

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Report**

Committee:	SIR GEORGE STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK JMC
Date:	3 SEPTEMBER 2012
Title:	PARK MANAGER'S REPORT
Reference:	4234
Report From:	GORDON GARDNER

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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 14 May 2012.

Staunton has had a tough start to the new financial year. Up to the end of June visitor numbers were down by 13%, but a strong July has seen the drop reduced to 2.9%. Membership has grown strongly despite the weather conditions and is up on last year by around 36%.

'George's Play Barn' has proven that a wet weather contingency will mitigate against freak weather. A high proportion of the membership growth came from the visitors buying into the play barn.

2. Business

- 2.1 Over the first four months Staunton has had 53,207 visitors, a fall of 1,593 (54,800). April was the worst hit month - 35% down, May slightly down and June was up by a few hundred visitors; but July had an extraordinary month at 45% up. (See Appendix 1 for more detailed information).
- 2.2 Membership has taken around £58,733 (See Appendix 2 for a break down of figures). We have had a superb start to the year at 36% above last year; this an excellent increase and proves the necessity of wet weather cover.
- 2.3 Staunton now has 4,953 members, which is an increase of 35% over July last year (3,657). This further supports the trend towards membership rather than day visitors being the key income stream. (See Appendix 3 for more detail)

2.4 The cafe run by HC3S, Hampshire County Council's in-house caterers, continues to improve. They have suffered over the last quarter which were expected to be their strongest months. Working alongside the caterers we have tried to have a seven day operation in the Coach House. In the new play barn Staunton will be bringing in self-serve units.

3. Farm

3.1 We have introduced two new goats (Anglo Nubian) to the children's paddock. They have been well received, although the goats have been trying to escape causing lots of fun and games. One of the goats has been named 'Gordon'

3.2 Lamb and beef will be back on sale in the shop. We have advertised our boxed lamb deal, which was very popular last year.

3.3 The young alpacas and llamas have been real hit. Some excellent PR has come off the back of their births.

4 Education

4.1 Staunton has had another busy year with 11,208 education visits! A record from last years 9,345 visits.

4.2 STAG – Staunton's Talented And Gifted has continued to work with children from 8 local schools for the sixth year.

4.3 The Education Team have finished teaching the 2nd Year ELB diploma group from Fareham and Gosport Consortium and all the students have passed with good grades.

4.4 Since September 2011 Staunton has been delivering an Animal Care Diploma every Tuesday for 10 students from The Petersfield School; from September 2012 we will be taking on an additional group of students to run a first and second year group, every Tuesday and Thursday.

4.5 The Beacon Partnership – a partnership with Highbury college and Havant Day Services working with students with special needs in the Nursery site project continues. Working with our Garden Team the students have grown plants to sell at our Gift Shop.

4.6 With over 4,312 days of mainstream and supported volunteers last year, we are looking to recruit a Volunteer Co-ordinator once the business case has been approved.

4.7 The American Grounds Hut is in the process of being transformed into a Naturalists Garden. The interpretation/demonstration area will feature lots of information and suggestions for the public on how to bring wildlife into your garden, including a pond, meadow and bird hide.

5 Countryside

- 5.1 Staunton has been inspected by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). This was to confirm we are following procedures regarding single farm payments, HLF and keeping sound records for our animals.
- 5.2 The Park is finalising details with Portsmouth Water over the new land it will now manage. This would give us access to a further £9,000 through SFP (single farm payment).
- 5.3 With the Senior Ranger now working at Manor Farm Country Park we are using this as an opportunity to take a look at our current ranger team cover.
- 5.4 The Park has welcomed Tim Speller (Queen Elizabeth Country Park) who will be supporting all the outside teams. Tim comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience that will help take our country park to the next level.

6 Marketing and Events

- 6.1 Social media is working very well - Twitter has 3,350 followers and Facebook now has over 2,200.
- 6.2 The first stage of the George signage is up; the plan is to increase the dwell time around the park by encouraging visitors to take the planned route.
- 6.3 George has been created into a mascot for the park and he will be out every weekend and everyday of the summer holidays.
- 6.4 Work is still underway for the map on the farm side and Leigh Park Gardens and the plan is to have this completed by September.
- 6.5 Hampshire County Council marketing are working on the new logo for the Park and hope to have the first visuals in the near future.
- 6.6 Staunton Live was on Sunday 19th August and feature Abba Magic and Pink Floyd. It was the most successful event so far in terms of numbers (8,000-10,000). Staunton will have to look carefully at how to have Staunton Live in the future with reference to funding.

7. Projects

- 7.1 We have successfully won lottery funding to carry out a school project to design and make stain glass windows for the Gothic Library; it will

incorporate local history with art and design. The project will start in September and aims to be completed for November.

- 7.2 The education manager has been working on setting up a co-operative in the Coach House, working with play providers, Highbury College, cycle hire and catering.
- 7.3 As part of a HCC Countryside project Staunton will be getting experienced support in putting together a project plan. The outcome from this will be teasing out key projects for feasibility studies.
- 7.4 There have been a numbers of delays in completing projects. This has been due to changes to the Countryside service structures and the loss of the key Senior Ranger. The simplest solution would be to get contractors to complete the works but due to tight funding on these projects this has not been a option.

8. Operations

- 8.1 The areas still needing completion from the Health and Safety audit are COSHH, Manual Handling and glazing risk assessments. The Health and Safety Officer is happy with the progress the Park has made on these.
- 8.2 Staunton now has cleaning contractors doing part of our cleaning. Rather than only having just contractors or a in-house team it is more practical for Staunton to have a split option.

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:

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

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

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

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. 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

- 3.2. 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