

# Mount Edgcumbe Joint Committee

Park Activity Report (June 2019)



Date of meeting:	19 July 2019
Title of Report:	<b>Park Activity Report (June 2019)</b>
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 June 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*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		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Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.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)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**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: 10/07/2019											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Peter Smith (verbal) Date approved: 10/07/2019											

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report informs members of the works and activities carried out since November 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 was covered by a donation from the Oak Foundation. Therefore the Park will receive a high end holiday let free of charge that will generate around £30,000 for the Park. This is a welcome addition to our property portfolio, and is presently booked through most of the summer.
- 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. The roof however was completely rotten and needed replacement as did the chimney.
- 2.3 Captain Blake's Retreat holiday let is also finished and taking bookings, this unique property is booked for most of June and July and has so far received 100% feedback. The remote location and world class views have been very much appreciated.
- 2.4 Work on Cremyll car park has been completed with the car park resurfaced, parking bays delineated and a new pay machine. This will hopefully generate around £15k more income a year with payback within two years. Parking as a whole contributes around £90,000 for the Park. These works will also prevent people being blocked in as sometimes happens in the summer.
- 2.5 An interpretation board has been completed on Lawrence of Arabia, telling of his involvement with Air Sea Rescue at RAF Mount Batten and his visits to the Park.
- 2.6 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 well beyond the Park's maintenance budget.
- 2.7 The Park now has a new boiler repair company and they have managed to fix the boilers which the previous company assured us were unfixable. Costs for replacement had been estimated at around £60,000. For the time being the boilers will soldier on.
- 2.8 Trees have been added to 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 Tamar has been hired to deal with the huge backlog of work.
- 2.9 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 still waiting to see what the new one looks like. English Heritage are visiting at the time of writing to look at emergency funding. The money for this bid is part of a gift of £70,000 from the Oak Foundation. The addition of Lady Emma's cottage has made the conversion of this property to a holiday let less essential.

- 2.10 The Park welcomes four Austrian volunteers on ten month placements Elias Nueuranter, Peter Steixner, Fabian Buchberger and Jacob Merski through the KONA programme. They provide a welcome and essential boost to our workforce and are accommodated in the Park or locally in Millbrook.
- 2.11 A new grass cutting contractor has been appointed and is producing a much better cut at a slightly reduced rate.
- 2.12 The clearing of fallen trees within the Penlee and Amphitheatre areas has been a major part of the Rangers work load during the winter.
- 2.13 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 started giving rides this summer.

### **3.0 Buildings and Park Infrastructure**

- 3.1 Two more holiday lets have been added since the last report, along with the purchase of Lady Emma's Cottage. Lady Emma's Cottage and Captain Blake's Retreat are higher end properties with larger profit margins. Lady Emma's Cottage markets at £2321 for the summer months and is more or less fully booked.
- 3.2 Work on the conversion of Rame Head into a holiday let, with views directly onto the 'Head' will commence this winter. Brand new multi access toilets will be moved to the old Coast Guard generator shed.
- 3.3 Plans for the Tree Houses are to be submitted this year but are likely to be amended now that we own Lady Emma's Cottage. Current thoughts are to have one really nice one, and some funds have been redirected to Cremyll car park that will show better returns.
- 3.4 There is now a pay and display machine at Rame Head car park, this raised £5707 we had estimated £6000 in the last report. The Honesty Box at Maker raised £2130. The charge for Rame Head car park is £1.00 per day.
- 3.5 The Park has a legacy of an aging vehicle stock and with the exception of our new Landover all vehicles are in excess of ten years old with many double that. The cost of keeping these vehicles operating is rising by 15% per year.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 The garden equipment is of a similar age to that of the vehicles and now breaks down at regular intervals causing work delays and an increased draw on the Park's budgets.

## 4.0 Events

- 4.1 We hosted the Mind, Body and Spirit event in the in the Earl's Garden marquee with pop-up tents, this proved very popular and was blessed with good weather. This was a private event that hired the marquee.
- 4.2 In March 2019, we hosted the Kernow Endurance Race with Edge Cycles along with another event in July 2019 part of a series of race events.
- 4.3 The 'Fiends' Easter Egg Hunt now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year had another record breaking turnout as the weather was kind to us.
- 4.4 Missy Ivy Events hosted two successful events the Gin Bubbles and Music festival and the Rum Drums and Reggae festival. The Reggae festival was great success with perfect Caribbean weather, combined with people turning up to the event on the Artists Platz in their yachts it had a fantastic atmosphere.
- 4.5 The Green Man was again blessed with good weather and as one of the Parks two main events it managed to break more or less even.
- 4.6 May 2019, saw the return of the Southwest Paddlefest that encompasses all things that you can paddle. The event is steadily growing and now in its third year at Mount Edgcumbe.
- 4.7 Faery Festival was another success, now in its sixth year at the Park and with good weather for most of the weekend. Numbers were slightly down due to another new Fairy event taking place only a couple of weeks before, thus splitting the fairy community!
- 4.8 The Christmas Fayre proved a very popular event this year and was piggy backed by the Wonder Nights event.

## 5.0. Business Development

- 5.1 The Park continues to develop its holiday let portfolio, it has 6 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.
- 5.3 A new businesses is now resident in the Barrow Centre, selling designer and vintage cake and cup wear. Edge Cycles now also runs the Frisbee Golf which will have another world championship this summer.
- 5.4 Wonder Nights a major light and Laser show took place this Christmas season in partnership with one of our Traders Richard Toy. This was a ticketed event that took place in the evening in the Earl's Garden and part of the House was 'transformed' into a 'wonderland' of light and shade. This event piggy backed the already established Christmas Fayre and with one or two changes it is hoped to run this event again this year. The event broke even which for a first year was considered a success.
- 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. The Park has a propeller from the Lancaster Bomber that crashed on the Breakwater and it is hoped that this will be turned into a memorial to those aircrew that were killed in and around the Park.
- 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.

Mount Edgumbe is now being marketed as part of the 'Disney' team as part of the American cruise industry.

It is hoped that ME will play a role in the Illuminate festivities and funding is being sought to light up the 'Folly' for this purpose

- 5.11 The Park has had a poor year in terms of filming income, partly we are assured due to 'market uncertainty' this is 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.
- 5.13 The Park has received numerous complaints relating to the Stables Café and it has run out of coffee at least three times this year! Park management has arranged a meeting with the Café in order to address these issues.
- 5.14 The House continues to break even with a small profit this year. The new shop stock has helped with this.

## **6.0 Weddings**

- 6.1 The Park has commissioned a review of the pricing structure of this business stream with the help of Plymouth City Council. Looking at comparative markets and price setting this will form part of the BDP. A presentation of its findings will be given at this meeting but it's fair to say that when true costs are calculated we were making very little money in some areas. The wedding business is some £20,000 down and still an area of concern. There is a better level of bookings next year (eight in total) but the marquee is on its last legs.

## Summary

The Park has worked to a £95,000 budget from the two LA's this year a reduction of some £35,000 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 spends that could have a large bearing on finances.

The Holiday let business is still flourishing and profit margins will increase with higher earning properties coming on line. Carpark revenue is very healthy and along with Rents shows the best performance. Weddings and conferencing are areas of concern. Please see finance section of the report.

The Park has had a record year for the number of events that it hosts and its social media presence is much improved as it drives towards truly becoming staycation. The Park through its entrepreneurial approach has managed to deliver more for users and at the same time reduce public spending. . The long term feasibility of reaching zero budget depends largely on the successful conclusion of the Trennow chalets lease consultation, which represents a unique opportunity for the Park to invest in its future.