

Swanley Town Council

Civic Centre, St Marys Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7BU

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www.swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk

ESTATES AND FACILITIES

Date 15th July 2021

Dear Member

A meeting of the above committee will be held at the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on **Wednesday 21st July 2021 from 7:30pm** or at the conclusion of the public participation session.



Mr R Hayman
CEO & Town Clerk

Committee Members: (Chair) Cllr S Andrews, (Deputy Chair) Cllr A Skipper, Cllr C Barnes, Cllr J Domigan, Cllr M Foster, Cllr J Griffiths, Cllr T Searles, Cllr J Tuckfield.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

If required, the meeting will be preceded by a public participation period of up to 15 minutes in total at 7:30pm. Members of the public are also entitled to speak, during the meeting, on agenda items only and with express permission from the Chairman / Mayor. Those wishing to speak on an Agenda item must indicate this during Public Participation.

RECORDING (AUDIO AND / OR VIDEO OF COUNCIL MEETINGS AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

During this meeting the public are allowed to record the Committee and Officers from the front of the public seating area only, providing it does not disrupt the meeting. Any items in the exempt part of an agenda cannot be recorded and no recording device is to be left behind. If another member of the public objects to being recorded, the person(s) recording must stop doing so until that member of the public has finished speaking. The use of social media is permitted, but all members of the public are requested to switch their mobile phone devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

MOBILE PHONES

Members of the public are reminded that the use of mobile phones (other than on silent) is prohibited at Town Council and Committee meetings.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MANAGER REPORT – Appendix A

To comment on the report and ask questions of the Manager.

4. THE ALEXANDRA SUITE AND THE OLYMPIC VENUES MANAGER REPORT – Appendix B

To comment on the report and ask questions of the Manager.

5. SWANLEY SKATEPARK

To receive verbal update from the CEO.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 20th October 2021.

If you would like further information on any of the agenda items, please contact Mr Ryan Hayman, on 01322 665855 or rhayman@swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk

To: Estates & Facilities Committee

From: George Brooker - Park & Open Spaces Manager

Date: 21st July 2021

Subject: Estates & Facilities Update

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To inform the committee of any new projects, bookings, or changes to operations.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To accept the update report and note any new bookings/changes to operations.

3. Background and information

Swanley Park update

3.1 Swanley Park Performance

The Parks performance over the past few months have been affected heavily by Covid and also the weather. The activities and facilities provided are not currently reaching the numbers of visitors we would tend to expect in normal circumstances. This has been felt by all parties located within Swanley Park. The Park was however fortunate enough to have exception weather during the June half-term which did provide some relief.

The Barnyard has started to gain traction and is doing exceptionally well with Parties, with some customers leaving very positive reviews on social media. The income currently being taken from the Soft Play is where we had predicted to be whilst the pandemics restriction was still in place.



We are hoping to increase term-time users with a toddler area located in the party room. Additional signage and additional marketing would also help maximise the use of the Barnyard. We have recently made changes to the booking system and our website to make it an easier and clearer experience.

3.2 Planned Developments

Many of the planned developments for Swanley park have been undertaken and have been welcomed graciously by the many diverse groups of users that the park regularly receives.

The old wet pour safety surface in the children's Play area has been replaced with an AstroTurf alternative and is proving to be the right decision.



The old fire exit doors in the Railway have been replaced along with new emergency lighting in the carriage and loco shed. In addition to these works small remedial works have also taken place to ensure the Park's fire risk assessment are being followed.



The drainage for the gullies in front of the toilet block have also been completed. The old pit had become undrainable, the existing pipework was redirected to a new location where new soak away crates have been installed.

The first stage of upgrading the paths have officially started with the path leading from Moreton Close/Kettlewell into the Park being the priority. The labour of this task will be undertaken by the Estates Team.





3.3 Swanley Park Events

With the government's latest update we are very confident that the remainder of our annual events can go ahead.

On the 17th of June the park were able to host The Secret Dance Performance. The ballet performance was very well received and future shows are being considered.

On the 25th of July Kent Fire & Rescue will be visiting the park to demonstrate to members of the public the importance of water safety, this will take place during drowning week. Members of the public will be shown how to throw life lines and how to act should they come into difficulties in the water. A Fire engine will also be present on the day to help promote the event.

Making Miracles have once again rebooked for their annual treasure hunt in the park. This event will take place over both the 4th and 22nd of August. Monies raised will be donated to "Baby trauma & Bereavement care".

Luna Cinema is also returning on the 6th, 7th and 8th of August, in comparison to previous years these dates are more fitting as they are in the school holidays. With the hope more visitors will be in attendance.



We are now in the final stages of planning for our annual 1812 event, along with the new Family Fun Fest (Rebranded from the Folk Fest). We are still looking for some additional stalls to participate in the two day event and advertisement has been placed on social media and notice boards. It is hoped this year will be as much of a success as the 2019 event, with the second day of the event being changed from a Family Folk Fest to a Family Fun Day event. This will now be based around children's entertainment in hopes to maximise the events second day. Both events are still free for all.

