

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Report

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>SIR GEORGE STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK JMC</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>MONDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2012</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>PARK MANAGER'S REPORT</b>
<b>Reference:</b>	<b>3737</b>
<b>Report From:</b>	<b>GORDON GARDNER</b>

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### 1. Introduction

The following report updates members of the Joint Management Committee on developments at the Park since the previous Park Manager's Report presented on 28 November 2011.

Staunton has leapt ahead again in terms of visitor numbers, with 16.4% above last year and 11.8% above budget. This has been helped by the mild weather between November and January.

Great work from the Staunton team to keep the momentum going.

### 2. Business

- 2.1 So far this financial year (2011-12) 111,075 visitors have entered the Ornamental Farm and Gardens (including educational visits). As outlined above this represents a good increase in visitor numbers when compared with last year (an increase of 15,645 visitors). (See Appendix 1 for more detailed information).
- 2.3 So far this year membership has taken around £84,221. (See Appendix 2 for a break down of figures). To date we are running at 29% above last year. January performed particularly well for membership sales, up by 148%.
- 2.4 The issues with a small minority of "members" abusing the membership direct debit system has now reduced to zero with no apparent impact on our membership.
- 2.5 January 2012 was a particularly good month all round seeing 5,425 visitors against 3,469 in 2011 – a 56.4% increase. Membership in January was even better with £6,940 as opposed to £2,799 in 2011.

- 2.6 With the Countryside staff structure changes taking place we are waiting to see what this may bring; we are confident that as a team we will adapt and make the most of any change.
- 2.7 Appendix 3 shows the suggested new pricing structure for 2012/13. Overall we are looking at a 5% increase and the suggestion is that only day visitor prices are increased. Membership increases would be left until next year.
- 2.8 The tea rooms, which were being run by Lime Caterers who have gone out of business, are now being run by HC3S, Hampshire County Council's in-house caterers. This is a shame because their food quality and customer service were good.

### **3. Gardens**

- 3.1 Shrub and rubbish clearance from around the "lean-to glasshouse" has begun. Work with property services has started to put together a bid for HLF (Heritage Lottery Funding).
- 3.2 The Beacon Community Partnership are back in action. The new benches funded by them are being used. The garden team have already increased the potential output of the new poly-tunnel.

### **4. Farm**

- 4.1 New piglets have been born to both our Kune Kune sows. They have been hugely popular with the public and the press couldn't get enough of them.
- 4.2 The first of our lambs have been born ready for the half term break.
- 4.3 We have planted a "Cedrus Libani", Cedar of Lebanon, in memory of Jess. The family who sponsored Jess for 17 years came to the ceremony. There could be a possibility of further sponsorship when Rose has her foal.

### **5 Education**

- 5.1 Up to the end of January 2012 8,116 children visited the Park. Although this is less than last year, we are now catching up. The education team have done a schools' membership campaign; membership has increased from 17 to 24.
- 5.2 Holiday Activities are planned for the February mid-term break. The weather is improving so the Park is looking forward to a busy time.

5.3 The Christmas season was successful with us virtually at capacity with 900 bookings. By keeping the Christmas theme simple and family-orientated we got a lot of great comments.

## 6 Countryside

6.1 The new method of selling firewood has worked exceptionally well. More wood than ever before has been sold and we have had to replenish our stockpile. This is without any marketing except a strong social media campaign.

6.2 We are in talks with Portsmouth Water with a view to possibly taking a further 51ha of grazing land adjoining the park. This would give the farm team more layback pasture and also this would give us access to a further £9,000 through SFP (single farm payment).

6.3 The Green Flag application is in and we are now working on updating our management plans.

6.4 We have signed an agreement with HBC parking services to manage enforcement of our car-parking with the view to them taking on the policing and enforcement of the operation; this way we can steer their coverage to fit our requirements.

6.5 As discussed at the November 2011 JMC meeting Staunton is keen to venture into the lucrative barbecue hire. Queen Elizabeth Country Park have made upwards of £30,000 per year out of this so there is scope for significant sums of revenue. The table below gives an expected return on investment.

