

## PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

**Subject:** Report on Park Activity to September 2017  
**Committee:** Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee  
**Date:** 20 July 2018  
**Cabinet Members:** Councillor Peter Smith and Councillor James  
**CMT Members:** Anthony Payne (Plymouth City Council) and Peter Marsh (Cornwall Council)  
**Author:** Chris Burton - Park Manager  
**Contact details:** T: 01752 822236  
E-mail: chris.burton@plymouth.gov.uk  
**Ref:** MEP /gen  
**Key Decision:** No  
**Part:** I

---

**Purpose of the report:**

This report provides an update on activities in the park.

---

**Corporate Plan:**

Delivering excellent services.

Maintaining service through income generation.

---

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

None.

---

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

None.

---

**Equality and Diversity:**

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

---

**Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:**

The Joint Committee notes the information.

---

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

N/A

---

**Published work / information:**

N/A

**Background papers:**

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7

---

**Sign off:**

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

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This report informs members of the works and activities carried out since September 2017.

## **2.0 Park Matters**

The Black Bee Reserve has received more funding from Tesco and has allocated this to an Observation Hive, Queen rearing hive and Bee Cam. They have also received money from the community fund to put a roof on the observation area. A Bee club has been started with Four Lanes End and Carbeile schools and electrical supply has been installed to the reserve and Garden Battery.

- 2.1 The house shop has had a new makeover and stocking. The impact of this has been obvious by the record turnover of almost £1000 a day and daily shop taking up by some 50%. There has also been a Flog It effect on house admissions which are expected to be much higher this year.
- 2.2 An interpretation board is completed on Captain Cook and will join Lawrence of Arabia in the Park. There will also be a Cook display in the house using material gathered in the development of the interpretation board. It is hoped to work on the general Park board this summer also.
- 3.0 The Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (HLS) is completed and the claim sent to Natural England.
- 3.1 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 good deal of tree safety work took place over winter.
- 3.2 The Park has been granted a sum of £14,000 from the Friends of Mount Edgcumbe in order to draw up an Heritage Lottery (HLF) bid for the English Garden House, this has gone out to tender at the time of writing with proposals in by the 30 November. The money for this bid is part of a gift of £70,000 from the Oak Foundation.
- 3.3 The 'Garden Team' has had numerous groups of international students helping with the garden work as well as the normal weekly volunteers groups. This year we had two ten month placements Elias and Christina from Austria, both are living in the Ranger flat and have taken to life here in Mount Edgcumbe with great zeal. We will have a further nine German placement student for six weeks over the summer.
- 3.4 Repairs to the French Gardn pond have been completed thanks to a donation from the 'Friends'. A number of leaky pipes in the Park have been repaired over the winter months. This has shown a marked reduction in our water bill.
- 3.5 The Elizabeth II Knot Garden is now maturing into a very beautiful garden indeed.
- 3.6 The location of the miniature railway has moved to 'Earls Halt' at the bottom of the Park at the top of the lime avenue. This has enabled a more extensive circular layout. It is hoped to be giving rides to the Park visitors in the school holidays.

## **4.0 Buildings and Park Infrastructure**

- 4.1 Work is underway to convert the Orangery Lodge to a holiday let. Initial works fixing a very leaky roof and chimney are underway and the concrete render has been removed from the outside of the building allowing the building to dry out and breathe once more. The concrete render will be replaced with a breathable lime plaster render. Work will soon commence on the inside of the building. The orangery lodge will be open for business for the Christmas season.
- 4.2 The Park has continued to be shut at nightfall which has helped greatly with security and parking issues. This has been enabled by having a resident gate keeper in West lodge. West Lodge itself has been made habitable and is lived in by our new handyman/gatekeeper role.
- 4.3 There is now a pay and display machine at Rame Head car park, this has been raising £1000 a month over the last couple of months compares to around £150 in the honesty box. This will enable cleaning costs of the toilets to be covered along with remedial works to the carpark.
- 4.4 The honesty box at Maker carpark is still ticking over and makes around £250 per month. There are new carpark charges for the Park and early indications indicate that this will generate significant revenue increase for the Park. They had not been raised for some six years.
- 4.5 A new generic Mount Edgcumbe Leaflet is available.
- 4.6 The Park has a new low mileage land rover that will help replace the ageing fleet of vehicles and also provide us with a more suitable wedding vehicle. This along with two new chainsaws has been part of the phased replacement of some very ancient equipment.
- 4.7 A new 'Buggy' has been purchased by the 'Friends' and along with our volunteer drivers is moving people around the Park, chiefly between the Cremyll ferry and Barrow Centre.
- 4.8 The HLF bid for English Garden House is nearing completion and will be submitted for the August deadline. This is the last round of the Heritage Enterprise Scheme so is fiercely competitive. It is a strong bid however and should it not be successful then it can be submitted again when a new fund is launched.

