

Oversight and Governance

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Published 14 November 2019

Mount Edgumbe Joint Committee

Date: Friday 22 November 2019
Time: 10.00 am
Place: Belvedere Room, Barrow Park Complex, Mount Edgumbe, Cremyll, Cornwall

Committee Members–

Plymouth City Councillors-

Councillors Mrs Beer, Corvid, Mrs Johnson, Mavin, Mrs Pengelly, Peter Smith and Vincent (Co-Chair)

Cornwall Councillors-

Councillors Burden, Crago, Foot, Pugh, Lennox-Boyd and Nolan and Trubody (Co-Chair)

Co-opted Members-

Sir Richard Carew Pole Bt., Mr D L Richards and Mr Neil Rugg

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 - <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/accesstomeetings>

Tracey Lee and Kate Kennally
Joint Clerks

Mount Edgumbe 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 - 6)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2019 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. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/20

(Pages 7 – 12)

6. Park Activity (To November 2019)

(Pages 13 - 20)

7. Friends Of Mount Edgumbe Country Park Update

(Pages 21 -22)

Mount Edgumbe Joint Committee

Friday 19 July 2019

PRESENT:

Councillor Vincent, Joint Chair in the Chair.

Councillor Trubody, Joint Chair.

Councillors Mrs Beer, Burden, Corvid, Foot, Kelly (substitute for Councillor Johnson), Lennox-Boyd, Mrs Pengelly and Rennie (substitute for Councillor Smith).

Co-opted Representatives: Mr D L Richards and Mr Neil Rugg.

Apologies for absence: Councillors James, Mavin and Pugh and Sir Richard Carew Pole Bt.

Also in attendance: Rob Andrew (Cornwall Council), Nick Butcher (Plymouth City Council), Chris Burton (Plymouth City Council), James Hatton (Cornwall Council), Sharon Heard (Plymouth City Council), Peter Marsh (Cornwall Council), David Marshall (Plymouth City Council), Nicola Moyle (Plymouth City Council), Helen Prendergast (Democratic Advisor) and James Reed (Plymouth City Council).

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.02 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. **To Note the Appointment of the Joint Chairs (Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council)**

The Joint Committee noted the appointment of Councillor Vincent (Plymouth City Council) as Joint Chair and Councillor Trubody (Cornwall Council) as Joint Chair.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made by Councillors in accordance with the code of conduct.

3. **Minutes**

The Joint Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2018.

4. **Chair's Urgent Business**

Councillor Vincent (Joint Chair) advised that there had been issues with arranging for Plymouth City Council substitute members for this Committee, as the Mount Edgumbe Terms of Reference only permitted named substitutes (one per political Group).

The Joint Committee agreed to recommend to each constituent authority that the Terms of Reference for Mount Edgcombe be amended to allow any Member to be able to act as a substitute at the joint meeting.

Order of Business

With the permission of the Chair, the order of business was changed and is reflected in the minutes.

5. South East Cornwall Strategic Transport Update

James Hatton (Cornwall Council) and Rob Andrew (Cornwall Council) provided the presentation on the update on the South East Cornwall Strategic Transport which highlighted the following key points –

- (a) Transport Planning and Strategy Team;
- (b) issues and opportunities which included -
 - local constraints and seasonal pressure on the network (HGVs and coaches identified as a particular issue);
 - funding for infrastructure improvements were difficult to secure due to lack of significant housing and employment growth;
 - Community Network Highways budget could be utilised for minor local improvements;
 - opportunity to increase the offer at Mount Edgcombe;
 - wider projects the economic viability of water based services (Tamar River Links);
- (c) South East Cornwall cycle/walking trails network -
 - a network of new trails in South East Cornwall would improve connectivity, support more active life-styles and increase tourism/leisure offer;
 - three key routes – East Looe, West Looe and East Looe to Cremyll;
 - match funding of £3.5m from Economic Development to progress the design work and business case as well as for land negotiations and acquisition; the development phase was expected to be completed by the end of financial year;
 - an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty bid to the LEADER programme for

increased cycle parking and way marking at the Country Park, as part of the existing National Cycle Route Two scheme;

(d) Rame Peninsula transport management scheme -

- Rame Peninsula traffic management study 2014 – general review of the traffic conditions; this included investigating the potential of a circulatory traffic system around the peninsular and managing restrictions through the villages;
- phase two study focusing on Anthony junction and the circulatory traffic system;
- recommended option – Anthony junction design option 4 ‘orbital junction with restricted moves’ alongside the introduction of a circulatory system;
- the programme to progress this scheme was currently being agreed.

