To: Estates & Facilities Committee

From: George Brooker - Parks & Open Spaces Manager

Date: 18th January 2023

Subject: Estates & Facilities Update

1. Purpose of report

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

2. Recommendations

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

3. Swanley Park background and information

3.1. Winter close down

This winter the bouncy castles and boating lake have remained open weekends only and weather permitting. We have seen a small increase in additional visitors on these occasions. The remaining bits of equipment have been packed away.

3.2. Attractions

Across the board visitor numbers and income has been much greater than expected this year. Since the introduction of the Leisure Boats we have seen a 79.8% increase in trips compared to last year.

Below is a breakdown of the Pedalo income each month.

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	11,461.54	1,328
May	6,677	1,145	4,480	769	0	0	3,871	664	8,580.98	998
June	5,266	903	5,071	870	2,533	435	5,619	964	11,493.33	1,336
July	7,083	1,215	4,128	708	6,749	1,158	4,623	793	20,300.83	2,338
August	9,017	1,547	10,309	1,768	9,375	1,608	8,671	1,487	32,234.93	3,702
September	2,276	390	2,640	453	3,576	613	2,970	509	6,086.75	710
October	667	114	147	25	616	106	1,295	222	3,698.93	431
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	333.34	40
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0
January	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-
February	1,912	328	92	16	0	0	1,619	189	-	-
March	1,030	177	175	30	0	0	2,667	314	-	-
Total	37,924	6,505	33,170	5,690	22,849	3,919	36,641	6,053	94,190.63	10,883

We are currently obtaining quotes for a new customised bouncy castle and bouncy castle area which will replace the existing bouncy castles, whilst revamping the area in which it is situated.

3.3. The Barnyard

Parties have continued to prove a popular choice for the Barnyard with a fair number of bookings over the autumn/winter months.

Month	Number of parties
September	18
October	8
November	10
December	14
January	13

With the new online booking platform introduced back in April, we have seen far less issues than the previous platform. This has also enabled us to expand the packages we offer and allowed for some great marketing opportunities.

We are currently exploring the option of starting an online gift shop.

3.4. Maintenance

General repairs have been caried out throughout the park by both the Estates Team and Park Rangers. On top of this a large amount of fencing was renewed, this improvement was also carried out in-house.

3.5. Park Opening

We will continue to open weekends (weather permitting) until the 1st of April, at which point we will fully open on a daily basis.

3.6. Events

During the December half-term, the Barnyard hosted a Christmas event. This, as always, was very well attended and some great feedback was given.

Proposals for this year's events are currently being discussed and an events schedule will be advertised across all platforms in due course.



3.7. Incidents

A report monthly is used to monitor incidents at Swanley Park.
October – 16
November – 12
December - 6
Each incident is reported to Kent police immediately.

These incidents consist of fishing, anti-social riding, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. To address the issues of fishing, the lake will be netted in late March, and the fish caught will be removed and taken to a local fishing lake.

3.8. Café

The Café has remained open daily throughout the autumn and winter months only closing in poor weather. A polycarbonate roof will be placed across the pergola to allow for additional sheltered space in bad weather.

3.9. SNBR

SNBR winter update from Peter Jackson:-

Our AGM was held in November with some director changes, however the secretary and chairperson remained.

Over the winter we have so far re-laid 60metres of the main running line.

Coach reconditioning continues with the final red coach body now finished.

Some of the coach wheel sets will be getting new parts over the winter as well.

The dangerous dying trees in the car park have been removed with new bushes expected to go in at the end of January

Our first steam engine only since before Covid charity raised over £1,500 for the Alzheimer's society. We were delighted that our friends at Moors Valley Railway lent us an engine to help.

Progress on our steam engine Owd Rosie continues and we hope to have her back in service during 2023.

Our diesel fleet is getting old, so we have invested in all new parts for them including Hydraulic pumps and new bogies (the wheel sets and motor part of the engine). Which we hope to complete over 2023 to extend the life of them while we hope electric engine technology comes on leaps and bounds

Between now and Easter we will be concentrating on the track work by the sheds and getting that back to 100%.

Peter Jackson

3.10. SWAN Group

We have had a remarkably busy few months in the conservation area. Incredibly pleased to report we have won 2 awards. Best Community Project from Sevenoaks in Bloom and a Silver Gilt award from South and South East in Bloom. This is entirely due to the hard work and commitment of our members, and we thank them all for their continued support. We have been pleased to welcome some new recruits this year.

Highlights include:

- A new bench bought with a grant from Asda located at the entrance to the conservation area
- The brownies coming along to our September meeting to rake the wildflower meadows and plant new seeds for next year. This contributed to their conservation badge
- The scouts joined us in November to plant 30 hedge saplings donated by the Woodland Trust and to spread wood chippings on the paths.
- We would like to thank both the Brownies and Scouts for their hard work.
- New bat box and 4 insect houses erected
- New sandy environment created by the flowering ivy to encourage ivy bees to nest
- New wildflowers planted including Ferns, Ragged Robin, Campion, Cowslips, Foxgloves

Wendy

3.11. Nursery Update

Construction has started on the extension of the Car Park and is expected to be completed by the end of January. The extension has meant that a number of bins, benches and signs have been removed. These have now started to be re-positioned within close proximity to the previous locations.



4. Open Spaces background and Information

4.1. Grounds Maintenance

Throughout the past few months the Estates Team have been focusing on their usual duties, which at this time of year mainly consists of hedge cutting and tree works.

14 trees have been ordered and will arrive mid-January, these will replace the trees lost after the last tree survey and consist of Acer Pseudoplatanus (Sycamore Maple); Carpinus Betulus (Hornbeam) and Quercus Robur (English Oak).

Back in November, Sevenoaks District Council contracted Swanley Town Council to litter pick and check for any defects in the town centre and the surrounding areas. These works are carried out twice a week (Mondays and Thursdays). It has been commented on how litter during these days is now greatly reduced. If additional payments are not made by the District, this contract it due to end by March 31st 2023.

4.2. Awards

Applications have been submitted for the S&SEIB awards, with the Green Flag applications being sent off by the end of January 2023.

4.3. Maintenance

General repair works have been carried out in-house across all Council owned buildings.

The decision was made that the Ford Ranger was to have its engine replaced in order to return to a third working vehicle. This is currently at the garage and is expected to be returned by the end of January.

5. Conclusions

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 Manager