3.4 Covid-19

With social distancing coming to an end we are finally able to open the Splash Pool for the first time with no restrictions. Until now the only way this facility could open safely was to implement a pod system to allow restricted numbers to enjoy the new attraction. We are hopeful with these and many more restrictions in the Park finally removed more visitors will enjoy what the park has to offer.

3.5 South & South East in Bloom

The judging for this year's South & South East in Bloom took place on the 29th of June. All of the staff across the Council, as well as local volunteers, played a part in ensuring the park was given the best possible chance. Results will be announced in September.

3.6 Swanley New Barn Railway (SNBR)

In July we received a morale boost of the return from a 6 year professional external rebuild of the society steam engine Sir Goss. The engine should enter revenue service in the coming weeks.

COVID has hit our revenue over the beginning of the season made worse with the rain over the last month. However we continue to work through these challenging times. Firstly 5 coaches have received new improved bodies in advance of the summer season. Our steam engine Owd Rosie has been overhauled in house finally and is now waiting painting and testing before we hope entering service in 2022.

Our COVID operation has been receiving great feedback from most of our customers and this has definitely outweighed the negative comments about not stopping at the car park station. Other miniature railways have even come to see our operating practices commenting received included “best we have seen”.

We have moved our gala due to COVID to September, and it will be smaller than normal sadly.

An external author (Jonathan James) has wrote and published a book called “Swanley New Barn Railway at 35” which is due to be released on our 35th anniversary on 19th July.

Finally we thank STC for the work in upgrading in the Electrics in the carriage shed. The improved lighting has made maintenance a lot easier.

3.7 Swanley Wildlife and Nature Group (Swan)

Swanley Wildlife and Nature Group (SWAN) Creating habitats for wildlife in Swanley Park, Kent

Swanley Town Council wanted to mark the Millennium in a permanent way, so it was decided that a wildlife reserve for the local community to enjoy would be a welcome addition to the Parish. Therefore, approximately 2 acres of land (known as the Environment Area) at the top of Swanley Park was set aside in the year 2000.

Advice was sought from The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and North West Kent Countryside Project about suitable wildflower plants, trees and shrubs to attract wildlife to the area. In April 2001 the scheme started with over 40 volunteers helping to plant 1400 wildflower plug plants and 25 trees and shrubs. Following initial planting, volunteers formed the Swanley and District Environment Group and continued its work, planting hedges and trees, creating wood chip paths, wildflower areas, bug hotels, reptile and amphibian hides and installing bird boxes.

The group was renamed "**Swanley Wildlife and Nature Group**" in January 2010.

Flora and fauna in the wildlife area (Environment Area) are monitored, and SWAN was very encouraged when 2 species protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 were identified.

Regular working parties are held by volunteers throughout the year with local Cub, Scout, Brownie and Guide groups helping out. Educational fun is had identifying trees, mini-beasts, birds and flowers in the wildlife area as well as their participation in tree and bulb planting..

Around 1000 hedgerow trees have so far been planted in the wildlife area. Volunteers in the community have spent over 2000 hours on projects since the group's formation. Swanley Town Council support the group by carrying out tasks such as grass strimming and mowing paths.

The group has achieved environmental awards for its work in the community, including a Silver Gilt award in South & South East In Bloom 2019 and 2020 for the category of Small Conservation Area, as well as Best Environmental Project in Sevenoaks District 2019 that was awarded in the local In Bloom competition.

The group has also undertaken environmental community work within the parish. Examples are churchyard clearance at St Mary's Church, Swanley and St Paul's Church, Swanley Village. In November 2018 an acre of land in Swanley Park was planted up with over 600 tree saplings to form a WW1 remembrance wood/area. In autumn 2019, 1000 mixed spring bulbs were planted in the same area around the trees by the group assisted by local community volunteers.

In 2021 SWAN became a member of the Friends of Swanley Park (FOSP), and will seek to increase the biodiversity in the wider park in partnership with Swanley Town Council.

It is hoped to link in with more local schools, as the wildlife area and park have the potential to be a valuable local educational resource. It is recognised that the areas created by SWAN are used by park visitors for many different reasons eg exercise, social interaction and improving mental health. This was very apparent during the 2020/21 COVID lockdown restrictions.

The group arranges an itinerary of events annually, which can be accessed on their Facebook site or website www.freewebs.com/swanleyenviorgroup. SWAN has an open invitation for new members to join the group from all areas not just Swanley, but request that under 18s must be accompanied by an adult.

