Report To: WERNETH LOW COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT

COMMITTEE

Date: 23 November 2015

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 (16 March 2015).

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,

phone: 0161-368-6667

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

1. Maintenance of Sites

- 1.1 The summer grass cutting programme for 2015 concluded at the end of October. The programme included grass cutting of the Lower Higham Visitor Centre area, car parks, access points, picnic areas and strips along footpaths.
- 1.2 The footpath refurbishment works around the Baron Fields Woodlands area of the Country Park have been completed. These footpaths are well used routes by many people especially school children making their way from the Arnold Road area of Gee Cross to Holy Trinity School on Higham Lane.

The work included scraping existing surfaces and relaying new wearing courses, excavation of new drainage ditches and installation of new drains and headwalls, excavation of existing drainage ditches and extending catchment areas.

The project cost was: £6,298.

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 In January 2015 the Country Park received £1,655 of grant income which was the final payment for Year 5. Since the agreement started in January 2010 the Country Park has received in total £28,827 of grant income from Natural England.
- 2.3 In July Emily Bryan from Natural England conducted a site inspection of the areas in this agreement. Particular attention was directed at the sward composition of the meadows now we are at mid-agreement. It was evident from the diversity and abundance present that the Environmental Stewardship Agreement management prescriptions are delivering real positive outcomes. This was altogether a very successful inspection.

3. Werneth Low Country Park Greenspace Volunteer Service

- 3.1 Since the last meeting of the Country Park Joint Management Committee the volunteers have held 4 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 17 members of the volunteer service.
- 3.2 At the September 2015 meeting of the Country Park Greenspace Volunteer Service the Volunteers agreed the major projects to be undertaken during winter and spring 2015/2016. The full list can be found in the Appendices of this report in Appendix 1.

4. Public Events

4.1 The Country Park's winter/spring 2014/2015 programme of public events has been completed with the final event in April. The attendance was as follows:

Date	Event	Attendance
30 th November 2014	Crichton Porteous Ramble	18
7 th December 2014	Ramble to Mottram in Longdendale	56
28th December 2014	Mid-Christmas Ramble	22
25 th January 2015	Short Stroll Around Werneth Low	48
1 st March 2015	Roman History of Werneth Low Walk	18
5 th April 2015	Easter Egg Hunt	731
28 th April 2015	Ramble to Chadkirk Chapel	43
	Total to Date	936

4.2 The Country Park's summer 2015 programme of public events has been completed with the final event in September. The attendance was as follows:

Date	Event	Attendance
3 rd May 2015	Martin's Maps – Instruction on Map and Compass	8
16 th June 2015	Flora Walk Around Werneth Low	11
4 th August 2015	Flora Walk Around Werneth Low	12
13th September 2015	History Walk Around Werneth Low	15
27th September 2015	All Day Ramble to Cown Edge	34
	Total to Date	80

- 4.3 Two dry stone walling weekends have been completed during the summer one, in May and the other at the end of September. Thirty four people attended completing about 40 metres of wall build. These events are organised in co-operation with the Cheshire branch of the Dry Stone Walling Association. The Hyde War Memorial Trust supports the events by purchasing additional stone.
- 4.4 The 2015/2016 winter/spring programme of public events at the Country Park is as follows:

Date	Event	Attendance
4 th October 2015	Martin's Maps – Instruction on Map and Compass	2
6th December 2015	Ramble to Mottram in Longdendale	
27th December 2015	Mid-Christmas Ramble	
31st January 2016	Short Stroll Around Werneth Low	
28th February 2016	Roman History of Werneth Low Walk	
27 th March 2016	Easter Egg Hunt	
24 th April 2016	Ramble to Chadkirk Chapel	
	Total to Date	2

5. Visitors – Monitoring 2014 and 2015

5.1 Active monitoring data for **2015**:

Month	Lower Higham Visitor Centre	Counter on path from Lower Higham to Cenotaph	Counter on path from Quarry Car Park to Cenotaph
January	245	4,106	4,604
February	193	3,655	3,344
March	239	6,433	5,763
April	1,023	6,028	5,697
May	201	6,478	4,511
June	264	6,215	5,634
July	136	6,209	5,392
August	296	7,700	7,783
September	278	4,709	5,401
October	204	4,715	5,412
November			
December			
2015 Totals	3,079	56,248	53,541
to Date:			
Previous			
Years Totals:	4,114	60,848	52,431

6. Green Flag Award

6.1. This summer the Country Park received its twelfth consecutive Green Flag Award. This is a tremendous achievement and recognition of all the hard work undertaken by the diverse range of groups working for the good of the Country

The following lines are taken from information supplied by the group "Keep Britain Tidy" who manage the accreditation.

