

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Park Programme of Activities
Committee: Mount Edgumbe Joint Committee
Date: 6 November 2015
Cabinet Members: Councillor Smith (Plymouth City Council)
Councillor Mrs Duffin (Cornwall Council)
CMT Members: Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place, Plymouth City Council)
Peter Marsh (Head of Commissioning and Asset Management, Cornwall Council)
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Ref: MEP /gen
Key Decision: No
Part: Part I

Purpose of the report:

This report provides an update on activities in the park from May to September 2015/

The Brilliant Co-operative Council Corporate Plan 2013/14 -2016/17:

This report on park activity links to delivering the priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan by delivering excellent services and increasing levels of earned income.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land:

The current programme of activities are contributing to the delivering of the 2015-16 financial plan for Mount Edgumbe.

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

Increased risk management will need to take place to manage the impact of the challenging financial position.

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

The Joint Committee notes the information.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Revised Jul 2013

None.

Published work / information:

None.

Background papers:

None.

Sign off:

Fin		Leg		Mon Off		HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member Nicola Moyle													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the content of the report? Yes / No													

1.0 Introduction

This report informs members of the works carried out since July 2015. It also updates members on events and current bookings within the Park.

2.0 Park matters including High Level Stewardship

- 2.1 PWH Surveyors have been appointed (via a previously outlined selection procedure) to oversee the capital element of the Natural England High Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme for Mount Edgcumbe. A joint process has been agreed between PWH and Plymouth for the tender process for the detailed work packages. These will be placed by December 2015 for work to be completed by August 2016.
- 2.2 The Gardeners have been busy stripping out and making way for their plans for 2016 planting.
- 2.3 A new garden which was funded by the Friends of Mount Edgcumbe Country Park (FOMECP) has been created in the Barrow Centre which will soon be home to a centrepiece sculpture donated by the FOMECP marking the 500th anniversary of the first major Edgcumbe structure on the Peninsula – the deer wall.
- 2.4 With help from Cornwall Council the Park team have patched holes in the sea wall at Cremyll and along the front of the Artist Platt (the bowling green area in front of the Great Hedge).
- 2.5 General HLS work continues with fence work, scrub clearance and tree management.

3.0 Building and Park infrastructure

- 3.0 Work has been undertaken (and continues) in and around the Barrow Centre to uplift and refresh the general presentation of the built environment. This work will be ongoing – with the notable exception of the Christmas Fayre period (see below).
- 3.1 A comprehensive fire audit has been completed for the Orangery with a view to expanding the occupancy capacity of the building for events. Fixtures and fittings work to the fabric of the building has been completed in line with advice to meet the requirements and in due course we expect the permitted capacity to increase from 150 to 200 persons.
- 3.2 A schedule is being drawn up for the annual over-winter maintenance in the main House.

4.0 Walks, Talks and Workshops

- 4.1 Between August and December we will be hosting 12 in-house talks, walks and creative workshops including an in depth focus on the historic paintings in the House, felt workshops, garden tours, dowsing for beginners, bat walks and an introduction to the furniture collection.
- 4.2 In addition Mount Edgcumbe has hosted two major art installations as a part of the Plymouth wide 'Acts of Making' festival of contemporary craft (working with Plymouth's Arts and Heritage team and Crafts Council England). Workshops (with the artists) were delivered on-site here at Mount Edgcumbe.
- 4.3 Park staff worked with the FOMECP to deliver their annual Halloween Hunt on Saturday 31 October.

5.0 **Conferences**

- 5.1 ME staff worked very hard to transform the House, Earl's Garden Marquee and the Belvedere into a conference centre to host the Plymouth College of Art 'Making Futures' conference (24 and 25 September). This international conference was a great success and the venue proved very popular with the delegates who travelled here from across the world. The House was then set for a wedding on the Saturday and reset again to open as a public attraction on the Sunday.
- 5.2 Mount Edgcombe hosted the South West Rangers Forum in the Belvedere – with over 40 Rangers from across the whole of the south west region attending. Following a presentation about Mount Edgcombe the forum concentrated on issues such as best practice in retaining volunteer support.