The main area of questioning from Members related to whether consideration had been given to re-opening of the old railway line from Wacker Quay to Tregantle Fort.

Councillor Trubody (Joint Chair) considered that the Joint Committee and both of the constituent authorities should support the proposed Torpoint passenger land jetty, as part of the wider water transport access scheme, as this would provide an opportunity to run a ferry service from Torpoint to Cremyll/Mount Edgcumbe.

6. **Revenue Outturn 2018/19 and Budget 2019/20**

James Reed (Technical Accounting Officer) presented which provided an update on the financial position of the Park and detailed the key variations to the budget.

The report highlighted –

(a) key variations to the budget -

- £63,000 reduced borrowing charges in 2018/19, reduction in salary overtime, salary savings, capitalised salaries and transfer from reserves;
- £46,000 increased vehicle repair work, refuse and cleaning costs;
- £27,000 less rental income than budgeted (funding for new unit conversions re-purposed affecting this financial year);
- £18,000 less holiday let income due to Captain Blake’s huts coming online later than budgeted;
- £19,000 additional parking income;

- £38,000 numerous items – net saving in gardens forecast due to receipt of 2017/18 income, more income from special events and miscellaneous activities;
- (b) the subsidy reduced from £112k in 2017/18 to £95k in 2018/19 (per constituent authority); future years were subject to ongoing reviews.

The main area of questioning related to whether there had been Ash die back in the Park.

The Joint Committee noted –

- (1) the financial position contained in the report along with the risks, issues and any mitigating actions;
- (2) the capital programme and proposals to be presented to Plymouth City Council.

7. **Wedding Business Analysis**

Chris Burton (Park Manager) and Sharon Heard (Commercial Business Analyst) presented the Mount Edgcombe Wedding Commercials Review which highlighted the following key areas –

- (a) why do a commercial review -
 - to investigate why marquee books were declining and how this could be improved;
 - the review was an opportunity to look at options to increase bookings and income;
- (b) review context included -
 - cost and pricing;
 - customer and booking analysis;
 - customer survey;
 - service review of both positive and negatives of the wedding offer;
- (c) pricing analysis;
- (d) headline recommendations included -
 - update prices and create packages;
 - improve the flexibility of wedding viewings;
 - redesign the brochure;
 - creation of a profit and loss account.

The main areas of questioning from Members related to whether –

- (e) consideration had been given to seeking the views of Cornwall Council's Registration Service with regard the proposals from the review;
- (f) consideration had been given to providing echo wedding packages at the Park;
- (g) the limited amount of accommodation within the Park had an adverse effect on the bookings for weddings;
- (h) consideration had been given to holding a wedding fayre at the Park;
- (i) the lack of communication/publicity regarding the accommodation that was now available at the Park;
- (j) funding had been set aside for the replacement of the marquee.

The Joint Committee noted the issues raised from the presentation.

8. **Report on Park Activity (June 2019)**

Chris Burton (Park Manager) presented the Park activity report that highlighted the works and activities carried out in the Park which included the following –

- Park matters;
- building and Park infrastructure;
- events;
- business development;
- weddings.

The Park had received £95,000 from each of the constituent authorities in 2018/19 which was a reduction of £35,000 from previous years. Whilst the capital investment in revenue creating streams had started to generate income, there would need to be expenditure on infrastructures within the Park which would have an effect on the budget going forward.

The holiday let business continued to flourish. The profit margins would increase with the higher earning properties coming on line. Car park revenue and rents were performing well. However, weddings and conferences were areas for concern.

The Park had a record year for the number of events that it hosted. The Park through its entrepreneurial approach had managed to deliver more for its users whilst at the same time reduce spending. However the long term feasibility of reaching a zero budget depended largely on the successful conclusion of the Trennow chalets lease consultations which presented a unique opportunity for the Park to invest in its future.

The main areas of questioning from Councillors related to whether –

- (a) appointing Cornwall Council to undertake the grass cutting in the Park would reduce costs;
- (b) the events held in the Park were marketed;
- (c) the grazing of animals was currently taking place within the Park.

The Joint Committee noted the report.

9. **Friends of Mount Edgumbe Country Park Update**

Neil Rugg, Chair of the Friends of Mount Edgumbe Country Park provided an update on the key areas of work that the Friends undertook in supporting the Park which included financial and practical support and social events.

