

PROGRESS REPORT - APRIL 2017

Report of the: Streetcare Manager
Contact: Samantha Whitehead
Annexes/Appendices (attached): Annexe 1: Bird watching is good for your mental health research
Annexe 2: Bird Nesting Boxes
Other available papers (not attached):

REPORT SUMMARY

A report to update the Joint Management Committee on the progress of matters considered previously and the activities of the Volunteer Groups

RECOMMENDATION (S)

Notes

That the Joint Management Committee notes the progress of the following:

- **Updates from the Volunteer groups**
- **Surrey County Council Members' Allocation Fund**

1 Update from Nonsuch Watch

- 1.1 Frances Wright of Nonsuch Watch has provided interesting research taken from a report by the University of Exeter which suggests bird watching as an excellent way to promote good mental health. An article outlining the research is attached as Annexe 1.
- 1.2 Research fellow Dr. Daniel Cox from the University has said "This study starts to unpick the role that some key components of nature play for our mental well-being. Birds around the home, and nature in general, show great promise in preventative health care, making cities healthier, happier places to live".
- 1.3 Whilst this report is encouraging and relevant for Nonsuch Park users, it is sad to note this information in light of a report submitted to the Joint Management Committee in November 2016 which included a survey pointing to the decline in many of the birds in Nonsuch Park.

2 Update from Nonsuch Voles

2.1 The Voles have carried out numerous activities during the last Quarter.

2.2 In and around the Mansion House:-

- The Voles were pleased to help Park Staff install and paint a re-cycled metal-railing fence adjacent to the Mansion House.
- The gardeners have started propagating plants both from seed and plant-plugs, for future use in the formal garden.
- The annual winter pruning of Wisteria has been undertaken, in addition to regular garden maintenance.
- A major task being undertaken in conjunction with Park staff is the renovation of an area known as the “Yew Room” at the rear of the formal garden. The yew room is a sheltered space surrounded by high yew hedges, and was probably used in the past to house hot-beds for growing tender vegetables, and as an area for hardening-off plants that had been grown in the former greenhouses.
- The hedges had become overgrown and were dying back as a result. To rejuvenate them, we are in the process of cutting them back hard. Yew responds well to this, and fresh new growth can already be seen. Over a number of years the hedge will be restored to a lush green feature. New yew trees are being planted to fill in the gaps.

2.3 In the woods:-

- The woodland management season concluded with the planting of around 50 more hazel saplings and 10 oak saplings in The Wood.
- In accordance with the Habitat Management Plan, the Voles have “scalped” 2 small areas of woodland edge in The Wood. This involved cutting back crescent shaped areas (about 3m wide by 2m deep) into the scrub at the woodland edge. The fresh re-growth and sheltered micro-habitat created is intended to benefit some species of flora and fauna which live at the woodland edge.

2.4 Other activities:-

- The Voles Shelter: At the last JMC Meeting, the Committee gave approval for the erection of the Voles shelter, subject to planning permission being achieved.
- Jon has been working with Guy Parker (EEBC Planning Officer) to prepare the application. After many hours work, it is hoped that the application will soon be ready for submission.

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- South & South East in Bloom 2017: As the Park will be entered for the annual SSEIB Awards in 2017, an on-site meeting was held with Peter Holman, Chairman of SSEIB, to discuss this year's entry.
- The Round Pond: The Voles helped Park Staff and Future Woodlands to carry out the tree felling on the south side of the Round Pond as requested by the JMC. This is the first part of the Pond renovation project.
- We visited the Wickham Avenue ditch in January and cleared leaf debris and other obstructions.
- We were pleased to receive 4 bird boxes, Hazel saplings and Yew shrubs courtesy of the Surrey Councillors' Members Allocation grant from Councillor John Beckett.
- The Voles held a stall at the Herald of Spring event at Bourne Hall, Ewell and sold items of wood-craft to raise funds.

2.5 Volunteer hours from January 2017 to the end of March 2017 are 973

3 Friends of Nonsuch

3.1 A representative from Friends of Nonsuch may have a verbal update they wish to present at the meeting.

4 Surrey County Council Members' Allocation Fund

4.1 In March 2017, the Streetcare Manager submitted two bids to the Surrey County Council Members' Allocation Fund on behalf of Nonsuch Park.

4.2 The first bid submitted was to update the three large park noticeboards, which are situated at each of the main car parks.

4.3 The noticeboard bid application requested £480 to update the current artwork to make the information clearer for visitors with dementia, reprint and install.

4.4 The second bid focussed on enhancing the natural environment of the park and requested c£500 to purchase four small bird boxes, please see Annexe 2, Hazel saplings and Yew shrubs.

4.5 We were delighted that both bids were successful and would like to thank Surrey County Councillor, John Beckett for his support.

4.6 Park staff and the Nonsuch Voles have already taken delivery of the bird boxes, saplings and shrubs and work is now underway to install the bird boxes in time for nesting season. The shrubs and saplings will be planted in due course to restore the Yew Room and continue the woodland management programme.

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- 4.7 The Streetcare Manager will work with the graphic designer to redesign the artwork and update the noticeboards in accordance with the advice received from Alzheimer's Society.
- 4.8 In addition, the noticeboard supplier will be asked to repair seals of the display panel section of the noticeboards and replace the baize, as there appears to be a leak, which has caused the baize to fade and condensation to develop, which makes the notices difficult to read.

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Nonsuch Ward;