**To:** Estates & Facilities Committee

**From:** George Brooker - Parks & Open Spaces Manager

**Date:** 20th July 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** Attractions

3.1.1 Pedalos

The 15th June saw the delivery of four Flamingo Leisure boats. All were immediately put to use and have been very well received by the visitors of the park. The additional four boats have helped ease queue and have ensured visitors are not waiting as long.

The Swans and Flamingos have all been named. This was done by using social media to allow followers to vote for their favourite name.



Overall Pedalo income and trip numbers from previous financial years are shown below:

| Pedalo Data | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Month | 18/19 | | 19/20 | | 20/21 | | 21/22 | | 22/23 | |
| | Income(£) | Trips | Income(£) | Trips | Income(£) | Trips | Income(£) | Trips | Income(£) | Trips |
| April | 3,998 | 686 | 6,127 | 1,051 | 0 | 0 | 5,307 | 910 | 11,940 | 1,410 |
| May | 6,677 | 1,145 | 4,480 | 769 | 0 | 0 | 3,871 | 664 | 8,930 | 1,058 |
| June | 5,266 | 903 | 5,071 | 870 | 2,533 | 435 | 5,619 | 964 | 11,674 | 1,367 |
| July | 7,083 | 1,215 | 4,128 | 708 | 6,749 | 1,158 | 4,623 | 793 | 0 | 0 |
| August | 9,017 | 1,547 | 10,309 | 1,768 | 9,375 | 1,608 | 8,671 | 1,487 | 0 | 0 |
| September | 2,276 | 390 | 2,640 | 453 | 3,576 | 613 | 2,970 | 509 | 0 | 0 |
| October | 667 | 114 | 147 | 25 | 616 | 106 | 1,295 | 222 | 0 | 0 |
| Febuary | 1,912 | 328 | 92 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 1,619 | 189 | 0 | 0 |
| March | 1,030 | 177 | 175 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 2,667 | 314 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 37,924 | 6,505 | 33,170 | 5,690 | 22,849 | 3,919 | 36,641 | 6,053 | 32,544 | 3,835 |

### 3.1.2 Closed attractions

We have decided to permanently close the Tree Trek and Hand Boat Pool. The remedial works that were needed to ensure the attractions could continue to operate were unviable. Replacements are being looked into such as a large sandpit with a climbing frame or sand factory.

## **3.2** The Barnyard

The Barnyard has continued to prove a popular choice for visitors this year with parties continuing to grow.

A new booking system was introduced in April meaning that parties are now bookable online as well as being customisable.

The Office and Soft Play Manager is in the middle of producing an action plan to increase off peak numbers.

| SoftPlay Data | | | | | Ticket Price | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Off Peak | 2.92 | Party | N/A |
| | | | | | Peak | 4.2 | Event | N/A |
| Year/Month | Off Peak | | Peak | | Party | | Event | |
| 22/23 | Income (£) | Children | Income (£) | Children | Income (£) | Children | Income (£) | Children |
| April | 307 | 105 | 1,371 | 470 | 1,687 | 220 | 1,472 | 212 |
| May | 592 | 203 | 1,250 | 428 | 2,900 | 258 | 0 | 0 |
| June | 593 | 203 | 1,362 | 467 | 2,783 | 219 | 0 | 0 |
| July | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | |
| August | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | |
| September | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | |
| October | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | |
| Febuary | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | |
| March | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | |
| Total | 1,491 | 511 | 3,984 | 1,364 | 7,370 | 697 | 1,472 | 212 |

**3.3** Maintenance and renewals

Maintenance has continued to ensure the park is kept to a high standard.

Block paving has continued in the park this year and has been carried out by the Grounds team and Park Rangers. The next path to be upgraded is the main path from the main car park up until the play area. Going forward these works will be carried out within the autumn/winter months to minimise disruption.



Sections of the boating lake Jetty have been renewed as well as a complete overhaul of the Kayak ramp, again these works were carried out in house.

The Café entrance doors and ramp have now been replaced with aluminium bi-folds and are now awaiting on a shutter to complete this part of the project.

The Bore hole has now been installed and is operational. This means that the lake will be able to retain its level throughout the season. We are hoping to regain some of the lost water level this year however next year we will be able to maintain its winter/spring level throughout the summer/Autumn



**3.4** Events

Despite the predicted bad weather, the rain held off and the turn out for our Jubilee Picnic in the Park was greater than expected. The event consisted of Entertainers, Corgi Hunt, Garden Games, Coconut shy, Crockery Smash, Bar and face painting.