## **4.0 Events**

- 4.1 Between November and July we hosted over 12 events; the season got off to a great start with the increasingly popular Easter egg hunt organised by the 'Friends' this event grows every year and is very popular with local families 744 children and over 2000 people visited the Park.
- 4.2 The Park hosted a Pink Floyd tribute band gig that had amazing weather and was a great success. An all ticket event 500 tickets sold out in two weeks. This was third party event which netted the Park some £1000 for little involvement and risk. It is likely that this event will be repeated and lessons learnt (more beer tents) will be incorporated.
- 4.3 The 'Fairy Fest' was a great success this year with a new world record for a gathering of Unicorns!

- 4.4 A 'Mind and Body' event took place in the Earls Garden this was a privately-run event that made the park some £1000.
- 4.5 Miss Ivy events continue to run events at the Park and the Doggy day, Jazz and Gin, and Great British Summer Fete' out series of events continues to be very popular with four legged as well as two legged customers. The park continues its policy of having more events but passing the risk onto event Companies in return for a percentage of profit. .
- 4.6 'Paddle Fest' also took place for the second year running and raised money for Military charities as well as the Park. It is hoped to widen the audience for next year's event and have more people from the Public involved in all things with paddles.
- 4.7 The Green Man was a great success with over 8,000 people visiting during the weekend of particular interest was the medieval pageant by the 'Age of Chivalry'.

## **5.0 Business Development**

- 5.1 The park continues to develop its holiday let business stream it has three holiday lets at the moment and will have four by Christmas with seven by 2022. These will account for over £150,000 of revenue income after costs for the Park, and as such form a major contribution to the Parks revenue stream.
- 5.2 The Parks Shepherds Huts are doing much better this summer after the late release last year.
- 5.3 Negotiations over the installation of a high ropes course are still under way.
- 5.4 Planning application for a holiday let at Rame Head adjacent to the 'Coastwatch' building has been sought from Cornwall Council. New purpose built fully accessible toilets will be constructed in the old generator store.
- 5.5 Holiday let occupancy targets are being met and exceeded.
- 5.6 The Park has started recouping the electricity savings as a result of the switch over to LED initially the savings offset the loan for the installation works.
- 5.7 The Park now has WIFI coverage to all its main buildings.
- 5.8 The House has now reached capacity in terms of letting out empty or redundant rooms. We now have an accountant's office, ceramics storage area and the Lyhner River Barge CIC, all renting office space.
- 5.9 Captain Blake's (Wiggle YMCA) hut on the cliff is about to start work and will be completed for next summer's holiday let season.
- 5.10 The cleaning contract for the Park has seen its first year with Kernow Maid; this will represent a £12000 saving a year for the Park and allow a more flexible operation, focusing cleaning time on seasonal demand.
- 5.11 Some £6,000 worth of income has been generated for the Park from filming over the last year, and it is hoped that this will continue to be a regular, if unpredictable, income stream for the Park.

5.12 The Park has produced a new conference pack for the conference season but has yet to reach its targets in terms of conferencing income.

## **6.0 Weddings**

6.1 The wedding business is some £20,000 down on last year's takings and as such the Park Manager has introduced an out of hours consultant on a percentage of sales, this has brought in £10,000 worth of bookings since the winter months but these are for future years. The key problem is one of operational flexibility and being open to calls in the evening and weekends.

### **Summary**

Through good housekeeping and increased revenue the Park will generate a surplus this year. This will be further enhanced as the income generating components of the commercial capital works begin to kick in this financial year.

Hard surface degeneration particularly on the concrete tracks, tree safety works and an aging fleet of vehicles will however place an increasing burden on the finances of the Park over coming years.