

Report

Committee/Panel:	Sir George Staunton Country Park
Date:	23 September 2013
Title:	Review of Business Development at the Park
Reference:	5154
Report From:	Adam Owen

Contact name: Adam Owen, Countryside Team Leader (Business Development)

Tel: 01962 845 169 **Email:** Adam.owen@hants.gov.uk

1. Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to review the recent developments at Staunton Country Park with respect to their impact on visitor numbers and income. The forthcoming Emerging strategy is also discussed.

2. Business development

2.1. There have been four major initiatives in recent years to improve the appeal of the park and to increase visits in the winter.

2.2. The play barn was opened in April 2012. Graphs 1 and 2 below shows visitor numbers to the whole Park and income for the same period prior and post this installation. It can be seen that visitor numbers increased by 31%. However, income was down by 4% between 2012 and 2013. This was principally down to very poor weather in the first financial quarter of 2012.

2.3. The play barn cost £68,761.23 to construct.

2.4. The Naturalist Garden was opened in November 2012. The project cost £45,000 and was 100% grant funded.

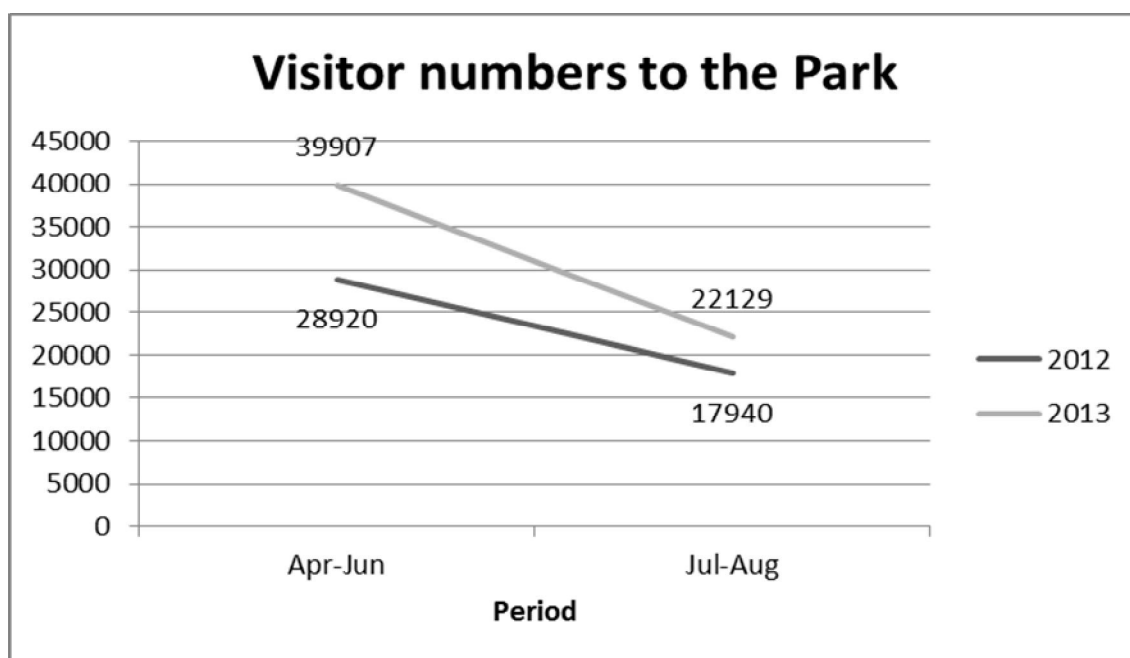
2.5. In February 2013 the butterfly house was opened for one month and this also had an impact. By analysing the same period in 2012 and 2013 (graphs 3 and 4) it can be seen that visitor numbers increased by 31% and income by 88%.

