

# Business Bulletin

**12.00noon, Monday, 23 August 2021**

## Projects and Staffing Update

Regional Park Officers have been very busy securing funding and support to deliver the anti-social behaviour, structural and visitor management issues discussed at the last Joint Committee meeting. This Bulletin provides a summary of this activity:

### Seasonal Park Rangers

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£75,000 grant received from NatureScot for six seasonal Park Rangers, who will be working a shift pattern with a focus on providing duty cover at hot spots between 7am and 10pm on Fridays-Saturdays-Sundays until 31 October, establishing a seven-day service over the summer months. All have been in post since 19 July and they had a very successful introductory weekend engaging with visitors on water safety, responsible camping, litter management and attending fire incidents.

### Temporary Toilets

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£71,000 grant received from NatureScot for twelve temporary toilets at Bonaly and Threipmuir car parks and Harlaw in front of Harlaw house. They have been on site since 14 June and are currently open between 10am and 6pm, 7 days until 31 October. Given the addition of seasonal rangers we hope to extend the opening times further. We have also increased the opening hours of existing public conveniences for Flotterstone.

### Car Park Marshalls

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We applied to NatureScot for £44,000 to fund seasonal car park Marshalls. However, the submission was unsuccessful.

### Estate Workers

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£31,000 grant received to appoint four Estate Workers and a Supervisor until 31 October to support our existing Estate team across the Regional Park and wider city outdoor estate. The team will repair footpaths and other infrastructure, such as fences and gates. Recruitment is underway, with starts expected from early August.

## Key Entrance Routes Strategic Plan

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£35,000 funding received from Visit Scotland to develop a strategic plan for the Development of key routes entering the Regional Park from Currie, Balerno and Penicuik. The plan will allow us to evidence route feasibility, costs and community need so that we can be eligible for the next round of Scottish Government funding for delivery over the next three years.

## Car Park Infrastructure and Permanent Toilets

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£421,000 conditional grant received from Visit Scotland towards the costs of creating an additional 140 car parking spaces, including more for blue badge holders, and installing electric vehicle charging points in the four main car parks at Harlaw, Threipmuir, Bonaly and Flotterstone. Cyclists will also benefit from additional bike stands and public bike pump and repair stations.

Three new unisex and accessible toilet facilities will also be built at Bonaly, Threipmuir and Harlaw car parks and an extra set of toilets near Harlaw reservoir. Work on both the parking and toilet facilities is expected to be completed by April 2022, subject to planning consent.

## Operation Boxy and Police Scotland

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Police Scotland ran 'Operation Boxy' in the Pentland Hills Regional Park during July, with a focus on the Edinburgh side of the hills: Bonaly Country Park, Harlaw, Torduff, Clubbiedean and Threipmuir reservoirs/areas. This Operation involved partnership working between Police Scotland, the Regional Park team, Scottish Water and the Fire and Rescue Service. The purpose of the Operation is to combat anti-social behaviour and encourage responsible access and use of the Pentland Hills, including the reservoirs. Daily patrols allowed Police Officers and PHRP Officers to engage with members of the public with the purpose of education and prevention. We also have weekly weekend briefing reports sent to all Police Sergeants to coordinate resources at weekends.

Penicuik police delivered a rural crime/anti-social issues and water safety awareness event at the end of June at Glencorse reservoir, which was very well received by visitors.

In West Lothian, a new PARC group has just been established. A Park officer will attend regular meetings.

## Reservoir Safety

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Scottish Water has selected the Pentland reservoirs as part of their two-year pilot study "Enabling Access". A site visit took place between the Police, Scottish Water, CEC Flood Prevention team and Scottish Water fishery managers.

As part of Operation Boxy, the Fire and Rescue Service delivered water rescue training on 23 August at Harlaw, with Police manning a stall with responsible leaflets/information.

The PHRP promoted Scottish Water messages on social media during their "water safety, drowning awareness raising" campaign at end of June. Scottish Water has been appointed nationally, via the Visitor Management Prevention and Reassurance working group, to

lead on water safety messages for partners to promote widely before the school term ended in June.

## Anti-littering Campaign

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Artwork has been created for display on Park bins, which will hopefully help encourage people to use them. This is part of a nationwide initiative from Zero Waste Scotland in partnership with the Scottish Government and Keep Scotland Beautiful.



## Contractor Standby

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The grounds maintenance contractor Glendale has been placed on standby to help clear up particularly dirty campsites at Harlaw and Bonaly Country Park should this be beyond the capacity of existing internal resources.

## Staffing

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Meryl Norris has left the team and Andrew Law, Natural Heritage Officer from the Edinburgh City team, is covering her duties whilst the recruitment process is underway.

## Visitor Management Action Group

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NatureScot funding of £16,000 was obtained by ELGT to produce a PHRP Visitor plan. A PHRP Visitor Management Action group has been set up since April with key partners meeting monthly to draft a VM action plan, review the draft Visitor plan produced by ELGT and create a key document which will be used to secure funding to improve infrastructure, signage and access.