grants this year alone and there are opportunities next year to attract funding from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme grant from next year onwards will help bring in extra revenue as well as potential capital receipts from chalet sales.

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**MOUNT EDGCUMBE JOINT COMMITTEE**

Tracking Decisions Log 2024 - 25



**Please note that the Tracking Decisions Log is a 'live' document and subject to change at short notice.**

For general enquiries relating to this Committee, please contact Plymouth Democratic Support, on 01752 398261

Meeting Date	Resolution	Officer Responsible	Response
12 July 2024	The Joint Committee agreed to request a briefing paper to clarify parking and enforcement charges at the next meeting.	David Marshall/Chris Burton	An update on this will be brought to the next meeting in November 2024.
12 July 2024	The Joint Committee agreed to extend initial timescales for production of the full Conservation Management Plan (CMP) to allow for necessary public engagement, attainment of funding, and required process to be undertaken;  The Joint Committee agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting in/around March 2025 (as required), to examine draft reports of the full CMP.	Tamsin Daniel / Chris Burton / Victoria Pomery.	An update on the progress of the CMP will be brought to the next meeting on November 2024. An extraordinary meeting will be scheduled in March as required.
12 July 2024	To extend invitations to appropriate organisations and bodies, to put forward nominations for Co-option to the Joint Committee, in order to provide appropriate advice, specialist expertise and enhance democratic engagement. These bodies would include organisations such as Natural England, Parish Councils & Protected Landscapes.	Elliot Wearne-Gould (Democratic Advisor)	Invitations to nominate representatives for Co-option have been sent to relevant bodies. An update will be provided at the next meeting in November 2024.
Friday 10 November 2023	Agreed to support the principle and proposed terms for a new Off Street Parking Order, as set out in the report;  Recommended to the appropriate Cornwall Council Cabinet Member, that Cornwall Council revokes the 'Cornwall Council Off-street	Chris Burton Councillor Richard Williams-Pears	An update on the progress of the Parking Order will be brought to the next meeting in November 2024

	Parking Places at Mount Edgumbe Country Park Order 2018', and introduces a new 'Off-street Parking Places at Mount Edgumbe Country Park Order 2024', on the terms set out in the report.	Elliot Wearne-Gould	
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The following relates to exempt or confidential matters (Para(s) 1, 2, 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Govt Act 1972). A breach of confidentiality could prejudice the Council/person/body concerned & might amount to a breach of the councillors /employees codes of conduct.

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