

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019

### Parks & Recreation

#### 1. **Newham Grange Leisure Farm**

Newham Grange Farm continues to welcome more visitors and November saw an increase of 167% more visitors compared to November 2017.

Improvements continue at the farm and new play equipment has been installed in the junior play area – there is now a huge Viking rope swing amongst other things including swings and a trim trail climbing frame. The main animal petting area has been moved and extended within the Discovery Barn giving families more space to see the animals and hold the rabbits and guinea pigs.

A litter of piglets arrived in November and visitors have been enjoying stroking the tiny piglets.

Families have enjoyed visiting the farm in the evenings and walking around the illuminated trails and seeing all the Christmas decorations during December.

January is an exciting time for the farm as the large-scale building renovation works commence and are expected to be finished in early April 2019. The farm will have a new shop/welcome centre, a much improved and expanded café, new toilets including a Changing Places toilet and extended and improved car parking.

The farm continues to receive very positive feedback from visitors on social media, here are some recent comments:

*“Great place with lots to do for the kids after its recent additions/updates.”*

*“First visit since the farm has been renovated and things added kids loved it especially the go kart track and now being able to handle the animals. Elf trail was fab and lovely to give the kids a Xmas treat at the end. Fab day as always.”*

*“Their Christmas event is a must. Fantastic Park, great walk, fun Maze and hunt. Car track ride went down well too. Found the snack hut hidden away with another park and small soft play area. Coffee perfect, lady lovely and even had soya milk. Too quiet, let's fill this place up.”*

*“We went yesterday and it looks great, will be back to see it all again after dark soon. You all deserve a big pat on the back for your hard work in creating such a special attraction. (Not a cow pat of course!)”*

*“Another lovely visit. Friendly, polite, helpful & knowledgeable staff (& workmen). Lovely café & food, lovely play areas & lots of happy animals. Every visit there is more improvements with the revamp, looking forward to seeing the end results. Keep up the good work”*

*“Super transformation, the handling experiences were lovely, the new play areas were enjoyed and the crazy golf was fun. The additional areas were all great and admission still the same, fabulous value for money. Staff were all friendly and brilliant with our children. There was*

*plenty of places to wash our hands after feeding the animals too. A gem on our doorstep. Thank you.”*



## **2. Stewart Park**

In conjunction with ABC the annual Frost Fair held on 2nd December was again a big success with over 2000 customers enjoying seasonal artisan food and Christmas crafts. Santa's grotto was also a huge success with the younger children with Santa once again being provided by the Friends of Stewart Park.

An application has been made by the Council to increase the capacity of the park during an event to be held in May 2019. Notices have been erected on all park gates for the purpose of public consultation.

Winter maintenance works are on-going and the drainage work which was completed earlier in the year has so far proved successful in solving the previous flooding issues.

## **3. Albert Park**

Winter works are taking place around the lake area including work along the cycle path and the islands on the lake.

A winter roller-skating offer is now available up until February 2019 which includes free skate hire and buy one get one free.

The Albert Park run was in action over the festive period with the Santa Run taking place on the 22nd December, followed by a Christmas day run and a run on New Year's Day which commenced at 10am due to the run at Stewart Park commencing at 9am. This allowed the runner's the opportunity to take part in both events

## Bereavement Services

## **4. Shortlisted by APSE**

The service was pleased to have been shortlisted by the Association of Public Sector Excellence in the category "Best performer in cemetery and crematorium services" following our first Performance Network submission this year.

The awards event is held annually in December and recognises best improvement and excellence among many local authority environmental service areas. Although we were pipped to the post, we will be entering again next year and we are really pleased to have been recognised in the shortlisting.

Our service takes part in several networking arrangements in order to stay up to date with best practice, and it is hopeful that it can continue to deliver excellent service.

## Property and Commercial Services

### **1. St Bede's Chapel Canopy**

It was identified that due to inclement weather many people attending funerals had no shelter at St Bede's chapel and a project was undertaken to provide a suitable canopy.

Detailed research was conducted by Design Services to provide a befitting canopy within the surroundings of the Crematorium that would provide a level of protection from bad weather. The result is an architectural interesting design that compliments the surroundings and has received positive feedback from users.



### **2. St Hilda's Chapel**

Bereavement Services identified that St Hilda's was the less popular of the two chapels available at Teesside Crematorium and wished to upgrade St Hilda's to the same standard as St Bede's to meet the expectations of the public.

After many months of discussion and careful planning between Asset Management, Design Services and Bereavement Services as well as consultation with funeral directors, a scheme was agreed and works commenced in autumn 2018. The aim of the project was to provide a light and spacious chapel with good accessibility for all.

The waiting area has been opened up to improve circulation; extra windows and a new lighting scheme installed to maximise light in the chapel. A new acoustic solution has been installed to enhance services as well as a full redecoration of the chapel. Crucially, the catafalque has been relocated to provide clear sightlines for all the congregation and doors have been heightened to eradicate pall bearers having to stoop when carrying coffins.

The accessibility of the chapel has been improved by the provision of a new hearing enhancement system, accessible doors, good colour contrast and lighting, height adjustable lectern and clearer circulation routes.