Green Flag: A national benchmark for parks and green spaces

"The Green Flag Award® scheme is the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK. It was first launched in 1996 to recognise and reward the best green spaces in the country. The first awards were given in 1997 and, many years later; it continues to provide the high level of quality against which our parks and green spaces are measured. It is also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve high environmental standards, setting a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas.

The Green Flag Award is one of a number of accreditation schemes that recognises excellence in the management of our public space."

7. Wildlife Nature Conservation

7.1 Once again visitors to the Park have been treated to some wonderful sights of Pink-footed geese flying high over the Low on their annual migration south. The birds are en-route from Martin Mere on the Lancashire wetlands to the Norfolk coast. The first 22 birds arrived at Martin Mere from Iceland on the 11th September and by the 8th October there were 30,000 at the reserve.

This breath taking autumn migration is one of the great wildlife spectacles in the North West and Werneth Low is a great place to watch it.

Appendix 1

Werneth Low Country Park Greenspace Volunteers 2015 2016 Winter Maintenance of Sites Projects

Project Ref	Location	Tasl	<u>c</u>				Comple	tion Date
1	Lower Higham - Cow La	ne Cut b	ack, prune hed	dgerow and	sweep lar	ie, clean-o	ut grids	October 2015
2	Cenotaph Area	Cut g	ass/edge off.	Clean area	ready for	Remembra	ance Day	October 2015
3	Lower Higham Gardens	Clear	borders and	orune shrub	s ready fo	r Remenbi	rance Day	October 2015
4	Lower Higham Visitor Ce	entre Clear	all banking ar	nd hedgero	w around (Garage Buil	lding	October 2015
5	Lower Higham Main Driv	ve Crow	n lift trees and	d clean off b	anking			October 2015
6	Higham Lane	Insta	l 2 metres of p	oitched path	n at stile at	Shepley's	Meadow	November 2015
7	Baron Fields Hazel Copp	oice Copp	ce Hazel in M	emorial Cop	ppice and p	rocess tim	nber	January 2016
8	Rear of Hillcrest	Thin-	out Coppice					January 2016
9	Flaggy Path	Edge	off and clean	134 metres	of flagg st	ones		January 2016
10	Hackingknife Woodland	Selec	tive thining					January 2016
11	Lower Higham Orchard	Cut b	ack 40 metres	of hedgero	W			March 2016
12	Flaggy Path Hedgerow	Cut b	ack 124 metre	s of hedger	ow			March 2016
13	QCP Picnic Area	Cut b	ack 54 metres	of hedgero	w			March 2016
14	Lower Higham Drive	Cut b	ack 30 metres	of hedgero	w			March 2016
15	Lower Higham Car Park	Cut b	ack 20 metres	of Holly he	dgerow			March 2016
16	Ash Cottage Picnic Area	Cut b	ack 46 metres	of hedgero	w			March 2016
17	Holy Trinity Paddock	Cut b	ack 60 metres	of hedgero	w			March 2016
18	Riding Track	Cut b	ack 140 metre	s of hedger	ow			March 2016
19	Earl of Warrington Mead	low Grub	out 128 metre	s of new lai	d hedgero	w		March 2016
20	Flaggy Path Hedgerow	L 36 E	S Post laying	trim 124 me	tres			March 2016
21	Higham Lane	298 n	etres of hedg	e cutting la	yed hedge	row		March 2016
22	Baron Fields Woodlands	Selec	tive thining es	specially alo	ong rights o	of way		March 2016
23	Windy Harbour	Comp	lete topping t	o masonry	wall and C	ock Brow b	oundary	March 2016
24	Rig Field Meadow	252 m	etres of Hedg	erow Layin	g			March 2016
25	Country Park	Audit	and install wa	aymarking/	OA signs			March 2016

Completed Projects		