6.0 **Weddings**

- 6.1 We currently have 18 weddings and 9 marquee receptions on the books for 2016 with the Christmas and Valentines rush still to come. That compares with 24 weddings and 7 marquee receptions delivered in 2015.

Feedback from clients indicates that having both a fully serviced reception venue (the Orangery) and 'free choice' option (The Marquee) is often what draws them to the Park.

The current trend of the bookings where we are seeing more marquee only receptions returns a higher revenue per booking to the park taking into account the man power required operate them which is reflected in the current booking value. Achieving a balance of offering the widest choice to clients and meet their highest expectations, whilst utilising the minimum manpower to safely deliver the event but still returning the highest revenue is a primary concern.

7.0 **Events**

- 7.1 Since the last Joint Committee meeting the team has delivered 'Run to the Fun' the South West Scouts Jamboree. This international gathering attracted young people from all over Europe and during the week on-site the camp site hosted 2,500 scouts with the venue proving to be a great success despite some difficult weather conditions at the beginning of their stay. The organisers have vowed to return in 4 years' time – the normal cycle for these events.
- 7.2 The Classic Car Rally on the first Sunday in August was blessed by a rare day of sunshine and once again the event attracted around 11,000 visitors. For the first time visitor satisfaction surveys were undertaken suggesting that the public really enjoy the format. Congratulations to the FOMECP and to Cornwall Hospice Care for a well organised day.
- 7.3 The Military Vehicle Trust event – Mount Edgcombe at War – went off with a bang and a crash this year as visitors enjoyed an investigation of warfare through the ages – from the Vikings to Vietnam. The Saturday proved very popular, but the weather closed in for the Sunday. However the organisers (working closely with Park staff) are much encouraged by the public's response and have already indicated that they wish to work with us to grow the event further.

- 7.4 The Sealed Knot weekend at the beginning of September was also well attended (although always a smaller event in aspiration) it is well suited to the area around the Tudor Blockhouse.
- 7.5 We also worked in partnership with the Ocean Film Festival World Tour to screen one of their films in the Italian Garden. 259 people bought tickets in this the first joint venture of its kind at Mount Edgcumbe.
- 7.6 As this is written we are looking forward to working with our commercial tenants to deliver an Open Day for the Barrow Centre on 30 October. This will include all the traders, plus local arts and crafts stalls, live music, workshops, demonstrations, children's activities and a prize draw.
- 7.7 In October we will also be working with the Flyers Disc Golf operators to deliver the first 'Disc Golf National Championship' hosted at Mount Edgcumbe. The event is already attracting the fledgling stars of this new sport and has generated considerable press coverage.
- 7.8 Plans are well advanced for the 2015 Christmas Fayre (12 and 13 December). Once again the event will be bigger than ever – with additional floor space and stallholders adding to the spectacle. The mix of the 'offer' is carefully structured so that nothing is repeated or in direct competition – but each year the diversity increases – as does the entertainment. We hope that Joint Committee members can join us from 10.00 each day.

8.0 Occupation of Rentable Business Spaces

- 8.1 We have recently decanted the artefacts in the Wheelwrights Workshop to create a new display beside the Fire Station in the Barrow Centre. This has allowed us to bring in a new commercial tenant to rent the old Wheelwrights to create a new gallery space.
- 8.2 A bid has been received for Unit 6 to convert it into office space for a commercial tenant – this is being processed with a view to the new tenancy starting at beginning of November.
- 8.3 Following notice from The Parlour tenant (unit 1) at the end of September, there have been two expressions of interest by new applicants. These will be investigated along with another possible strand of income development.

9.0 Park Manager Update

- 9.1 Following interviews in September, a new Park Manager, Chris Burton will be joining the park team in mid-December. Chris is currently working in Tanzania and will be relocating back to Cornwall to take up his new role. Chris is a trained ecologist and has had previous experience running parks in this both this country and abroad.