

King George's Fields Trust Mile End Annual Report 2020-21

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1. Background

- 1.1. The King George's Fields charity is registered with the Charity Commission as King George's Field, Mile End Charity, registered number 1077859.
- 1.2. The Council is the trustee of the charity and the council is the freehold owner of the land which is subject to this report.

2. Core function

- 2.1. The King George's Fields Charity Board (the Board) is established by section of the Council's Constitution, which gives the Board the following functions:
 - 2.1.1. To administer the affairs of the King George's Fields Charity and discharge all the duties of the Council a sole trustee of the Charity.
 - 2.1.2. To administer the affairs and discharge the duties of trustee of such other charities controlled by the Council as the Cabinet might authorise by resolution.

3. Demography of the Borough

- 3.1. According to the Census ONS 2011 mid-year population projection, the borough's population was 304,900 in June 2017, with a projected rise to 364,500 by 2026. The 2016 figure is the first time the area's population has exceeded 300,000 since before the Second World War.
- 3.2. The borough's population is projected to grow more than twice as fast as London and 3 times as fast as England between 2016 and 2026.
- 3.3. Tower Hamlets has seen drastic population change in recent decades, growing faster than any other local authority in the country. Over 30 years, the borough population more than doubled, rising from 144,800 in 1985 to 295,200 in 2015.
- 3.4. Greater London Authority's population projections for the borough predict that Tower Hamlets to be the fastest growing borough in London over the next ten years, reaching a population of 364,500 in 2026.

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- 3.5. The borough includes one of the highest Muslim populations in the country and has an established British Bangladeshi and Pakistani business and residential community.

4. **Charitable objects**

- 4.1. The land within the areas shown edged red on the plan KGF2 attached hereto which has been acquired by the Council or the London County Council shall be preserved in perpetuity as a memorial to his late Majesty King George V under the provision of the Foundation.

5. **Activities - how the charity spends its money**

- 5.1. The maintenance of Mile End Park, and the other open spaces within King George's Field, Mile End, for the use and enjoyment of the public.

6. **Service Standards**

- 6.1. The land is managed by Tower Hamlets Parks and Open Spaces whose service priorities are as follows:
- Strives to make all parks and open spaces within Tower Hamlets places where people feel safe, secure, and that visiting such green spaces is an enjoyable experience.
 - Recognises the importance of parks and green spaces as major community assets.
 - Fully recognises the importance and benefits of parks and open spaces as places for recreation, leisure and play for all communities within Tower Hamlets.
 - Recognises the importance of the Borough's parks and open spaces and ensures that all of our wide-ranging communities and partners have equal opportunities to use them.
 - Encourages the historical heritage of many of Tower Hamlets parks and open spaces and works closely with colleagues and partners alike to protect such cultural assets.
 - Manages and maintains the Borough's parks and open spaces on behalf of the communities we serve.

7. **Design principles for Tower Hamlets Parks and Open Spaces**

- 7.1. The key landscape design aims for all Tower Hamlets Parks and Open Spaces will inform any future developments in Mile End Park.
- Retain the open, green aspect of the Park

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- Retain and enhance the main desire lines but avoid criss-crossing the Park with paths
- Enhance the public's feelings of security
- Enhance nature conservation and biodiversity
- Enhance and manage boundary and other planting
- Provide public art features that increase the visual interest and identity of the site and involve the community
- Enhance the attractiveness of the Park
- Establish a positive site identity that is clear from within and outside the Park
- Focus formal design and ensure that this sight line remains open for all time

8. Activities taking place that support the Charity Objectives

8.1. Events and activities in Mile End Park this year.

8.2. March 2020 was the beginning of lock down due to the COVID-19 pandemic and hence nearly all in activities in KGFT lands ceased. Parks staff became focussed on trying to keep parks safe for the public to use for exercise and relaxation.