### Cost/ Revenue Analysis Barbecues at Staunton

<b>Costs/Revenue</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
<b><u>Costs</u></b>				
Barbecues	£1300			
Other up front costs	£200			
Maintenance	-	£150	£150	£150
Staffing	£360	£500	£680	£840
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>£1860</b>	<b>£650</b>	<b>£830</b>	<b>£990</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>				
Barbecue Hire	£2160	£3000	£4080	£5040
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£2160</b>	<b>£3000</b>	<b>£4080</b>	<b>£5040</b>
<b><u>Net Profit</u></b>	<b>£300</b>	<b>£2350</b>	<b>£3250</b>	<b>£4050</b>

## **7 Marketing and Events**

- 7.1 Sam Holly the Marketing Manager has returned from maternity leave.
- 7.2 Work has started work on a new events leaflet. The current leaflet worked well encouraging visitors to take part in our free activities.
- 7.3 A new welcome leaflet should be completed soon. We have changed from having events listed on the opposite side of the pay-zone map. A updated map of the country park will be printed; the idea being to help visitors discover more of the park.
- 7.4 Social media is working very well - Twitter has 3,200 followers and Facebook has close to 1,100. Social media in-conjunction with our website play important part in raising the profile of Staunton Country Park.
- 7.5 We are currently working with Nadine Kune at Hampshire County Council to create a marketing plan, which will include the launch of a new brand identity to create a better brand presence and awareness of the Park to visitors.
- 7.6 The 2012 events programme has been finalised and sees the return of 'The Water Festival' and 'Staunton Live' and, new for 2012, 'Hampshire Welcomes the World'. These events are all free and held in Leigh Park Gardens.
- 7.7 Group travel is the main focus for advertising this year and it is hoped to include trade fairs such as Excursion early in 2012.
- 7.8 Work is underway to create a welcome leaflet for Leigh Park Gardens which will include the cycle and walking trails on offer.
- 7.9 The new PO9 newspaper is due to be launched soon. Staunton will have a regular feature with a mixture of editorial and advertising. The new paper has the potential readership of 30,000 homes in the local area.

## **8. Projects**

- 8.1 Work that began in August on the Wildlife Zone has progressed well. The rangers have completed most of the practical work. The education team are coordinating the interpretation and renovation of the building. The opening is expected in February.
- 8.2 The Senior Education Manager and the Senior Ranger have almost completed business options for the development of the coach house complex. The mandate was to generate income and provide much needed facilities, which would lead to an expanded use of the Country Park. Hampshire County Council Property Services have also shown an

interest in the project. Their support is needed to rectify some historical problems with the building.

- 8.3 There has been another delay with the installation of the play area; the manufacture of a number of bespoke items being installed in the barn has been delayed. Eibe Play Ltd are hopeful this will be the final hold-up and the items are now due on the 19 March 2012.

## **9. Operations**

- 9.1 The year anniversary of the Health and Safety audit performed by Hampshire County Council is coming up. The number of actions remaining to be completed is into single figures and, hopefully, will be down to zero from around the 50 that were asked to be dealt with.
- 9.2 One of cleaners has left her role of 18 hours a week after relocating. This gives us the opportunity to look into appointing someone to take over the role and also to lend support to the operation officer with maintenance and general housekeeping tasks. We are hoping to get a 30 hour a week post signed off. This will also help with the upcoming play barn and the requirements for cleaning.
- 9.3 The changing facilities project, which will see a brand new accessible changing room located in the visitor centre, is near to completion. The existing room has been knocked into the shop store cupboard and the outer wall was relocated a couple of feet further into the lobby to provide a large and modern changing facility for those with disabilities.
- 9.4 The Operational officer has recently completed the IOSH (Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) Safety Awareness for Facilities Managers Course with Hampshire County Council and is about to begin a NEBOSH (National Examination Board Occupational Safety and Health) General Certificate Course in Health and Safety at Highbury College. Having someone on site NEBOSH qualified will prove invaluable.

## **10. Recommendation:**

- That the JMC notes the content of this report.
- That the JMC approves the new pricing structure for 2012/13.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

DocumentLocation

None

**IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

**1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

**2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

**3. Climate Change:**

How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?