

Hermitage Park Update

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Hermitage Park construction works and activity plan. There will be a presentation on the day to accompany this report.
- 1.2 Lot one - Passivhaus Pavilion achieved practical completion on 9th May 2019 and is currently subject to the snagging and defects period. Lot two – Landscape and Conservation achieved phase one practical completion on 24th October 2018 and are programmed to achieve phase two practical completion by the end of November 2019. Completed works include: improvements to the whole park including restoration of the historic fabric; restoration and reinterpretation of historic planting; celebration of the heritage; reconsideration of the recreational elements and reconfiguring of car parking.
- 1.3 A number of activities are underway including negotiation of the pavilion lease, delivery of the activity plan, development of the area behind Victoria Halls and a graffiti pilot project aimed at addressing the cost of removal of graffiti within the Park.

1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.4.1 Members consider and note the contents of this report.

Hermitage Park Update

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides an update on Hermitage Park construction works and activity plan. There will be a presentation on the day to accompany this report.
- 2.2 Hermitage Park in Helensburgh is an important heritage asset and includes the town's 'A' Listed war memorial. The Hermitage Park regeneration project aims to create a sustainable park for residents and visitors to the area and a resource for the local community. It is delivering outcomes related to the economy, health and wellbeing, culture and heritage, and enjoys widespread local support.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members consider and note the contents of this report.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 Construction Works

Lot one - Passivhaus Pavilion achieved practical completion on 9th May 2019 and is currently subject to the snagging and defects period. Lot two – Landscape and Conservation achieved phase one practical completion on 24th October 2018 and are programmed to achieve phase two practical completion by the end of November 2019. Works completed include:-

- 4.1.1 Restoration of historic fabric - including walled memorial garden, pond and gates, old mill remains, Hermitage Well, sun dial garden, and the Millig Burn paths, bridges and walls.

- 4.1.2 Restoration/reinterpretation of historic planting - contractual works were opening up lines of site to improve safety of visitors and introducing lighting on main paths. Planting of the flower beds at the sun dial has, and further planting will, take place as part of the Activity Plan.
- 4.1.3 Celebration of heritage through interpretation and community involvement - upgrading of the paths and drainage to increase access to the Park and development, design and installation of the interpretation units.
- 4.1.4 Reconsideration of the recreational elements - which has resulted in the new Passivhaus pavilion with community room, café and kiosk, a children's play park, a games lawn and hard standing for events and activities, and electrical pillars for events. Due to rising costs and changes in H&S regulations regarding water in public spaces there was not sufficient funding for the fountains, however the plaza area has been designed in such a way that this can be retrofitted should funding be available.
- 4.1.5 Reconfiguring and building of car parking spaces (45 total spaces for both the Park and Victoria Halls), two bike sheds and a buggy shed, and the introduction of traffic lights and crossing on Sinclair Street.
- 4.2 Final costs will be available after the end of both contracts snagging and defects period in 2020 and a final cost report will be prepared for the appropriate Council Committee. Officers and the Friends of Hermitage Park (the Friends) continue to fundraise for the Park and were awarded £35k from the Town Centre Fund for a greenhouse in the Demonstration Garden and a pop up events stage. Both of these will help to increase community participation in the Park.
- 4.3 **Activity Plan**

There are elements of landscaping and conservation works that will take place in 2020 and these include:

 - 4.3.1. Planting of trees in the main avenue and in front of the pavilion (Council), planting of the memorial garden and the demonstration garden.
 - 4.3.2 Dry stone walling to the burn.
- 4.4 Other work/activities in progress include:
 - 4.4.1 The pavilion lease, for the café and kiosk was advertised late summer and the Estates Department is in negotiation with a potential lease holder.
 - 4.4.2 Delivery of elements of the activity plan including: training in drystone dyking and the volunteer construction of walls within the Park, development of the Demonstration Garden with various groups including

Hermitage Academy. These and other activities have contributed to the health, well-being and educational of the community and resulted in over £102,090 in-kind volunteer hours.

