

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Park Manager's Report
Committee: Mount Edgumbe Joint Committee
Date: 23 November 2018
Cabinet Members: Councillor Peter Smith and Councillor James
CMT Members: Anthony Payne (Plymouth City Council) and Peter Marsh (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 in the 2018/19 financial year to end of June 2018.

Corporate Plan:

Plymouth City Council:

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

Cornwall Council:

2018-22 Business Plan:

Healthy Cornwall

Homes for Cornwall

Green and prosperous Cornwall

Connecting Cornwall

Democratic Cornwall

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 | | | | | | |
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Sign off:

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| Fin | Pl.18.19 .141 | Leg | n/a | Mon Off | Lt/3158 5/1411 | HR | n/a | Assets | | IT | | Strat Proc | |
| Originating SMT Member: David Draffan | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Has the Cabinet Member agreed the content of the report? Yes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report informs members of the works and activities carried out since July 2018.

2.0 Park Matters

- 2.1 The Park now owns Lady Emma's Cottage having purchased the property from the owner. The cost of this sale will be covered by a donation from the Oak Foundation. Plymouth City Council capital funding was sought for the purchase. Therefore the Park will receive a high end holiday let that will generate £30,000 of income for the Park, for free! The house came with a number of bookings so we were able to achieve income the day after exchanging. The existing cleaning and management regime are being kept in place in the short term to have a seamless change over for the customer.
- 2.2 The house shop has had a new makeover and stocking. The house saw a rise in visitor income of some 20%.
- 2.3 Work on the steps from Barrow car park has been completed as the old steps became dangerous after flash flooding in the summer. The new steps seem to have been positively received.
- 2.4 An interpretation board has been completed on Lawrence of Arabia telling of his involvement with Air Sea Rescue at RAF Mountbatten and his visits to the Park.
- 2.5 Funds are being sought for the repair of the access road to 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 well beyond the parks maintenance budget. Funds from reserves are hoping to be sought.
- 2.6 The Park now only has one operating boiler therefore there is no back up. The boiler no longer has spares available. Costs for replacement are around £60,000.
- 2.7 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. A temporary ranger Tamar has been hired to deal with the back log of work.
- 2.8 The Heritage Lottery (HLF) bid for the English Garden House has been carried out by PWH along with Park staff. HLF have however withdrawn their current funding stream the one we were applying for! We are all waiting to see what the new one looks like. The money for this bid is part of a gift of £70,000 from the Oak Foundation.
- 2.9 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 have also taken on a further long term volunteer Marlene who is working with the Garden Team. We will have a further 4 German placement student for 6 weeks over the winter.
- 2.10 A major push to repair steps throughout the Park has taken place. Along with a rotational repair of Memorial Benches.
- 2.11 The clearing of fallen trees within the Amphitheatre has been a major part of the rangers work load this summer.

- 2.12 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. The railway started giving rides this summer.

3.0 Buildings and Park Infrastructure

- 3.1 Work is now well underway to convert the Orangery Lodge to a holiday let. The roof has been largely replaced as it was rotten and a major led work scheme completed. The render has been replaced with breathable lime plaster. Chimney supported and the second fit has now commenced. The orangery lodge will be open for business for the spring season.
- 3.2 Work on Captain Blake's Hut at Wiggle Beach has commenced and will be completed by March.
- 3.3 Planning for conversion of Rame Head toilets to a holiday let has been approved. Work will commence in the spring. Brand new multi-access toilets will be moved to the old Coast Guard generator shed.
- 3.4 Plans for the tree houses are to be submitted next year but are likely to be amended now that we own Lady Emma's Cottage, current thoughts are to have one really nice one.
- 3.5 Yew Tree Cottage in its first year of operation has been meeting its booking expectations and is well liked with a high rating in customer feedback.
- 3.6 There is now a pay and display machine at Rame Head car park, this should raise in excess of £6,000 this financial year. This compares to around £150 in the honesty box and nothing before that. This will enable cleaning costs of the toilets to be covered along with remedial works to the car park.
- 3.7 The honesty box at Maker car park is still ticking over and makes around £250 per month. There are new car park charges for the Park and early indications show that this will generate significant revenue increase for the Park. They had not been raised for some six years.
- 3.8 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. Consultation with Plymouth City Council about ex street services equipment is taking place.
- 3.9 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.

