Report To:	WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date:	19 February 2018
Reporting Officer:	Assistant Executive Director, Place
	David Cannon, Greenspace Development Officer
Subject:	GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT
Report Summary:	To inform Members of activities undertaken within the Country Park since the last meeting of the Joint Management Committee (20 November 2017).
Recommendations:	That the report be noted.
Links to Community Strategy:	To ensure that the Country Park is an attractive and environmentally friendly place to visit.
Policy Implications:	The activities in the Country Park are in accordance with Council policy priorities.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	The funding for the projects is met by the Operations and Greenspace revenue budget.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	It is important that the Joint Management Committee is kept informed of activities undertaken in the Country Park.
Risk Management:	Activities in the Country Park are kept under review in order to ensure any potential risks are dealt with adequately.
Access to Information:	Background papers and information can be obtained by contacting David Cannon, Greenspace Development Officer,
	C phone: 0161 368 6667

e-mail: david.cannon@tameside.gov.uk

1. MAINTENANCE OF SITES

1.1 The summer grass cutting programme for 2018 is due to start the beginning of April. The programme includes: the grass cutting of the Lower Higham Visitor Centre area, car parks, access points, picnic areas and strips along footpaths. The cost of this programme of maintenance is paid by Tameside Council.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP – HIGHER LEVEL AGREEMENT 2010 – 2020 UPDATE

- 2.1 Environmental Stewardship agreements have five primary objectives:-
 - Wildlife conservation
 - Maintenance and enhancement of landscape quality and character
 - Natural resource protection
 - Protection of the historic environment; and
 - Promotion of public access and understanding of the countryside

Environmental Stewardship – Higher Level agreements are only suitable for land that is of "significant environmental interest".

- 2.2 Since the agreement started in January 2010 the Country Park has received in total £39,158 of grant income from Natural England.
- 2.3 At the time of this report the Country Park is compliant with all aspects of this agriagreement.

3. PUBLIC EVENTS

3.1. The winter/spring 2017 to 2018 programme of events at Werneth Low Country Park is as follows:-

Date	Event	Attendance
17 December 2017	Christmas Ramble Around Werneth Low	34
28 January 2018	New Year's Ramble Around Werneth Low	27
25 March 2018	Roman History of Werneth Low Walk	
1 April 2018	Easter Egg Hunt	
30 April 2018	Ramble to Chadkirk Chapel	
	Total	61

3.2 The summer 2018 programme of public events is currently being planned, which will include Flora Walks, a History Walk, a Poetry Walk and an all-day ramble to Cown Edge. All the events will be included in Tameside's Greenspace publications and social media platforms.

4. WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK GREENSPACE VOLUNTEER SERVICE

4.1 Since the last meeting of the Country Park Joint Management Committee the volunteers have held 3 meetings. The volunteers assist the Greenspace Development Officer with public events, the maintenance and general upkeep of sites, and staffing the visitor centre. There are at present 15 members in the volunteer service.

- 4.2 At the October 2017 meeting of the Country Park Greenspace Volunteer Service the Volunteers agreed the major projects to be undertaken during winter and spring 2017/2018. The project list of works with update of progress can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.3 Volunteer Mike Kelly has completed re-laying 200 metres of hedgerow near Higham Lane in Shepley's Meadow. This project is Heritage Lottery funded and jointly managed with Woodland Officer, Andy Long from Manchester City of Trees. We expect to receive £5.00 per metre for the completed project.
- 4.4 In addition to the hedhelaying in Shepley's Meadow, Volunteer Mike Kelly is now laying a further 38 metres of hedgerow at Ash Cottage on Higham Lane. This project has also been included in the submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 4.5 On Monday 5 February the Country Park Volunteer Service celebrated their 30th Annual General Meeting. Since 1988 the volunteers have played a major and significant role in the stewardship and care of the Country Park. Their work, focusing right across the whole management spectrum of the conservation of Werneth Low, has saved the Management Committee tens of thousands of pounds, provided a viable means of engaging the local and wider community and ensured the Country Park is fit for purpose.

5. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2017

5.1 On Sunday 12 November 2017 the annual Service of Remembrance was held at the Cenotaph on Werneth Low. The commemoration was supported and attended by over 500 people and is the most important occasion in the Country Park's calendar of events.