The result is a total transformation from an old dark chapel to a light, spacious and welcoming accessible space.

### **3. Defibrillators**

Over the past 12 months Property Services have worked collaboratively with Public Health to install Defibrillators to select locations in Middlesbrough and corporate properties. Property Services will maintain the Defibrillators to ensure they are ready if ever required.

### **4. Civic Centre – Demo Area**

Property Services has recently been involved with the Demo Area on 1st Floor Civic Centre. The works included modifications and additions to the electrics, re-lamping the full floor with cool white lamps and carrying out decoration works to ensure the demo area is as close to the new building as reasonably possible.

### **5. Safer Bus Station Award**

For the third year running, Middlesbrough Council has achieved the Safer Bus Station Award - this is testament to all the staff who work at the Bus Station.

The Safer Bus Station Award scheme establishes standards of good practice and accredits individual bus and coach stations, whose operators have demonstrated a commitment to working with the local police force and other partners, to reduce crime and create a safe and non-threatening environment. It has a comprehensive assessment in which the bus or coach station must meet all of the criteria required.

Below is a testimony from Ryan Davey Area Manager-North East British Parking Association.

“Both myself and the Police Assessor, Steve Cranston, were very impressed with Middlesbrough bus station. Not only is the station clean and tidy, but the staff are all very friendly, welcoming and happy to help anyone within the station. This is not just an opinion gained from the assessment but also from personal experience when I have used the bus station. In addition to the signage and electrical signs for bus information, staff are always on hand to offer assistance.

The bus station is laid out in a way which makes finding the relevant bus stops easy to find. The lighting is good throughout and the station is accessible to all. The CCTV within the station is excellent and is monitored within the station which allows for a prompt response to any problems that may arise.

## Environment

### **6. Area Care**

Area Care teams carried out cleansing works before, during and after the Christmas light switch-on in Centre Square on November 22nd and the Magical Middlesbrough Parade which took place on Sunday, 2nd December and involved cleansing the whole route from Southfield Road to Centre Square. Area Care's involvement in the parade didn't just involve cleansing as our operatives also drove the parade float vehicle.

Floral decorations were produced by our nursery and used to decorate the front of the stage during both Middlesbrough College, and Teesside University's Graduation Ceremonies which were held on 5th November, 3rd December and 4th December in the Town Hall.

## 7. Waste Services

Green Waste collections have now ceased for the winter period and will recommence in April 2019. Although tonnages will not be as high as last year due to the dry weather we experienced this summer, participation was still good during the middle part of the season.

Due to Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day Bank Holidays falling on days when there would normally be waste collections, all collections were revised over the Christmas period. Details of the amended days were available on our website, social media, local press and leaflets located in Hubs, Libraries, and Council Buildings. Normal collections days were resumed from 8th January 2019 and we would like to thank residents for their patience over the Christmas period.

For the second year running Middlesbrough Council supported Teesside Hospice with the collection of residents' real trees in exchange for a small donation to the charity which helps to care for local people suffering from cancer and other life-limiting illnesses. The collections covered Teesside Postcodes from TS1 to TS23 on 5th, 6th and 7th January 2019 and all Christmas Trees were recycled by Askham Bryan College to be used as bark and mulch to create new paths in Stewart Park.

Middlesbrough Councils Recycling & Waste Department also collected real Christmas Trees along with residents' normal waste week commencing Tuesday 8th January 2019 for one week only.

In early December, Selective Licencing and Recycling & Waste Service Managers worked collaboratively to install a bin-housing behind Kings Road Shops in North Ormesby, to help resolve issues with fly tipping and provide residents of the flats with somewhere secure to put their waste. Previously, residents disposed of their waste via black bin bags which were then put out for collection behind the shops, it is now hoped that the bin housing will reduce fly tipping and littering and help to improve the environmental aesthetics of the area. In addition to this, Area Care operatives and Environment Enforcement Officers are ensuring that the area is monitored regularly to assist in improving the area.

Public consultation on the Joint Waste Management Strategy ended on the 30th November 2018. A report will be presented to Council in January 2019 for formal approval and then the Council will begin the process of developing an action plan to implement.

## 8. Enforcement Team

The table below shows the number of incidents and the different incidents that the Environmental Enforcement Team has dealt with during November 2018. The biggest incident dealt with is dumped material of which could be fly tipping, all of which has to be investigated by the team in the hope that evidence is retrieved.

<b>Incident</b>	<b>Number</b>
Abandoned Vehicle	41
Untaxed vehicle	2
Caravan	2
Animal Welfare	2
Dogs - Fouling	13
Lost Dogs	3
Stray Dog	32
Public Health Nuisance - Other	1
Wheeled bin charging	18
Dumped Material-Fly Tipping	100

Bag Slashing	3
Abandoned commercial bins	2
Wheeled bin complaint	14
Fly Posting (ECU)	1

The DVLA recently delivered training to the Enforcement Team, this training was around the removal of untaxed vehicles. It gives the local authority devolved powers to deal with and in some cases remove untaxed vehicles from the public highway. This will not only generate income but will also remove illegal vehicles from our roads.

*Councillor Denise Rooney*  
*Executive Member for Environment and Commercial Services*