8.3. All parks experienced an increase in footfall as other facilities, such as sports centres, closed to the public. As in the early days of lockdown access to playgrounds and outdoor gyms were prohibited. However, despite barriers and signage some members of the public chose to ignore the ban and tore down tape and fencing to gain access to equipment. As a consequence, the outdoor gym equipment in Wennington Green was removed from site and put into storage.

8.4. Park rangers patrolled KGFT lands at least three or four times a week, checking on equipment, levels of anti-social behaviour of litter. Where the public were clearly breaking the legislation around gathering in parks rangers advised them not to do so, but without enforcement powers this was not always effective.

9. Mile End Park Arts and Eco Pavilions

9.1. The Pavilions an important part of the parks infrastructure generating income and providing space for community focussed activity.

10. **Summary of bookings**

10.1. Due to lock down caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, both the Pavilions were closed to the public and a large number of bookings were cancelled or postponed. Both buildings were then occupied as COVID-19 test centres and later the Arts as a vaccination centre. These occupations brought in some income to the Trust but nowhere close to what we would ordinarily generate.

11. **Investments made**

11.1. Income for the year was 55K.

11.2. In addition to the usual repairs and maintenance regime monies were invested in the following:

11.2.1. The following investment was mainly sourced from the Parks Capital allocation as part of a five-year improvement plan.

11.2.2. Refurbished both Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) within Mile End Park at a cost of £35k.

- Installed a new outdoor gym on Wellington Green £85k
- Resurfaced the BMX track £17k
- Renewed various playground safety surfaces at Mile End Park £50k
- Installed new playground at Whitehorse Adventure playground £99k
- Resurfaced the MUGA at Whitehorse Adventure playground £37k (new fence, colour spray, line and play markings)
- Installed a new under 5 multi-play unit at Locksley street £ 16k
- Installed new CCTV cameras in Mile End park £25k
- Installed dog exercise equipment in Stepney Green Park £2k
- Installed a CCTV system at Whitehorse Adventure Playground £20k
- Improved signage £7K

12. **Compliance with public benefit requirements**

12.1. The Trust has maintained the lands within Mile End Park and other KGFT sites to an acceptable standard with ongoing improvements implemented listed in the above investments.

12.2. The Parks continue to be well used supporting as they do a number of key facilities:

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- Mile End Leisure Centre
- Stepney Green artificial football pitch
- Playgrounds
- Outdoor activities centre including BMX track
- Various water features
- Areas of bio-diversity
- Pavilions with free activity
- Outdoor gym equipment
- Programme of events and workshops
- Variety of spaces for walks and informal sports activity

13. **Finance**

13.1. The full year's accounts are attached to this annual report. The Trust generates income to fund the maintenance of the park and its programme of activities. This income in a normal year is generated through:

- Rentals of shop/restaurant units plus climbing wall centre. These properties are managed by Council's Asset Management team. They have outsourced the management of the shop units under the green bridge. The external company collect rents and service charges, reviews leases and find tenants for any vacant lots. This continued through lockdown.
- Operation of car parking spaces. These being in Haverfield Road and Lawton Road (by green bridge), These are managed by the councils parking services.
- Corporate volunteer schemes. Managed by the parks team these provide a useful volunteer work force for maintenance of the park and also income from a fee per participant. No income in this year as all activity cancelled
- Hire of artificial football pitch at Stepney Green, managed by the Parks team. The site does generate a small surplus and the majority of the teams using the facility are local to Tower Hamlets and the fees are amongst the cheapest in London. No activity due to lock down
- Hire of Pavilions for weddings, private parties and exhibitions. Bookings are managed and staffed by parks personnel, including a pool of casual events staff. Facilities management manage the utility bills, cleaning and maintenance. See above.
- Commercial activity such as fairgrounds. These are managed by the Council's Festivals and Events team with the income coming to the Trust. No activity due to lock down.

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- 13.2. All income generated within the KGFT lands go to the charity's accounts to support the public access to good quality sports and leisure facilities.