The report highlighted –

- (a) the current membership of the charity was 600; the members played a significant role in supporting the Park both financially and practically; the total level of financial support from the Friends, since 1985, was £830,000;
- (b) following the previous meeting of the Joint Committee, quarterly meetings had been established with Park management which would enable more formal dialogue to take place and result in the compilation of a list of priorities for the Park (which would comply with the charity's Constitution);
- (c) the Friends reiterated their concerns on the apparent shortfall between the Park budget and the requirement to maintain buildings and plant in a safe and useable condition; the charity would like to see the results of a comprehensive audit which would provide a realistic guide as to how fast the aim of reducing the budget to zero could be achieved;
- (d) the Friend's Lodge had now been completed, following planning permission in January 2019 and was not situated behind the Gardener's Lodge.

The Joint Committee was advised that the ambition of both constituent authorities remained the same to achieve a zero budget. In order to achieve this both authorities had undertaken a £1.3m capital programme of investment in the Park, to safeguard its future. The work and financial support (£830,000) of the Friends was recognised as vital for the Park.

On behalf of the Joint Committee, the Joint Chairs thanked the Friends for their continued and highly valued support.

Mount Edgumbe Joint Committee



| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Date of meeting: | 22 November 2019 |
| Title of Report: | Revenue Budget Monitoring 2019/20 |
| Lead Member: | Councillor Peter Smith (Deputy Leader) |
| Lead Strategic Director: | Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place) |
| Author: | Christopher Burton, Mount Edgumbe Park Manager |
| Contact Email: | Chris.Burton@plymouth.gov.uk |
| Your Reference: | n/a |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Confidentiality: | Part I - Official |

Purpose of Report

This report presents an update of the financial position for the Mount Edgumbe Joint Committee for financial year 2019/20.

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 and proposals to be presented to Plymouth City Council's Investment Board

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:

A forecast nil variation to budget was reported to the Joint Committee and the final outturn is a nil variation to budget.

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.

Monitoring of commercial project delivery times and ensuring they perform in accordance with budgets set, with continued focus to sensibly capitalise on existing assets, to generate new and / or more income as soon as possible.

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

| 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 | Briefing report title | | | | | | | |
| B | Equalities Impact Assessment (if applicable) | | | | | | | |

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> | | | | | | |
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Sign off:

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| Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Nicola Moyle | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Anthony Payne Date agreed: 13/11/2019 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cabinet Member approval: [electronic signature (or typed name and statement of 'approved by email/verbally')] Councillor Peter Smith Date approved: 14/11/2019 | | | | | | | | | | | |

Section I**Revenue outturn 2018/19 - Financial summary**

| Business Type | Activities | | | 2019/20 Budget | | | 2019/20 Forecast | | | Variation to net Budget | Comments |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|-------|------------------|-------------|-------|-------------------------|--|
| | Previous Year | As at Now | Increase / decrease | Income | Expenditure | Net | Income | Expenditure | Net | | |
| | | | % | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | |
| Staffing & Operations | | | | (53) | 580 | 527 | (53) | 593 | 540 | 13 | |
| House | 8,030 | 7,410 | -8% | (41) | 41 | 0 | (41) | 41 | 0 | 0 | Visitor admissions |
| Gardens | | | | 0 | 13 | 13 | 0 | 13 | 13 | 0 | |
| Grounds | | | | (27) | 102 | 75 | (27) | 102 | 75 | 0 | |
| Trading Activities: | | | | | | | | | | 0 | |
| Conferences | 16 | 6 | -66% | (8) | 5 | (3) | (8) | 5 | (3) | 0 | Bookings |
| Rents | 39 | 42 | 8% | (185) | 28 | (157) | (185) | 28 | (157) | 0 | 42 Units let 43 Total |
| Chalets | 81 | 81 | 0% | (76) | 0 | (76) | (76) | 0 | (76) | 0 | Units let 21 year Lease from 2020 |
| Parking | | | | (94) | 3 | (91) | (110) | 3 | (107) | (16) | N/A |
| Special Events | 18 | 13 | -37% | (41) | 31 | (10) | (41) | 31 | (10) | 0 | Does not include SAT park run |
| Holiday Lets | 651 | 702 | 8% | (121) | 63 | (58) | (121) | 66 | (55) | 3 | Days occupied -Max poss 183 days per let |
| Glamping | 115 | 125 | 9% | (11) | 5 | (6) | (11) | 5 | (6) | 0 | Days occupied -Max 109 per hut |
| Weddings | 26 | 24 | -8% | (26) | 8 | (18) | (26) | 8 | (18) | 0 | Wedding Functions |
| Filming | 2 | 0 | -100% | (1) | 0 | (1) | (1) | 0 | (1) | 0 | |
| Misc. Activities | | | | (5) | 0 | (5) | (5) | 0 | (5) | 0 | No Measurable comparison |
| Total Operations | | | | (689) | 879 | 190 | (705) | 895 | 190 | 0 | |
| Subsidy | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cornwall CC | | | | (95) | 0 | (95) | (95) | 0 | (95) | 0 | |
| Plymouth CC | | | | (95) | 0 | (95) | (95) | 0 | (95) | 0 | |
| Total | | | | (190) | 0 | (190) | (190) | 0 | (190) | 0 | |
| Deficit / (surplus) | | | | | | 0 | | | 0 | 0 | |

