

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	SIR GEORGE STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK JMC
Date:	MONDAY 14 MAY 2012
Title:	PARK MANAGER'S REPORT
Reference:	3897
Report From:	GORDON GARDNER

Contact name: Gordon Gardner

Tel: 023 9245 3405 **Email:** gordon.gardner@hants.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The following report updates members of the Joint Management Committee on developments at the Park since the previous Park Manager's Report presented on 27 February 2012.
- 1.2 Staunton ended the year well in terms of visitor numbers, with 19.4% above last year and 13.6% above budget. January to March were excellent months .
- 1.3 In terms of visitor numbers this happens to be a record for Staunton. The last time we recorded over 130,000 visitors was in 2008/2009 at 130,530. 2011/12 finished on 134,008.
- 1.4 We have now opened 'George's Play Barn' and it has already received many compliments. It has been used the way we had envisaged, as a wet weather haven. There have been no serious issues so far. The official opening will be later in May.

2. Business

- 2.1 The last financial year finished (2011-12) with 134,008 visitors having entered the Ornamental Farm and Gardens (including educational visits). As outlined above this represents a excellent increase in visitor numbers when compared with last year (an increase of 21,805 visitors). (See Appendix 1 for more detailed information).
- 2.2 Membership has taken around £121,500 (See Appendix 2 for a break down of figures). We managed to be 31% above last year, which is a superb increase and continues Staunton's change from being an attraction over-reliant on day visitors.

2.3 Since May 2011 Staunton Country Park Membership has grown from 3,814 members to 4,274, a 460 member increase. Members have visited Staunton 26,811 times, which equates to an average of 6.3 times. This is good news as it shows our members value the membership.

2.4 The cafe is now being run by HC3S, Hampshire County Council's in-house caterers. We are pleased with HC3S's performance so far. They have taken over managing the café on the Country Park side and put catering into the Gothic Barn with the new play area.

3. Farm

3.1 A new foal from our shire horse 'Rose' has received lots of publicity already.

3.2 We are still losing lambs to the Schmallenberg virus; over a third have been lost so far. This is a real blow as we had hoped to increase our herd to fill our increased land holding.

3.3 With support from the education team we have improved the quality and frequency of our animal encounters. I'm very impressed with progress so far.

4. Education

4.1 Although figures are not yet finalised, from April 2011 to March 2012 10,280 children visited the Park. This is less than last year, however, we have done well to achieve this with fewer members. The education team have succeeded in increasing membership from 17 to 34.

4.2 Education are currently working with marketing on our interpretation and signage. It is one of the key criticisms from our visitors, that they have enjoyed their visit to Staunton but feel they have missed something.

5. Countryside

5.1 Staunton's firewood supply is hopefully better prepared for the next winter season; we currently have a massive surplus with more trees to process.

5.2 Talks with Portsmouth Water were successful; we will now manage a further 51ha of grazing land adjoining the park. This gives the farm team more layback pasture and also gives us access to a further £9,000 through SFP (single farm payment).

6. Marketing and Events

6.1 Social media is working very well - Twitter has 3,350 followers and Facebook has close to 1,450. Social media, in conjunction with our

website, play an important part in raising the profile of Staunton Country Park.

- 6.2 The website is getting a facelift, taking the user much more into account and using modern methods to produce a user friendly website. The graphics team will start with the front page soon and complete the back pages over the next 2 months.

7. Projects

- 7.1 The first phase of the coach house development is now complete. The bike hire company is in place, catering is available and toilets have been provided.

8. Operations

- 8.1 The year anniversary of the Health and Safety audit performed by Hampshire County Council has been completed. Although we have a few actions to complete it is thought that we have reached an acceptable standard.
- 8.2 The changing facilities project has now been completed to much fanfare. We have already received a lot of interest from groups with special needs. As there are not many of these facilities in Hampshire we hope Staunton will come a popular destination.

9. Recommendation:

- That the JMC notes the content of this report.

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

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

Equality objectives are not considered to be adversely affected by the proposals in this report.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

The proposals in this report are not considered to have any direct impact on the prevention of crime.

3. Climate Change:

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

There are no proposals within the report which will 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?

There are no proposals within the report which will impact on our need to adapt to climate change.