2.6. The butterfly house project cost £3,000 to implement.

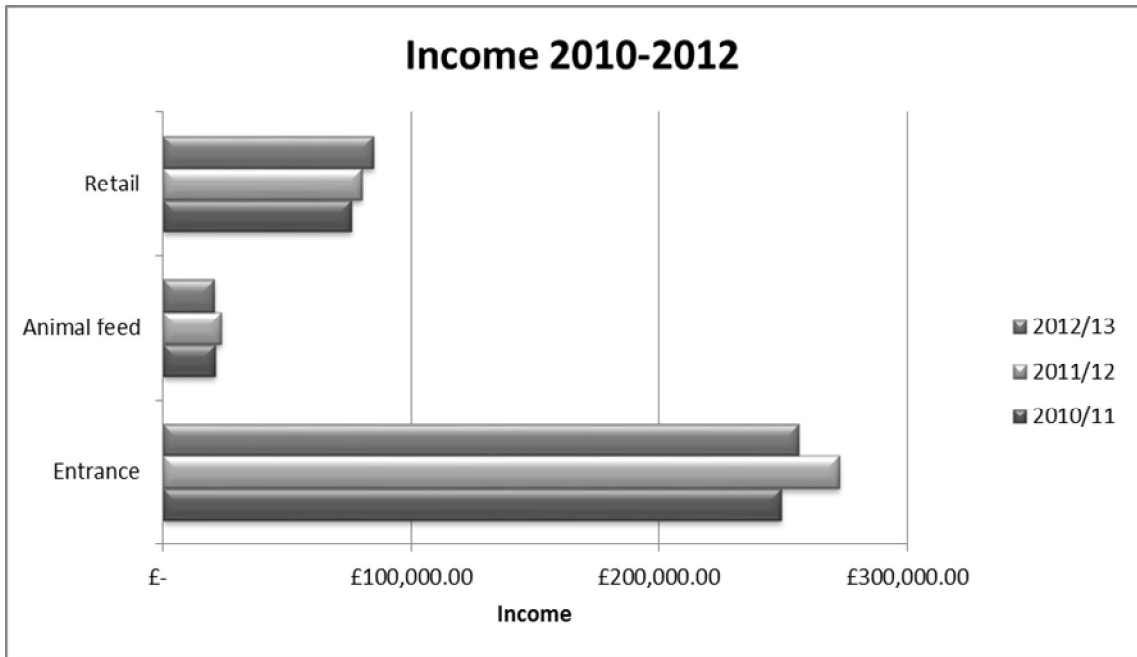
2.7. 'Windows into the Past', a project to restore the stained glass windows in the Gothic Library was opened in July 2013. The project cost £17,500 and was 100% grant funded.

2.8. It is not possible to directly link visitor numbers and income to the development of the Naturalist Garden and the Gothic Library project due to the nature of these developments. However, it is evident that visitor numbers are increasing, as too is income and thus they are a contributing factor.

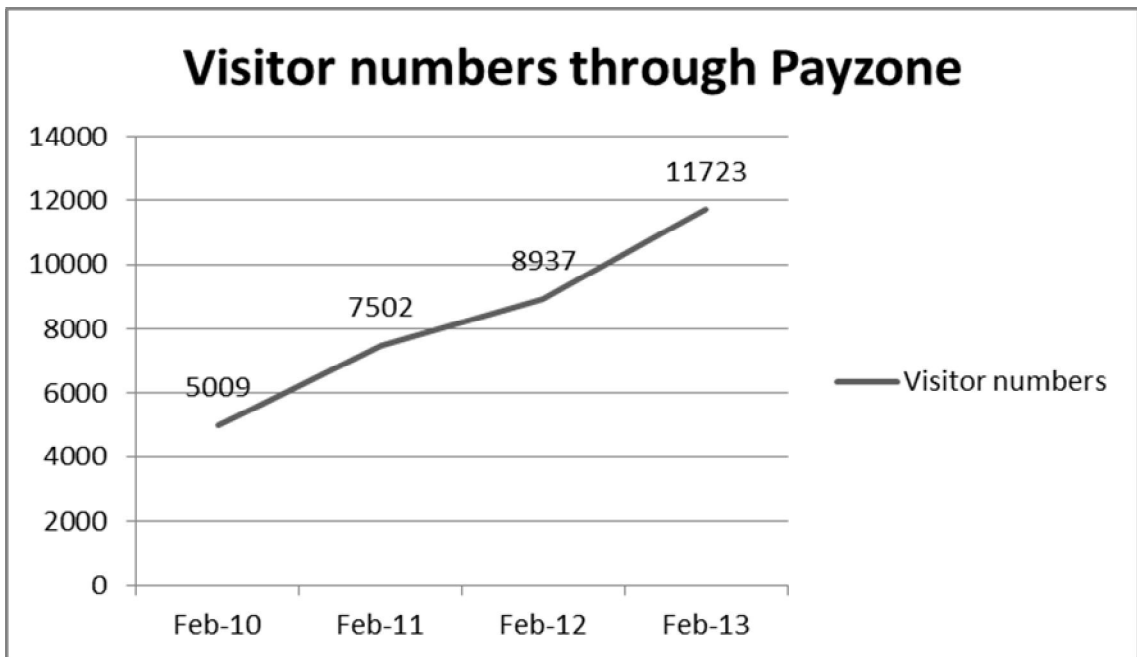
- 2.9. Whilst visitor numbers and income have increased in some areas, notably retail, over the period 2010-2012 the appeal of such initiatives are finite. There was no long-term planning for these developments or a consideration on the impact to the rest of the site. The projects were a rapid response to achieving greater income in year.
- 2.10. The demographic of visitors remain adults with young children. Older children, adults, large groups, ethnic minorities are not regular visitors. There is a need to improve and widen the offer to the public to attract all sections of the population.
- 2.11. Since May 2013 HCC has invested £100, 000 in two buildings, the hay barn and the agricultural barn. The hay barn was required to be complicit with health and safety regulations and storage of hay. The agricultural barn was a supported project to enable the management of livestock as well as utilisation for public events.