1.2 Commentary

Key variations to budget can be summarised as:

- £13k Additional staffing
- (£16k) Additional Parking income
- £2.8k Utilities pressure Lady Emma's Cottage

Staffing & operations

Salary cost increase pressure due to per temps working on projects.

Trading activities

Holiday Lets:

- New lets completion slower than original timetable, due to additional works required. Income re-profiled during budget preparation.

Parking:

- Income increased by higher parking tariffs and new parking machines have been introduced.

Subsidy

Remains at £95k per-authority in 2019/20 but future years subject to ongoing review. Please see appendix I for prior year subsidy trend analysis.

Section 2

2.1 Revenue budget planning 2020/21

Budgets are a work in progress due to joint authority subsidy yet to be finalised and review carried-out of commercial project delivery timetable. Budgets will progress savings targets, future income streams (includes parking and events) and revenue implications of capital projects proposed.

Section 3

3.1 Approved capital programme

| Scheme | Funding | Prior year spend £ | 19/20 Budget £ | Total Scheme £ |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Commercialisation | Loan (50% CCC & 50% PCC) | 372,159.28 | 264,310.72 | 636,470 |
| Cremyl Car Park | Loan (50% CCC & 50% PCC) | | 70,000.00 | 70,000 |
| | | 372,159.28 | 334,310.72 | 706,470 |

Section 4

4.1 Risk Register

Risks are recorded below to reflect those activities that may happen and could affect the monitoring position, but are not currently included in the latest forecast.

| Topic | 2019/20 Risk Details | Risk Value £000s | Risk H/M/L | Mitigation £000s |
|---|--|---------------------|---------------|--|
| VAT to be charged on wedding packages | HMRC advice re 4 year backdated £34k repayment due. 19/20 & future bookings need to comply. | £28k | H | 34k total pressure to be funded: 6k remaining historical reserve balance 14k PCC pressure 14k CCC pressure Potential for £28k pressure to be reduced through proactive efforts to delay or reduce other 19/20 revenue spend. This will be reassessed at month 9 and 19/20 forecast possibly amended. |
| Overspend of 18/19 capital programme, currently without approved funding solution | Former year £650k capital project for Cremyl Quay has overspent the EA grant funding available by £52k. Cornwall Council has advised that £26k is now due from PCC to fund 50%. | £52k | H | Decision now required regarding how overspend is to be funded. PCC & CCC Capital Finance teams to progress. |

