

# RESTORATION PROJECT AT CRANFORD PARK: AN UPDATE

<b>Committee name</b>	Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Michael Naughton, Place Directorate
<b>Papers with report</b>	None
<b>Ward</b>	N/A

## HEADLINES

This Report provides an update on the Restoration Project at Cranford Park.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee note the contents of the report.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1. Introduction

This project consists of the restoration of the historic buildings, structures and landscapes of Cranford Park, the building of a new café. the provision of additional visitor facilities including a playground and interpretation, the introduction of volunteering and events programmes managed by on-site staff and the upgrading of the park for educational, recreational and community purposes.

It has been largely externally funded, the largest funder being the National Heritage Lottery Fund/National Communities Lottery Fund. The first round Bid to the Lottery was successful in December 2017 and the second, very detailed, Bid in July 2020. Construction works took place on site from April 2022 to July 2023. The project budget, for capital works and activity plan, was £4,492,906.00.

### 2. Update on the New Build and Restoration Works

Practical completion took place on 24th July 2023. By this time the repairs had been carried out to the cellars and stables, each with heating, lighting and security systems, the new café and associated hard landscaping had been completed, the Information Centre upgraded, the playground built, the car park extended, the driveway put in, the courtyard upgraded, the passing place near the entrance constructed, the cable bridge put in place over the River Crane and St. Dunstan's Subway upgraded. Over recent months, minor snagging has taken place.

However it was considered that the Cellars were too damp to instal the main staircase and three

fire doors, which are all largely of timber. Investigation works are underway into improving waterproofing and dealing with condensation problems.

### 3. Update on Interpretation

The entrance signs have been installed, the new notice boards are in place and the new maps and interpretation have replaced the previous ones, which were by now very out of date.

The projector has been installed in the cellar, and this now shows a 10 minute film about the history of Cranford Park and Cranford House. A motion activated audio play of an old groom talking to a stable lad (set in 1828), has been installed in the stables, together with horse harness, hay and a dressing up box for visiting school children.

The ten posts for the audio trail have been installed around the park and the app (audio and visual) is ready to download.

Some minor signage is still outstanding, as are the plaques acknowledging the funders. This will be completed shortly.

### 4. Update on Electricity Installation

The park requires a 500 kva electrical transformer to provide enough power for the café kitchen, electric charging points and the other energy requirements of the offices on the site.

It was agreed with Southern and Scottish Electricity (SSE) that the transformer could only be located on the eastern side of the River Crane, the cables crossing the river via a cable bridge.

Whilst the bridge has been put in place (its design requiring a Permit from the Environment Agency) and the Intake cupboard has been made ready in the Information Centre, SSE could not source the Transformer until May 2023, charging the consequent uplift in price to the Council.

However, before they would instal it, SSE required a Deed of Grant to be drawn up between Transport for London and LB Hillingdon, for a right of way over the few metres of driveway in TfL's ownership. This legal document was not straightforward, but completion has now taken place.

Only with the Deed of Grant complete, would SSE begin legal proceedings for the transfer of land underneath the site of the new Transformer. Despite this being authorised by Cabinet in November 2023, SSE will not commence writing the contracts with their outsourced haulage and installation operators, until the land transfer is in place.

When a date for installation is received, LBH contractors will be brought in to dig the cable trenching and electricians to switch electricity cabling from the temporary to the permanent supply.

### 5. Update on Foul Drainage

Toilets have been existing on the site for decades, at Cranford House, at the Information Centre and at St. Dunstan's Church, which stands within the park. However, it was discovered that the sewer led to a large septic tank, which appeared to discharge into the ground and from thence to

the river. As the site usage is to be increased, through the cafe and public toilets, foul drainage must be provided to modern standards.

After a great deal of investigation and the costing of options, it was agreed that a Sewage Treatment Plant would be the most practical for the anticipated usage, in terms of maintenance, and also the most economically advantageous option.

Accordingly, a permit application was submitted to the Environment Agency in November 2023 and the plant is on order. The installation and tele handling companies have been commissioned, as have the electricians. The outcome of the permit application is awaited.

## 6. Update on Café Lessees

Two businessmen, with much experience in the hospitality industry, are interested in running the cafe. They have submitted a detailed Bid and authorisation has been given by the Cabinet Member to proceed with the negotiation of the lease. This is being drawn up by the Council's Estates Team.

## **RESIDENT BENEFIT**

The Cranford Park Steering Group includes representatives from the Friends Group, local residents' groups and St. Dunstan's Church as well as the London Wildlife Trust and Historic England. The many public consultations undertaken over the last few years and the numerous events and community visits organised, have demonstrated that there is a great appetite to restore this historic park and its buildings. Volunteer numbers are increasing, visitor numbers are rising, community groups are becoming much more aware of the park and there is an eager anticipation of the park's proposed facilities and the events and volunteering programmes planned.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Capital Release has been authorised for the transformer, cable trenches and associated works and also for the Sewage Treatment Plant. There is a small overspend on the heritage budget.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

## **APPENDICES**

None