Background:

SWAN volunteers are celebrating their 20th anniversary this year creating habitats in the wildlife area (Environment Area) in Swanley Park. The group has started meeting again as a result of COVID Lockdown restrictions being eased. Wildlife projects have been planned for the rest of the year, and the wildlife area has once again been entered into South & Southeast In- Bloom and Cooling's In-Bloom award. The group also contributes to the community and biodiversity aspect of the park's Green Flag award. The park's ground staff continue to support SWAN with basic maintenance including, grass cutting, bramble and tree pruning. Current group leaders are Richard Maile (Chair), Liz Davies (Secretary) and Andy Meaton (Treasurer and

monitor of all things fauna in wider park). Please refer to attached SWAN summary document.

April - June 2021 Activities:

April/May

- Covid risk assessment updated - rest of year programme of group projects drawn up and published.

- A community litter pick of the wildlife area and top end of the park was undertaken. Equipment secured last year from a grant was used, and suitable waste material collected was recycled where possible (e.g. clean plastic bottles). A number of hidden fishing rods and equipment was found in undergrowth during the day.

- Chair and Secretary for SWAN attended the first meeting of the newly formed Friends of Swanley Park (FOSP). There are already plans for SWAN to work with the council to improve biodiversity and the visitor experience in other areas of Swanley Park e.g. the lake island. SWAN hope that lake water levels can be improved and maintained if funding is secured for a borehole, this would supply 7.3 million litres of groundwater a year without the need of a licence or payment.

- Richard Maile & Liz Davies met with staff from Horizon (primary) Academy to explore how the school can use the Environment Area for subjects of the National Curriculum. Other schools could similarly be approached.

June

- The 3 wildflower areas of the Environment Area were seen to be thriving. Yellow rattle is now established in all areas that will suppress dominant grasses.

- A small recycled wildlife pond was installed by volunteers in the wildlife area. We were joined by Cllr Andrew Skipper, and STC ground staff assisted volunteers with heavier tasks. Wire mesh was secured over the top of the pond.

- A local tree surgeon supplied some wood chip for the path but more needs to be sourced. STC ground staff will continue to provide wood chip when possible.

- On the 29 June S&SE In-bloom judges will inspect the wildlife area with Richard Maile (Chair). The wildlife area has been put forward for the category of Best Small Conservation Area of the Year. The area has won Silver Gilt two years running, and last year scored nearly enough to place it in the Gold category.

Forward look during next quarter:

- Visit to the Environment Area by Laura Trott MP on 2 July.

- Cooling's In bloom judging end of July.

- The annual wildflower identification exercise will be undertaken and databases (and

other flora and fauna) updated. These are quite extensive and comprehensive, and provide good evidence.

- Result of grant application to secure spring bulb planting in the autumn.
- STC ground staff to maintain all grass paths and banks in the Environment Area. This needs to be undertaken every few weeks in spring and summer.
- September SWAN stall at postponed SNBR gala.
- A number of stag beetles have been found in gardens surrounding the wildlife area. Monitoring to continue and stag beetle user friendly habitat created.
- 3 Environment Area wildflower areas to be cut early autumn, that is essential to maintain status quo.

4 Conclusions

4.1 As highlighted in this report, we continue to aim to maximise the use of our facilities, whilst also generating additional income for the Council.

George Brooker

Parks & Open Spaces Manger

To: Estates & Facilities

From: Kerina Keir

Date: 21st July 2021

Subject: Estates & Facilities Update

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To inform the committee of any new projects, bookings or changes to operations.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To accept the update report and note any new bookings or changes to operations.

3. Background and information

3.1 The Alexandra Suite

The venue continues to host the vaccinations; moving more to a walk-in service rather than booking in advance. The Pavilion has now been accepted as a second venue allowing us to hire out both suites at the venue.

We held our first private event on the 4th July 2021 in The Pavilion which enabled us to open our bar and kitchen. All went very well; indeed, one of the guests has since booked a further function with us.



We have now recruited a new team to work across both venues and opening The Alexandra Suite has allowed us to train them on private functions. However, as we open fully we will continue to recruit new staff to meet the demand.

Our bars have been painted and installed with all new products including a new cocktail machine in our main bar.



3.2 The Olympic

We have now fully opened and have welcomed back our snooker members, memberships are being renewed from the 1st June 2021. We are planning on using some of these funds to update the snooker tables.

Euro 2020 has helped us with our bar income along with our quiz nights which continue to sell out. We are looking forward to bring back Karaoke at the end of the month. Swanley Rugby are using The Olympic on a regular basis which also brings revenue to our bar and Noypichef.

“Freedom Day” will enable both venues to open fully allowing us to host a school prom and our own “Schools Out Party Night” and more importantly our first Wedding Ceremony and Reception since 2019.

4. Reasons for recommendations

4.1 This report does not contain any decisions to be made; it just provides information to be noted.

5. Conclusions

5.1 As highlighted in this report, we continue to aim to maximise the use of our facilities, whilst also generating additional income for the Council.

Kerina Keir

Venues Manager