To: Estates & Facilities Committee

From: George Brooker - Park & Open Spaces Manager

Date: 19th January 2022

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. Swanley Park background and information

3.1 Winter Close Down

All attractions have been packed away for the winter, this was achieved in a timely manner.

3.2 Attractions

Six leisure swan pedalos and four rowing boats have been ordered to replace some of the boating fleet; These will be in place for the new season.

In anticipation of the new season, we are also looking at:

- New hand boats or similar alternative options
- A new bouncy castle to replace one of our existing castles



3.3 The Barnyard

The Barnyard has remained open throughout the winter months.

In December, we launched a new playroom in the party space at The Barnyard. This has better catered for the baby and toddler market which in-turn has boosted footfall to the attraction. Customer feedback to date is very positive regarding this addition.

Four seasonal events are being planned for this year.





3.4 Maintenance

General repairs and maintenance are currently being undertaken to ensure the park is fully operational for April.

The roof on the Railway's mess room has been replaced which was done by the Estates team.





3.5 Park Opening

A partial opening has been set for 12th February with the boating lake; bouncy castles and nerf sessions restarting. These activities will be open in readiness for the February half term and all weekends thereafter (weather permitting).

A full opening is planned for 2nd April with all attractions in scope.

3.6 Events

The following events are currently scheduled for the year:

Event	**Date (s)**
Half Term	14th-18th February
DnG Events	29th May-5th June
Picnic in the Park (Queen's Jubilee)	5th June
Colour Dash	3rd July
SNBR Gala	23rd- 24th July
1812	26th August
Family Funfest	27th August

Discussions have started and are awaiting dates for events such as: The Treasure Hunt; Luna Cinema and a Sevenoaks Fun Day to name a few.

3.7 Incidents

A report monthly is used to monitor incidents at Swanley Park.

November – 7

December – 9

Each incident is reported to Kent police immediately.

3.8 Café –

The Café has remained open throughout the winter this has complimented the facilities at The Barnyard.

Both a new flooring and a replacement door are being investigated to enhance the café in readiness for April.

3.9 SNBR –

Since the end of our season the railway has been busy catching up on our maintenance activities.

All the diesels are presently going through their annual service and maintenance.

The main station has had the two remaining platforms re-laid with new rail and sleepers, a job that was abandoned due to Covid last winter

We have replaced or repaired about 300 yards of rail and sleepers on the main line in readiness for 2022 season

We are replacing four worn out coach bodies, once this is complete, every coach body will have been replaced in two years. These new bodies are stronger than the life expired previous bodies

In the workshop we are building a replacement turntable. The existing station turntable, now at 35 years old is showing its age. We hope to have this in place before the start of the 2022 season, with a full back plan for the 2023 season (as Covid keeps delaying us). This huge structure is impressive, and completely designed and built-in house using tried and tested technology and will be a massive improvement to the existing turntable.

We are in the process of inviting visitors to our summer gala on 23rd and 24th July, we hope to have a nice collection of visiting engines on the main line, and other attractions in the park as normal.

Peter Jackson

3.10 SWAN Group –

October:

- 2nd Swanley Brownies raked the 3 wildflower areas in the Environment Area and SWAN members finished off re-mulching the path - approximately 200 ft in total.

- 3 tawny owls in the mature trees in the Environment Area were heard on the night of 8/10/21.

- Richard Maile confirmed that he would be stepping down as Chair at the end of 2021 and had produced a handover plan for any new potential candidate. Hopefully, someone will step forward before the January AGM. Also, a basic Environment Area management plan needed to maintain the status quo has been given to STC Parks department.

November:

- SWAN were awarded 1st place in Sevenoaks in bloom for the category of "Best Community Environmental Project".

- 250 wild spring bulbs were planted in the woodland area of the nature area after the area was prepared by STC.

- Liz Davies (Secretary) confirmed that she would be standing down at the January 2022 AGM. Hopefully, a new potential candidate will be identified before the January AGM.

- A wildflower meadow was created on the open part of the park lake island, and some yellow iris transplanted in hessian sacks to the margins of the front of the island. This should create valuable habitat and enhance visual appearance on and around the lake island.

- Environment Area path topped up by SWAN with woodchip supplied by the park staff.

Richard Maile

4. Open Spaces background and Information

4.1 Improvements

Toward the end of October, the Estates team installed a new remembrance bench at St Mary's Church in time for the remembrance service.

We are reviewing locations within the area for three new flower displays in time for the Swanley in Bloom 2022.

This year Swanley Town Council introduced a "Christmas tree drop off" service which is located at The Birches car park at Swanley Park. The trees will then be chipped and used to top up the pathways in the environmental area.





4.2 Awards

South & South East in Bloom applications have been submitted for Swanley Park; Swanley Recreation ground; Swanley Town; Swanley Nature Reserve and St Mary's Churchyard.

Green Flag applications are currently being prepared for Swanley Park; Swanley Recreation ground; Elephant Park and Archer Way.

4.3 Maintenance

The Estates team have turned their attention to the winter schedule much of which consists of tree or hedge works throughout the town.

As we have developed the team's skills, we have been able to undertake most of in-house. Additional training will be scheduled to further enhance their range of skills and competencies. By upskilling our workforce we become less reliant on outsourcing work to contractors.

some established trees have been planted to replace some of the lost trees. An amount of £5,000 has been set aside for next year to fund the further planting of trees in our open spaces.

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.

George Brooker

Park & Open Spaces Manger