The Secret Garden ballet production was held on the 4th June. The shows were ticketed unlike last year but again proved popular, receiving a number of positive reviews. After deductions, the total net profit was £338.74.




Final preparations are now being made to this years Jubilee Fireworks and Family Fun Fest events. This years Bucket donations will be donated to Home-Start. Timings have been altered to ensure performers have enough time to completely fulfil their sets and ensure swap overs run smoothly.

From FOSP a new event is being introduced on the 5th August, SEN Morning. This event will be put on for children with additional needs and will run from 8:30 – 10:30am. This will be ticketed and will allow participants exclusive use of some of the park's main facilities. Tickets will be valid all day but from 11am ticket holders will mingle in with the public. This event will only be advertised to certain groups to ensure the right target audience is met. All profits will be donated to We are Beams and SNAP.

This year has seen the return of We are Beams annual Colour dash, the Park saw hundreds of runners take part. The coloured powder is made up of bio-degradable corn starch which has been dyed. This means the powder is completely harmless to wildlife and has since all been washed away.



**3.5** Incidents

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

May – 21

June – 26

Each incident is reported to Kent police immediately.

These incidents are mainly made up between Fishing and anti-social behaviour. Ways to put a stop to fishing are being investigated and we are in talks with the environmental agency, Kent police and Mid Kent Fisheries.

**3.6** SNBR –

The weather has been really good this year and the park has been very busy. We have completed ¾ of our red coach bodies as the full set is receiving a rebuild. We have run just shy of 50% of all trains with a steam engine this year, which has also proved very popular. We are now looking to improve the car park station (Swanley Parkway) where we will install some platform signs over the coming months. We are hosting our annual Grand Summer Gala on the 23rd & 24th July which will include visiting locomotives, traction engines and stalls.

Peter Jackson SNBR

**3.7** SWAN Group –

## Activity Report by Swanley Wildlife and Nature (SWAN) group

## April

Planted some shade tolerant native wildflowers in woodland area. Placed bamboo hoops and labels to indicate position and help monitor their progress. Allowed to dig up spare foxgloves from Hall Place gardens (Bexley) and planted them.

A new bat box was made and given to us by a Swanley resident and has been put in position.

2 new members

Acknowledged both outgoing chair and secretary's considerable achievements over many years with a small presentation

## May

Successfully applied to Woodland Trust for 30 free hedge saplings to plant at top of area, delivery expected in November. Local scouts will help with digging!

Wendy (Chair) had met the Ryan – STC – regarding proposed planning application for pre-primary nursery adjacent to Environment area.

Wildlife pond was vandalised, restored by Andy, no further trouble.

Grant application to National Garden Scheme Community Gardens Award was successful - £153.00 – spent on bird accessories and plants.

## June

Continued with native woodland flower planting with all members keeping up regular watering and maintenance.

SSEIB judging due 8th July, so paths cleared with help from ground staff of Swanley Park, litter picked, continue control of invasive blue lupins.

SWAN group meet on the last Saturday of each month.

### 4. Open Spaces background and Information

**4.1** Grounds Maintenance

Preparations for Green Flag and SSEiB took place in June and July with the team ensuring the Town and all open spaces were kept to a high standard.

The summer flowers have now all been planted and are being maintained by Window Flowers except for the flowers at Swanley Park, Swanley Recreation ground and The Alexandra/Civic Centre which are being maintained in house.



**4.2** Awards

Green Flag Judging has all been completed and we are currently awaiting the full result from Swanley Park, Swanley Recreation Ground, Elephant Park, and Archer Way.

The Judging for SSEiB took place on Friday 8th July and the results will be announced in September.

**4.3** Maintenance

As well as general repair works to the Parks & Open Spaces, Venues and Housing stock remedial works have been conducted on the playgrounds at Swanley Park, Swanley Recreational Ground and Elephant Park, with new toddler swings being installed at the Recreation Ground by the end of July.

The Estates Team, Parks & Open Spaces Manger and Park Supervisors all undertook a routine playground inspection refresher course. An operational Playground Inspection Course will be booked in the next financial year to allow for a more thorough inspection to be conducted every quarter.

## 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

Parks & Open Spaces Manger