6. THE LOWER HIGHAM VISITOR CENTRE

- 6.1 Lauren Gradwell, The Hyde War Memorial Trust's archivist, has installed a new exhibition covering all the years of The Great War 1914 1919 in the visitor centre. The exhibition has raised much interest especially the poignant feature of young men, from the Ashton Brothers Training Corps, using Werneth Low as a training ground prior to joining the armed services.
- 6.2 On 23 January we welcomed 30 Year 4 children from Holy Trinity School Gee Cross to the Visitor Centre. The children learnt about the Country Park, in particular the history of the purchase of the land and farm in memory of the 710 servicemen from Hyde, Gee Cross and Newton killed in The Great War.
- 6.3 Arrangements are well underway for the 11th Alder School Cross Country Run around Werneth Low Country Park. This annual event raises thousands of pounds for The Christie Hospital in Manchester and is a great link between our local schools and the Country Park.

7. **VISITORS – 2017**

7.1 Active monitoring data for The Lower Higham Visitor Centre 2017:-

Month	Lower Higham Visitor Centre					
January	207					
February	202					
March	357					
April	590					
May	339					
June	213					
July	165					
August	390					
September	179					
October	173					
November	759					
December	106					
2017 Totals	3,680					
Previous	3,719					
Years Total:						

8. WILDLIFE NATURE CONSERVATION

8.1 Over the winter there has been a small flock of Bullfinches in residence around the gardens at Lower Higham. Feeding off Sunflower seeds on the bird table these handsome finches are normally seen at lower locations than Werneth Low. The collective noun for a group of Bullfinches is: a bellowing, which may be linked to their piping call that can be heard at no small distance.

APPENDIX 1

Werneth Low Country Park Greenspace Volunteers 2017 2018 Winter Maintenance of Sites Projects

Project Ref	Location		Task					Comple	<u>tion Date</u>
1	Hackingknife Woodl	and	Plant 2,000 Pseudo narcissi					October 2017	
2	Lower Higham Drive)	Cut back 3	Cut back 30 metres of hedgerow					October 2017
3	Hackingknife		Tractor cu	t Rosebay	Willowher	b			October 2017
4	Lower Higham - Cov	v Lane	Cut back,	prune hed	gerow and	sweep lan	ie, clean-o	ut grids	November 2017
5	Cenotaph Area		Cut grass/	edge off.	Clean area	ready for l	Remembra	ince Day	November 2017
6	Lower Higham Gard	lens	Clean bor	ders and p	rune shrub	s ready fo	r Remenbi	ance Day	November 2017
7	Orchard Hedgerow		Reduce he	eight along	g all legnth	to aid sum	imer cuttin	g	November 2017
8	Lower Higham Cow	Lane	Tractor fla	il hedgero	w				November 2017
9	Lower Higham Visit	or Centre	Clean all b	anking an	d hedgerov	w around C	Garage Buil	ding	December 2017
10	Baron Fields Hazel	Coppice	Coppice H	azel in Me	morial Cop	pice and p	process tim	ber	January 2018
11	Rear of Hillcrest		Thin-out (Coppice					January 2018
12	Lower Higham Orch	ard	Cut back 4	0 metres o	of hedgero	w			March 2018
13	Flaggy Path Hedger	Cut back 124 metres of hedgerow						March 2018	
14	QCP Picnic Area		Cut back 5	4 metres o	of hedgero	w			March 2018
15	Lower Higham Car I	Park	Cut back 2	0 metres o	of Holly hee	dgerow			March 2018
16	Werneth Low Road		Cut back 356 metres of hedgerow						March 2018
17	Rig Field Meadow		Cut bBack 300 metres of hedgerow					March 2018	
18	Holy Trinity Paddoc		Cut back 60 metres of hedgerow					March 2018	
	Riding Track Highm	Cottages	Cut back 1	.40 metres	of hedger	w			March 2018
			Total Hed	ge Cutting	metres 1,0	94			
19	Shepley's Meadow			s of Hedge	, ,				March 2018
20	Ash Cottage		38 metres	of Hedgel	aying				March 2018
21	Milkwort Bank		Coppice/Cut Back Ulex europaeus (Common Gorse)					March 2018	
22	New Piece Meadow		Remove/cut back encoaching blackthorn					March 2018	
23	All Sites		Outstandi	ng from ac	ccess audit				March 2018
24	Higham Cottage Ste	ps	Prune/Cro	wn Lift Oa	ak trees				March 2018
25	Baron Fields Woodl	Remove Blackthorn suckers from corner with Hillcrest					st	March 2018	

Completed Projects