

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>SIR GEORGE STAUNTON COUNTRY PARK JMC</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>MONDAY 3 DECEMBER 2012</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>PARK MANAGER'S REPORT</b>
<b>Reference:</b>	<b>4470</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 3 September 2012.

Staunton continues to turn around the tough start to the financial year. Up to the end of October visitor numbers were up by 9.6% and 3% above budget. Membership grew strongly despite the weather conditions and are up on last year by around 36%.

The 'Naturalist Gardens' ( Wild Zone ) will have had its official opening on the 28 November. This excellent new resource will now be available to the education team.

#### 1. Business

- 1.1 So far this year Staunton has had just under 100,000 visitors (99,547), a increase of 8,700 visitors over last year. August and September performed well and October did better than expected, although the poor weather kept away the day visitors. (See Appendix 1 for more detailed information).
- 1.2 Membership has taken around £94,787 (See Appendix 2 for a break down of figures). We are continuing the trend from the start of the year at just under 37% above last year. If this pattern takes us to the end of the year we should see membership making around £165,000.
- 1.3 Staunton now at 5,162 members. This is a 4.2% increase since August (4,953). This is due to excellent administration and great soft selling from the visitor service team. (See Appendix 3 for more detail)

- 1.4 Staunton has hired some new visitor service staff to support the growing business needs. With the growth in membership, increased visitor numbers and the wider remit for the front desk team this was urgently needed.
- 1.5 The front desk team are having some issues with clarifying which children are over the age of 3. In the first instance it could be easier to ascertain a child's age if we reduced the free range down to under 2's.
- 1.6 We are also looking into a better customer flow through the entrance and retail areas. Although the system works well most of the time it bottle necks around the entrance can build up quite quickly and the current flow does not work well for visitors with access issues.

## **2. Farm**

- 2.1 'Shadow' the young shire foal has been sold for £1,200 to the Cheshire Shire Horse Centre. 'Rose' is due to have another foal in late summer 2013.
- 2.2 £5300 worth of calves were sold in September. With access to more land ( Portsmouth Water) Staunton should have more opportunities to fatten calves and lambs.
- 2.3 With the lower lambing numbers this year the Park has had to purchase some new ewes – Wiltshire Horns.
- 2.4 The new lambing shed is now back on track with enough funding in place to ensure it is in place by April/May 2013.
- 2.5 Due to changes to capital/revenue funding the new hayshed will have a delay until Staunton can find other funding.

## **3. Education**

- 3.1 The Stained Glass window project has been started and is going incredibly well. It will be completed by March 2013 and if anyone wants to be involved let us know.
- 3.2 The Naturalists' Garden opening on 28 November will be attended by Front Lawn Junior School.
- 3.3 The Victorian Coach House has been used much more, especially over half-term. There have been issues with toilet capacity. The lease agreements will be in place for a pilot year from January 2013.
- 3.4 The Beacon Community Partnership now has a project manager, alongside the mainstream partnership, who is offering supported volunteer places and developing social enterprise. I would recommend a presentation to JMC at a future meeting to raise awareness of this innovative scheme.

- 3.5 Final figures for education numbers for the academic year 2011/12 have been confirmed as approximately 11,000, which was a great number.
- 3.6 Two accredited animal care courses are running at Staunton. The Park is working with Highbury College to explore the possibility of them relocating their animal care team to Staunton full time. There is huge development potential in our 14-19 programme leading to becoming a learning centre for land-based industries.
- 3.7 The Park is continuing to develop and improve its Short Breaks programme, specifically for children with disabilities and their families.

#### **4. Countryside**

- 4.1 Staunton has been inspected by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). On the whole Staunton is following procedures with just some tightening of administration to be carried out.
- 4.2 A new contract with Portsmouth Water for land at Gypsy Plain has been agreed.
- 4.3 The countryside team, with support from Tim Speller (QECP), have been dealing with a number of potentially high risk trees. Some of these trees have been close to Leigh Park properties. In conjunction with this Staunton is clearing up issues on our boundaries over land ownership.
- 4.4 With local bike groups, Portsmouth water, local councillors and other interested parties Staunton will be improving our bike/walking network. This will include adding more way-signage, extending routes and opening up others in the future.

#### **5. Marketing and Events**

- 5.1 HCC's new structure of media buying has resulted in us working with a media buying agency called Mediacom. We are uncertain at this stage as to the increased costs to Staunton; to date the Park has not been charged any commission for the bookings made but this is more than likely to happen in the future.
- 5.2 A new welcome leaflet is due to be completed in December 2012 , ready for distribution in January 2013 (appendix 4 most current version)
- 5.3 The Park is currently working on a social media campaign to double the number of fans on our Facebook page; this currently stands at 2,530 fans.
- 5.4 The Park is investigating ways of getting more investments for Staunton Live as access to community budgets is looking unlikely for next year.

## **6. Projects**

- 6.1 The social enterprise project at the Coach House is a work in progress. The education manager has had some difficulties in getting a short term contract in place. This should have been resolved now with support from the estates team.
- 6.2 The first meetings have been held to tease out the future development plan at Staunton Country Park; this included a meeting with virtually all the Staunton team. As referred to at last JMC in September 2012 this is to find out what makes Staunton a great place to visit and what improvements could be put in place make it even better. As part of a HCC Countryside project plan Staunton will be getting experienced support to put together a project plan. Part of this process would include a 'special' session with the JMC.
- 6.3 The volunteer group have submitted an application for a grant from Sita to improve the access links for customers to free-to-use areas. If successful the group plan to repair/reconstruct several paths around the car park and also install some new ones, enabling people to move safely around both the car park and to the Country Park.. The money will pay for all tools, materials, training for the volunteer scheme and cover the cost of the support staff for at least another 6 months. The result of the application is due at the end of 2012 and the work is planned for spring time if successful.

## **7. Operations**

- 7.1 The park has recently received a fire audit from the Risk and Business Continuity adviser for HCC. The audit was largely good. There were a few actions required, which include reviewing the fire management plan risk assessment and the changing of a fire exit.
- 7.2 Training sessions are due to take place in the near future for all teams on manual handling. Steve Peach (QECP) a manual handling trainer for HCC has agreed to come to Staunton and visit all teams within their own department; this will make the training both more interesting and appropriate for the individuals.

## **8. Gardens & Glasshouses**

- 8.1 A new member has been added to the Gardens Team (Ryan Bodsworth). Ryan not only works for Garden Team but also has a additional role within Visitor Services.
- 8.2 Another 50% of the box hedging has been removed from within the walled garden due to disease. It has been replaced with timber edging boards.

8.3 The Butterfly zone is almost complete with just interpretation work still be done.

**9. Recommendation:**

- That the JMC notes the content of this report.

**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:**

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.