

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

DEPARTMENT: STREET SCENE

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Cllr Mike Booth	Leisure	September / October 2011

PARKS AND GREENSPACES

1. Park Ranger Summary Report 2010/11

As in previous years, an 'end of year' report of the Park Ranger Service has been produced. The service has continued to keep Sefton's parks a safe and positive place for people to visit with thousands of positive interactions with the Borough's park-users including:

- 5,299 Volunteer Hours facilitated by Park Rangers in parks
- 4,441 School/College students attended Park Ranger Sessions
- 16,252 People attended Park Ranger Activities in parks
- 5,425 Park Visits made by Park Ranger Cluster teams
- 16,000 Poop-Scoop Bags issued to dog walkers

The Service is continuing to address issues of anti-social behaviour in parks by leading on a varied programme of park activities, educational sessions and by providing a positive presence in the parks.

2. Halloween / Mischief Night Diversionsary Activities

In the run-up to mischief night, and in the absence of any other provision of diversionary activities in the Borough, the Park Rangers provided a range of activities throughout the October half-term period. This included Conker Championships, Pumpkin Carving, Halloween Horrors, and a full scale imported Skate Park at Potters Barn Park secured through partnership funds from Church and Linacre & Derby Wards, Merseyside Police and Adactus Housing.

3. Wild About Plants

Wild about Plants is a national project. The Park Rangers are working with the charity Plantlife in Linacre/Derby ward and engaging 5 local schools in the initiative. In the first year of the project the partnership has delivered a series of workshops in schools and local parks. The project aims to increase learning opportunities about the natural environment in local parks, supporting children to increase interest and enthusiasm for the natural world and confidence in accessing these spaces.

4. 'In Bloom' Competition

Pride and passion best describes this year's In Bloom efforts as community groups, schools, Council officers and contractors all embraced In Bloom, and worked in partnership to help make Sefton a better place to live and work. The three main town entries for Southport, Crosby and Waterloo, and Maghull, all won Silver Gilt awards. In addition this year, a record number of Neighbourhood Entries were submitted by local communities who understand the ethos of In Bloom, which is to help build and create healthy and environmentally sustainable communities for people to live and work.

5. Park Activities and Summer Park Fun Days

Organised activities in Parks are a good way of attracting new audiences, and getting messages across to visitors about the benefits and responsible use of parks. This summer saw a series of 26 fun days in the parks for all the family. Despite a relatively poor summer for weather, these attracted over 8250 people into the park including 4070 children! This represents an extra 1500 attendees compared to last year. These fun days included a bouncy castle, DJ, circus skills, as well as sports coaching, face painting, arts and crafts and drama. With the fun days and the other activities, Parks and Green Spaces have hosted over 400 activities since April.

6. Park Improvements

Over the summer period there have been significant landscape improvements to two of our major parks. At Hatton Hill Park in Litherland, approximately 20% of the park has been improved by turning old, redundant tennis courts, into terraced lawns. This has meant the space can be enjoyed by the public for informal relaxation, instead of an area that had, effectively, become inaccessible and unusable. A new ramp arrangement allows better access to the pavilion and generally, the appearance of this section of the park has been greatly improved.

At Victoria Park in Waterloo, a new toddlers play area with seating, and a new footpath to allow better circulation has been created, along with improvements around the pavilion. Both of these schemes have been very well received by the public and illustrate the ongoing commitment to improve our parks for the people of Sefton.

COAST & COUNTRYSIDE

7. Ribble Estuary Cockle Fishery Update

The initial high numbers of cockle gatherers accessing the estuary from Sefton fell after the initial two week of activity as predicted. The operation on the Sefton (south) side was deemed a huge success by all the agencies involved; including the Cockle Merchants and gatherers. However, cockling in the Ribble Estuary continues to cause problems for Local Authorities and the emergency services - although currently this is from the Lytham (north side) and relates mostly to accessing the beds by boat. There have been incidents virtually every day that have involved the rescue of cocklers by the rescue services.

There is the potential for the numbers accessing the shore from Sefton to increase if increased controls are put in place on the north side. The Coast and Countryside Service continues to have a daily presence, in order to ensure that early success is sustained through the management of permits and through continued liaison with partners in the operational plan.

Cemeteries and Crematoria

8. Southport Crematorium Open Day

The Cemeteries and Crematoria Service held another successful open day with over 150 people visiting Southport Crematorium. As well as talking to staff the visitors had the opportunity to tour the crematorium including a look behind the scenes.

Whilst the main purpose of the open day was to help dispel concerns and fears about cremations, we took the opportunity to ask visitors to complete a short questionnaire to provide feedback and to help improve our service.

- 98% of visitors said that the Open Day met their information needs
- 98% of visitors said that they thought the staff were caring and professional
- 97% of visitors thought that the Crematorium was clean and well-maintained
- 92% of visitors thought the grounds were well-maintained
- 90% of visitors said that the leaflets were informative
- 84% of visitors thought that the Cemeteries and Crematoria web pages met their information needs.

- Visitors quotes
 - “Very informative”
 - “Very interesting and helpful”
 - “My mum will be cremated next Tuesday...I promised her I would be there to the end. Thank you for putting my mind at rest”
 - “Dispelled some myths”