Section 5

5.1 Recommendations

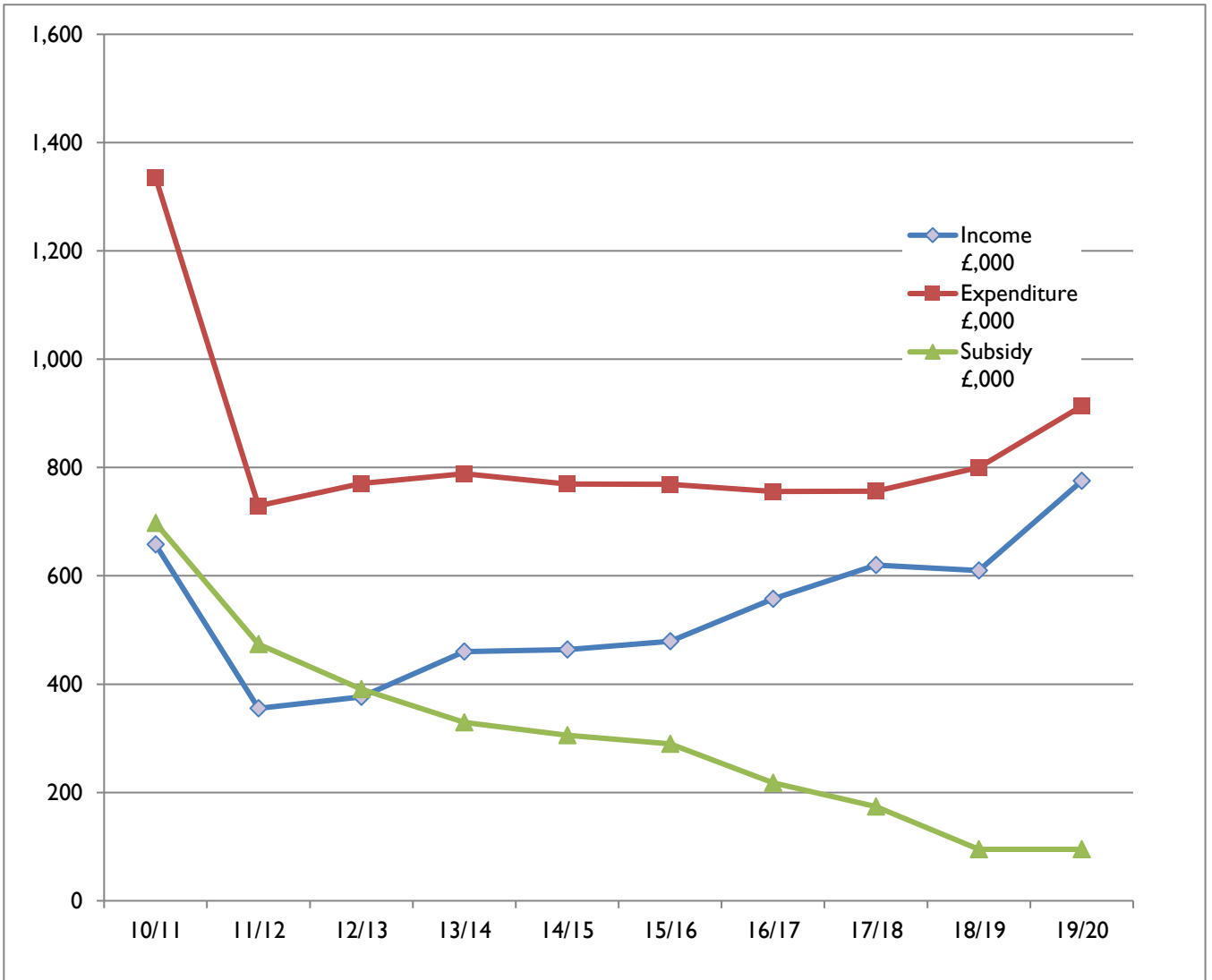
It is recommended that Joint Committee:

- Notes the financial position contained in the report along with the risks, issues and any mitigating actions
- Notes the capital programme and proposals to be presented to Plymouth City Council's Investment Board, subject to a detailed business case

Appendix I

1.0 Income & Expenditure V's subsidy

Financial performance over the last 10 years.



Note

Financial year 2019/20 represents projected income and expenditure, based on current budgeted projects. It is also expected that as more commercial income is achieved the subsidy will be reduced.

Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee



| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Date of meeting: | 22 November 2019 |
| Title of Report: | Park Activity to November 2019 |
| Lead Member: | Councillor Peter Smith (Deputy Leader) |
| Lead Strategic Director: | Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place) |
| 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 in the 2018/19 financial year to the end of November 2019.

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:

n/a

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

*Add rows as required to box below

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| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| A | Briefing report title | | | | | | | |
| B | Equalities Impact Assessment (if applicable) | | | | | | | |

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.

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Sign off:

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| Originating Senior Leadership Team member: David Draffan | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Anthony Payne Date agreed: 14/11/2019 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cabinet Member approval: [electronic signature (or typed name and statement of 'approved by email/verbally')] Councillor Peter Smith Date approved: 07/11/2019 | | | | | | | | | | | |

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report informs members of the works and activities carried out since July 2019.