4.0 Events

- 4.1 We hosted a new event on 30 June and 1 July – the Mind, Body and Spirit event in the house and the Earl's Garden marquee with pop-up tents leading to the Barrow Centre and workshops throughout the weekend hosted in the Belvedere. The event was a great success and the organiser has already booked the same weekend for next year (the Park received 10% of the ticket take at £650).
- 4.2 On 8 July we hosted the South West British RX Cycle event in the Deer Park.
- 4.3 On 21 and 22 July we hosted the Great British Summer Fete in the lower park (10% of gross turnover Miss Ivy Events).

- 4.4 5 August - the Mount Edgcumbe Classic Car Rally – the 25th year of this event was a great success. The organisers (Friends of Mount Edgcumbe and Cornwall Hospice Care) had been under a little pressure to ensure that the traffic management for the event was tightened up – with two sets of three way traffic lights being required. The organisers also chose to double the cost of public parking (from £5 to £10) to focus the motorist on car sharing or considering alternative travel arrangements. The decision was also led by the difficulty in providing change fast enough to get cars off the public highway. With a new internal management regime with four lanes of inbound traffic with more volunteers taking money this worked very well and to date the organisers have not received any complaints. The event itself was a great success – 2019 will see some more innovations and new entertainment options.
- 4.5 8 and 9 August – Plymouth National Fireworks Competition – Park staff and volunteers from the ‘Friends’ raised £2,300 by providing parking and asking for a contribution.
- 4.6 12 August the Park hosted the British Cycling SW Series Cycling Finale in the Deer Park.
- 4.7 17 and 18 August the Park hosted Plymouth Arts Centre outdoor screening of Mama Mia and Pans Labyrinth which yielded £500 for the Park.
- 4.8 28 August – 3 September the Park hosted Mount Edgcumbe at War (Cornwall Military Vehicle Trust).
- 4.9 9 September – Abba Tribute Band – Artist Platt.
- 4.10 9 September – Downhill Cycle Race – Edge Cycles - Deer Park.
- 4.11 15 and 16 September – A Doggy Day Out – Miss Ivy Events – Lower Park (10%).
- 4.12 13 October – Land Rover Discovery Event – Friends take donations.
- 4.13 28 October – Friends Halloween Hunt – donations taken for entry at £3.00 for 298 families.

5.0 Business Development

- 5.1 The Park continues to develop its holiday let business stream it has 4 our holiday lets at the moment and will have six by Spring 2109 and 8 by 2022. These will account for around £120,000 of revenue income after costs for the Park and as such form a major contribution to the Parks revenue stream.
- 5.2 The Park’s Shepherds Huts did much better this summer after the late release last year.
- 5.3 Two new businesses are now resident in the Barrow Centre a photographer and an architect.
- 5.4 ‘Wonder Nights’ a major light and laser show will take place this Christmas season in partnership with one of our commercial tenants Richard Toy. This will be a ticketed event that takes place in the evening in the Earls Garden and part of the house will be ‘transformed’ into a ‘wonderland’ of light and shade. This event will piggy back the already established Christmas Fayre and creates a new dynamic offer.
- 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 Initial planning for the 'Blitz 80' exhibition is taking place.
- 5.9 Initial discussions are taking place along with valuation reports in preparation of the lease renewal at Treninnow Chalets. This has the potential to raise a large amount of revenue income for the Park and should be the final game changer in terms of driving towards a zero budget for the Park.
- 5.10 We are working directly with Visit Plymouth and Visit England on an initiative called US Connections – which has already been launched at the Chicago Travel Trade Fair – by partners Visit Britain.

We are carried 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.

The US Connections campaign starts now with a £500,000 boost from the treasury for VisitBritain to promote the UK and its Mayflower connected cities to the American Market as a brand new product. This starts in 2020 but is intended to continue after that following further 400 anniversaries.

- 5.11 Some £5,000 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 pounds down and still an area of concern. The key problem is one of operational flexibility and being open to calls in the evening and weekends.

7.0 Summary

- 7.1 The Park has worked to a £95,000 budget from the two local authorities this year a reduction of some £34,000 it looks as if this target will be met. Whilst capital investment in revenue creating streams is starting to show fruition in terms of income there are as mentioned above a number of infrastructure elephants in the room that could have a large bearing on finances.