- 4.5 Ongoing work by the community includes the proposal for the siting of a structure on the area of ground between the Victoria Halls boundary and the burn. This was approved in principal, subject to statutory consents, by the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee on 20th December 2018. This proposal was originally put forward by the Helensburgh and District Men's Shed and is now being taken forward by the Friends.
- 4.6.1 Members are aware of the recent rise of graffiti issues in Helensburgh which includes the Park. The approach to graffiti taken by the Council is to remove the graffiti as soon as it is found. However, due to limited budgets, resources and the amount of graffiti in the Park, the immediate removal of graffiti could not continue. As part of the daily Park check programme graffiti continues to be monitored with only obscenities being dealt with as a priority.
- 4.6.2 Officers and the Friends have consulted with key stakeholders on the issue and have proposed a pilot project in partnership with Hermitage Academy. This pilot project would be led by a representative of Yardworks (based at SWG3 and run the annual Yardworks street art festival) and work with Hermitage Academy pupils and others as identified, to create a high quality graffiti wall in the Park with a backdrop of heritage and cultural icons. This proposed graffiti wall is already used for graffiti therefore the project would seek to improve this. The Friends are seeking funding for this. If this pilot is successful then officers will consider how this can be further developed. The next steps, subject to funding being accessed, are to commission and deliver the project and report back to area committee by the end of 2020.
- 4.6.3 In addition to the graffiti pilot, advice from the police, as part of a multifaceted approach, includes adding CCTV cameras. This is not a failsafe system but can help to deter anti-social behaviour. The park has two cameras within the new pavilion and a CCTV pole on the north eastern corner of the plaza. The Councils Anti-social behaviour Co-ordinator has organised for the Councils re-deployable CCTV camera to be located within the park for a short period of time. The Friends are fund raising for permanent CCTV cameras to be installed in the Park, and these would be managed by the Council.
- 4.7 **Timeline** - The remaining timeline as agreed between HLF and council officers is as follows;
 - 4.7.1 Green Flag Application – February 2020
 - 4.7.2 Park launch – Spring 2020
 - 4.7.3 Delivery of Activity Plan - to March 2021
 - 4.7.4 Soft landscaping works complete – March 2021
 - 4.7.5 Project completes (revenue/interpretation/training/activities) – March 2021.
 - 4.7.6 End of Hermitage Park Development Officer/Manager Post – March 2021

4.7.7 Ten year Management and Maintenance Plan – commencing April 2021 and completes April 2031. Greenflag Award to be maintained over the ten year period of the management and maintenance plan, as part of HLF grant condition.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Hermitage Park project and demonstrable community support provides an opportunity to create a sustainable park for residents and visitors alike and fits well with strategies for the area. The project is reaching the end of its capital delivery phase and is programmed to officially launch in spring 2020, whilst the Activity Plan will continue up to April 2021. There are a number of work areas that remain to be delivered and a number of new developments taking place, such as the proposed graffiti pilot, that aim to improve the Park and to ultimately enhance the offering to the community and visitors alike.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1	Policy	None
6.2	Financial	None at this time. The Graffiti Pilot will be funded by Friends of Hermitage Park. Officers and the Friends continue to fundraise for the Park.
6.3	Legal	The Park Project is bound by HLF terms of grant approved by Council 21 st Jan 2016 and by terms of grant from a range of funders.
6.4	HR	None
6.5	Fairer Scotland Duty: (please refer to guidance on Hub)	None
6.5.1	Equalities - protected characteristics	None but proposed improvements increase accessibility of the park to those with mobility problems and visitors with pushchairs through improved paths and design.
6.5.2	Socio-economic Duty	None
6.5.3	Islands	None
6.6.	Risk	None
6.7	Customer Service	None

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Hermitage Park Presentation