



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Brooks Hill Country Park Update**

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1. Introduction

This report covers progress and developments at Brocks Hill Country Park (BH) and as requested by the Chair of Service Delivery Committee setting out achievements and work in progress since October 2015 when activity was last reported.

A further report shall be brought to the next Service Delivery Committee on 22 March 2016 with proposals for efficiency savings and maximising income at BH.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.** That Members note the report made.
- 2.2.** Delegation be given to the s151 Officer to review in-year the continued funding towards the Stepping Stone project as necessary, following further proposals for the project from Leicestershire County Council.

3. Information

3.1. Brocks Hill Country Park and Habitat Management

- Routine conservation management of site. All projects other than woodland thinning and tidying of stone/brash stores completed.
- Assistant Ranger post funded by GtB reserves completed 6th October 2015.
- TCV delivered a commissioned course at Brocks Hill which saw four students learn about hazel coppicing. The material was processed to make stakes and binders for future hedge laying courses. This was then purchased by TCV as part of the new wood sales from the site.
- Some work has been undertaken on boundary habitats based on feedback from neighbours with regard to ASB. One landowner approached for a "land grab" in the spring has subsequently removed the fences and laid boundary hedgerows.

3.2. Country Park Facilities

- Jubilee Amphitheatre used for equinox festival by Leicestershire and Rutland Pagan Federation. Meetings held with Borough Hindu Federation for Holi in March 2016. Discussions underway with theatre companies for 2016 tours.
- Volunteers have maintained fencing, wood chip and brash supplies around

the den building and fencing around the memorial mound. Brash is now coming from winter felling.

- Music/low key “busking” events with Wigston Magna Music Band and other local performers have provided popular weekend additions both at the Sundial, Centre and Amphitheatre. This promotion has led to Oadby and Wigston Scout Band doing a free performance at the Christmas Craft Fair. This helps local bands with their own recruitment and promotion and has been working well.

3.3. Community Engagement

- The door counters recorded visitor tallies in the Centre of:

September	9,561
October	11,777
Total Since April 1st	101,349
Total Since Jan 1st	124,701

- The Friends of Brocks Hill have continued to fundraise and promote the NDVD Programme. Their talks and events such as the Food Fair and heritage focussed talks continue to provide an added attraction to the site and bring in different audiences.
- Half-term holiday events had strong bookings. Events included up to three sessions a day. Over 90 people attended an event in association with Leicester Hedgehog Rescue and 60 attended a pilot evening with the Leicester Astronomical Society. The latter will be developed as paid for events in future, now there is a proven demand.
- Adult events are steadily building a profile, with excellent feedback and new visitors attracted.
- Leicester De Montfort Rotary Club has continued to photograph Brocks Hill as one of their 2015-16 environmental projects. A weekend guided walk was run for five members in October. The group are presenting funds to the Friends Group to buy a dedicated digital frame for the conservatory to display their images. They are looking at having an exhibition of images in 2016.
- Borough-wide Archaeology Field Work Group continues to meet at BH.
- Working with colleagues in Leisure Development for Brocks Hill to host the 2016 Sports Relief mile in March.
- Planning meeting held for Menphys sponsored walk May 2016.
- Through the Friends of Brocks Hill, contacts links have been made with Keyham SEN school. Year 9 pupils will visit on the 30th November for a guided walk to inspire them to make sculptures and features for around the Centre/play areas that reflect their thoughts about nature and being outdoors. This will be an ongoing project into 2016. This will link to the Natural Discovery Volunteer Development programme objectives.
- Support for Oadby Remembers event (commissioned input).
- Working with Community Engagement Officer discussions progressed with Borough Hindu Association around events and links to site in the Borough, outdoor yoga; community funding and events.

- Over 2,100 school children have had commissioned activities at Brocks Hill since April 1st with six schools attending September-November with 350 children. The highest number of pupils attending in a full year previous recorded was 1400 for the whole year 2011-12.
- Working with the Leicestershire Scout Federation on the centenary event February 2016.
- Brocks Hill family Christmas craft fair has continued to be fully booked to showcase local artisans/crafters.
- Working with Oadby and Wigston Lions for use of legacy money around the site to enhance facilities e.g. benches and sculptures.
- Stepping Stones Project, Community engagement and participation in environmental projects – Leicestershire County Council are proposing to reduce the resource available in September 2016, an options paper to suggest possible ways forward will be produced. For the time being, funding contributions by the District Council, approximately £4,000 per annum are being requested to remain the same with any under spend to be either refunded or carried over. Delegation to the S151 Officer is requested to, if necessary, take steps to review the funding towards this project.

3.4 Centre and Building Work

- Interim arrangement SLM for café delivery and catering for events continue. Planning application approved for BH capital works so this is scheduled for the New Year.
- Water leak repair scheduled. Most cost effective solution was a full new main.
- Volunteer gardeners continue working on site. The group is growing and often attracts carers with vulnerable adults (Lead volunteer is DBS checked through OWBC).
- Continued work with advisors on the shop and stocking.
- Responsive maintenance has included dealing with water temperature failures, rain water harvesting and electric failures.
- Health and Safety and Resilience: Continued work on a full Business Continuity Plan. Street Car Park, Oadby.

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Implications	
Financial	No significant implications.
Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	No significant implications.
Equalities	No significant implications.