2.0 Park Matters

- 2.1 Lady Emma's Cottage was purchased from the owner in September 2018 and since then has been fully booked, justifying its purchase as a Park asset. The cost of this sale was covered by a donation from the Oak Foundation.
- 2.2 The Orangery Gatehouse holiday let has been completed and is very busy, aimed at the wedding market this is a one bedroom property adjacent to the Orangery with fantastic views across the Sound.
- 2.3 Captain Blake's Retreat has been fully booked since it was launched on the 1 June 2019. November 2019 has been the first opportunity to get into the building and snag it since it was opened all seems to be going well and it has very positive feedback despite the trek involved getting to it.
- 2.4 Work on Cremyll car park has been completed with the car park resurfaced and parking bays delineated. Parking as a whole contributes around £90,000 for the Park. Early indications show that we are likely to receive in excess of £2,000 per month more in the summer months from this car park. A balance will have to be sought between local car parking permits and pay as you park customers in the summer. The price of the annual car parking permits have not risen since April 2011.
- 2.5 Cremyll Lodge and Horseshoe Cottage are our oldest holiday lets and will receive a makeover this winter as part of the continuing maintenance regime of the property portfolio.
- 2.6 The new and exciting holiday let development of The Coastguard Lookout at Rame Head has gone out to tender and work will commence before the new-year. This will be a fully accessible property. New fully accessible public toilets will be completed first before the old block is converted into a stunning one bedroom let with amazing views out onto St Michaels Chapel and the English Channel.
- 2.7 Initial design concepts for the Tree House are being drawn-up to be put forward to Planning at Cornwall Council with the hope of starting construction next autumn.
- 2.8 An interpretation board is completed on Lawrence of Arabia telling of his involvement with Air Sea Rescue at RAF Mount Batten and his visits to the Park.
- 2.9 Funds are being sought for the repair of the access road to the Barrow Centre, which has become very uneven and subject to flash flooding and dust storms in the summer (not very pleasant when you are having lunch at the Stables). The cost of these repairs however is likely to be around £25,000 and beyond the Park's routine maintenance budget. A business case will be prepared.

- 2.10 The Park had taken delivery of a triple mower and a Suzuki ride-on mower from Plymouth City Council and the gardeners are very happy with their new equipment. These are the first new big pieces of machinery for some considerable time.
- 2.11 The Park's trees feature in the Corporate Risk Management Strategy. The Rangers are continuing to carry out the work involved with the 'Quantifiable Tree Safety Risk Assessment' (QTRA) and are now able to follow national best practice in assessing tree safety in the Park. The Park now has a Tree Safety Management Plan in place. A temporary Ranger has been hired to deal with the huge backlog of work and is working on the digitisation of the Parks tree records and reports.
- 2.12 The Park welcomes eight Austrian volunteers on ten month placements through the KONA European Programme. This is a fantastic scheme that enables us to manage the Gardens and wider Park with only three Gardeners and three Rangers, long may it continue.
- 2.13 The clearing of fallen trees after storms and the number of times the Park is closed due to high winds is on the increase. It is interesting to note that this is a symptom perhaps of the effects of global warming and is likely to have a greater impact on the Park in the future. Certainly all our rangers spend more time than they used to, clearing up and making safe after storms, this continues to put pressure on capacity.
- 2.14 A new addition to the relic garden has been created by the gardeners utilising some of the interesting stone work uncovered by the creation of the Black Bee Reserve.
- 2.15 The Black Bee Reserve had a very good year this year, only three years ago the group had just one colony, this year there were close to 50. Black Bee colonies are being spread around the Rame Peninsula and we have had our first real harvest of honey. Through the 'Polinize' project the Mount Edgcombe apiary has been able to supply colonies of Black Bees to The Box and Theatre Royal - all good news for biodiversity.
- 2.16 The Park continues to play a full role in the planning for Mayflower 400 and will participate in the opening and closing of the light festival Illuminate.

3.0 Buildings and Park Infrastructure

- 3.1 The English Garden House has been regraded to Grade 2* by Historic England and as such will be eligible for grants to restore it. In the first instance this will involve securing emergency funding to replace the roof and protect the assets from further deterioration due to weather ingress something that has been a problem since the lead was stolen some time ago. The building featured in the launch of Historic England's 'Buildings at Risk Register', on BBC Spotlight.
- 3.2 Lighting connections and supply have been replaced and updated at the Folly, Orangery and the French Garden as part of the legacy of 'Illuminate' and 'Mayflower 2020' funding. This will mean that not only will part of the Park be illuminated this year from the 28th November - 1st December but an infrastructure legacy will enable the Park to consider future lighting of the Folly.
- 3.3 New steps have been installed from the Barrow car park and associated landscaping has helped separate people from traffic and helped to mitigate the wash out of the footpath during storm periods.

- 3.4 The Barrow Centre was looking rather tired and has received a makeover.
- 3.5 Wifi has been installed in the bottom of the Park and the holiday-lets at Cremyll and Orangery Lodge now have internet access.