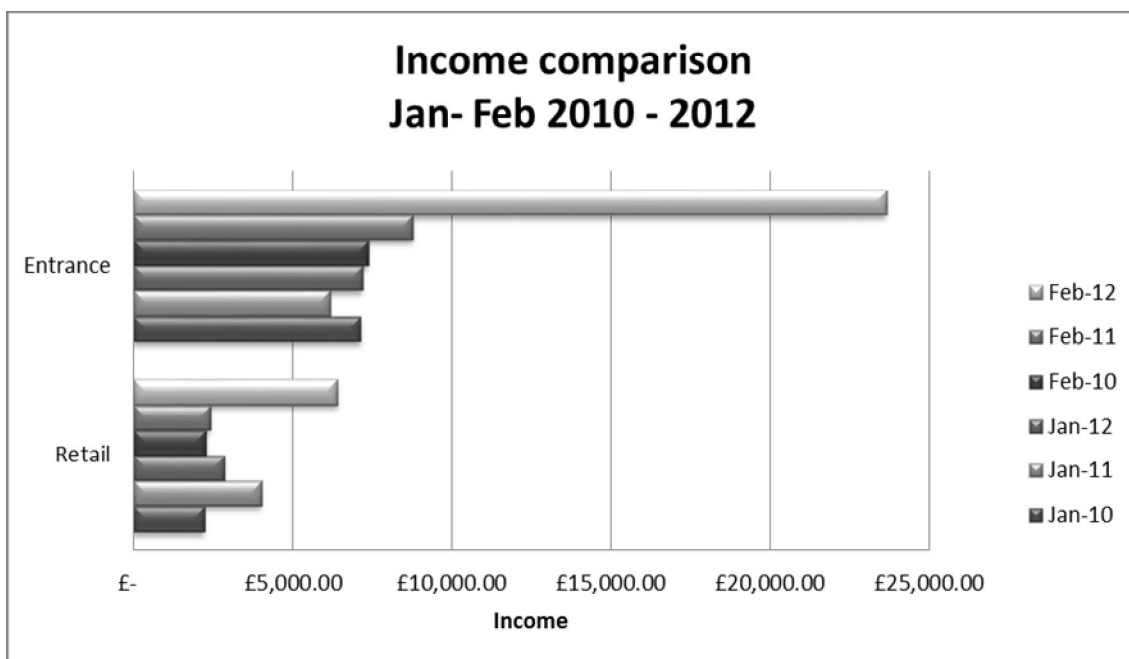
Graph 1: Note figures for Jul-Aug are low as 2013 is an incomplete data set at time of report, and 2012 figures have been adjusted to be representative of the same period i.e. to 15 August.



Graph 2



Graph 3



Graph 4

3. Future direction – Emerging strategy

- 3.1. A number of workshops have been held with staff at the park in the last 12 months. These have been to review the current status of the park and seek views as to what the future could look like. The results of these workshops have been collated into an emerging strategy which visualises the park in the future and sets out a clear action plan to implement this visioning.
- 3.2. Currently the document is in draft format and will be peer reviewed by a working group of HCC officers. Once this has been completed, by October 2013, the document will be reviewed by staff and stakeholders. At Staunton this includes the JMC. Recommendations will be considered and the actions from the emerging strategy will then delivered over the defined period.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1. That Members acknowledge and accept the content of the report.

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

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

Any future development will have a full EIA as part of a feasibility study

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

N/A

3. Climate Change:

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

Any future development will consider climate change as part of a feasibility study

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

As above