4.0 Events

- 4.1 On 13 July we hosted a Proms event in the Park hosted by a third party organiser which was well received by the audience – the feedback via social media was incredibly positive.
- 4.2 We also hosted a very well attended Ice Cream Festival on 21 July which greatly benefitted from some fine weather. Attendance was estimated at around five thousand people.
- 4.3 The 4 August 2019 saw the return of the annual Mount Edgumbe Classic and American Car Rally run jointly by Friends of Mount Edgumbe Country Park and Cornwall Hospice Care (supported by Park staff) which was blessed with good weather after a couple of showers early in the day. Attendance was estimated to be around the 10,000 mark. For the first time this year the Police and the Fire Brigade attended as part of the show.
- 4.4 Miss Ivy Events hosted two successful events in August – Jazz and Gin and a Summer Fete – both proved popular with our car parks over-run and overflow parking put in place.
- 4.5 On 7 and 8 September 2019 saw the Sealed Knot using the Lower Park for their displays and plans are afoot for a possible expansion of the event in 2020.
- 4.6 September 2019 also saw us hosting our first Street Food Festival with a mixture of music and food on offer held in the early evening which again struck a chord with the public and was well attended.
- 4.7 On 15 September saw the return of the ‘Doggy Day Out’ which suits the Park very well and provided lots of fun for the canine friendly attendees.
- 4.8 In October 2019 the Park hosted the annual return of the Land Rover Discovery event (the Land Rover Discovery was launched at Mount Edgumbe in October 1989).
- 4.9 On 27 October 2019 the Friends of Mount Edgumbe Country Park Halloween Hunt was incredibly well received with 425 families taking part (in excess of 1,500 people). Our thanks to Ged Edgumbe and Jacquie Maynard for a year’s worth of organising and making to create such a wonderfully funny (and scary) trail.
- 4.10 Throughout the summer holidays and into September Mount Edgumbe Country Park hosted a major part of St Luke’s Hospice ‘Elmer’s Trail’ (Plymouth). This took two years of planning to deliver but proved its worth as many thousands of people followed the trail over the period with the focal point of the trail bringing visitors into the Barrow Centre.

5.0 Business Development

- 5.1 The Park continues to develop its holiday let portfolio, it has eight holiday lets at the moment and will have 10 by 2022. Those coming on line now are likely to have higher profit margins as they are predominantly higher end properties, service costs for lower grades are more or less the same as higher grades.
- 5.2 The Park Manager and Business Development Manager attended the 'Old Houses New Tech' Symposium based at Antony House and are pursuing ways of enhancing the collection through digital media. This would be launched with the forthcoming Blitz display but would have longer term legacy. This could take the form for instance of allowing the characters in the paintings of the house to come alive and tell their stories on peoples phones. It is hoped that this will draw in a new tech savvy younger audience to the House.
- 5.3 Holiday let occupancy strategies for summer periods and peak periods are being reviewed this year in partnership with Classic cottages. Short term lets maybe replaced with week only bookings.
- 5.4 Initial Planning for the 'Blitz 80' exhibition is taking place. Designs have been drawn up and rooms allocated to the display, the Metta Catrina will be decanted next winter and the display launched on the anniversary of the bombing of the House during the Plymouth blitz on 21 March 1941.
- 5.5 The Park has a propeller from the Lancaster Bomber that crashed on the Breakwater during the Second World War and hopes to turn into a memorial to those aircrew that were killed in and around the Park. The propeller has now completed its desalination period.
- 5.6 Initial discussions are taking place along with valuation reports in preparation of the lease renewal at Treninnow Chalets. This has the potential to considerably raise revenue income for the Park and is critical in terms of driving towards a zero budget for the Park.
- 5.7 Bookable guided house tours have provided a significant income this year and will be continued throughout the year. As a 'bookable product' along with Plymouth hotels, boat operator and other attractions such as Elizabethan House and 'The Box' we are amongst a very few attractions that have been focused on because we are offering a Mayflower Tour of the House – the House was 73 years old when the Mayflower sailed past on her way to the American continent.
- 5.8 The Park has had a poor year in terms of conferencing perhaps due to market uncertainty. Despite its best efforts the Park (certainly in the field of large conferences) remains too difficult to get to. Bespoke small events are the way forward and we have seen a number of away-day packages and small third sector conferences.
- 5.9 The house shop made a small but notable profit this year after an investment in some stock.

6.0 Weddings

- 6.1 We have recently received revised advice in relation to the VAT status of weddings which changes the VAT status for our venues. In 2008 and 2012 Park staff checked and recorded the VAT advice which (at that time) confirmed weddings as zero rated. The HMRC's policy on wedding venue income was clarified in 2016 as the result of a series of tribunals on the interpretation of VAT legislation. The new advice (received at the end of August 2019) is very clear in stating that weddings need to pay VAT and that this should be retrospectively backdated over the past three years.

This will have a budgetary impact on the Park. Weddings are sold at least two years in advance and those weddings that already have contracts signed in good faith (without VAT applied) will now take place with little or no profit for the Park. This will mean that although bookings have gone up after considerable work by the staff this will be cancelled out in the short term by the new interpretation. VAT was added to the price for all weddings sold from the moment this information was received. The Park has commissioned an independent review of the pricing structure of this business stream with the help of PCC, this looked at comparative markets and prices have been adjusted accordingly. A presentation to the Joint Committee on this topic was given at the last meeting.

7.0 Summary

- 7.1 The Park continues to grow its revenue stream and holiday lets and car parking continues to provide increasing levels of income. The Park and its workforce continue to meet these new challenges in the way we work, and how we generate income so that the Park can remain a first class Country Park for the people of Plymouth and Cornwall to enjoy free of charge.
- 7.2 The overall picture of expanding income streams and a drive to reduce LA contributions has taken a couple of unforeseen hits this year. The decision to implement VAT advice and back date it along with several building infrastructure costs, in order to meet legislative requirements, has counteracted what has been a good year for several business streams in terms of income.
- 7.3 Quick win days are over in terms of increasing income streams and negotiations such as Treninnow chalet leases are still the most likely way of establishing a firm sustainable growth platform for the Park.

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The Friends of Mount Edgcumbe Country Park
Report to the Joint Committee, 22 November 2019

Membership

Membership is open to all who wish to support and assist the Park in preserving, maintaining and enhancing the amenities available for the benefit of all users.

The number of members currently remains around 625. While the total constitutes a minor percentage of those visiting the Park the input from the members in financial and practical terms is significant.

Financial Support

The Charity Commission has provided new guidance for charities with a connection to a non-charity and The Friends are in the process of revising its General Policy to take this guidance into account in our association with the Park Management. The guidance also provides greater clarity on where The Friends are 'permitted' to provide financial support and is likely to mean that while we may be sympathetic to requests for funding of certain items they will fall into the category of those that have to remain the ultimate responsibility of the Joint Committee.

Quarterly meetings with the Park Management will result in a mutual prioritisation of projects. We are in the process of investigating a significant improvement to the toilet provision at the Orangery and the creation of a shelter structure for use by school groups in inclement weather.

While we understand the drive towards the Park being self-funding we remain concerned on the apparent shortfall between the Park budget and the requirement to maintain the buildings and plant in safe and useable conditions. The Friends again request that a comprehensive audit of the condition of the Park, its buildings, contents, vehicles and plant be undertaken to provide a realistic guide as to how fast the aim of reducing the support budget to zero could be achieved.

Since the last meeting of this committee the Friends purchased a replacement 'Bat Cam' system to enable the bats in the Stable Block to be viewed without disturbance

Practical Support

People join The Friends because they care about the Park and our aim is to persuade more of the members to join the ranks of those who volunteer to help in a practical way. The majority of volunteers are members of The Friends and they drive the buggies, act as house stewards, assist the gardeners and rangers, make the costumes for the 'dressing up' room in the House, and provide traffic management advice. The Friends provide volunteers for the Park and third party organised events including The Proms and Wondernights.

Social and Other Events

The Friends aim to provide an annual programme of social events catering for a wide range of tastes and ages. Since July 2019 we have, jointly with Cornwall Hospice Care, organised the Annual Summer Fayre/Classic Car Show in August and also organised a children's Halloween Trail in October. The Fayre was the most successful ever and raised over £37,000. Since 1995 the event has raised over £320,000

shared between the two charities. Last year's difficulties in accessing the event were overcome by the employment of an alternative traffic management contractor. Similarly the Halloween event attracted a record number of children.

Friends Lodge

The Friends vacated the Orangery Lodge in May 2018 to facilitate its conversion to a holiday let. A replacement wooden lodge behind the Gardener's Lodge was opened in May 2019, acting as an information point for visitors to the Park and to raise funds through the sale of pre-owned books. Since then it has raised over £3,000 and the total annually is expected to be 2 to 3 times higher than achieved in the original location.

Website

Our website has been refreshed to appeal to the younger generation, to stimulate a greater attendance to our events and an increase in the funds available to support the Park.