

## Scrutiny Review of Security at Preston Park – Summary of Evidence

### Evidence

#### BREAKDOWN OF INCIDENTS:

The breakdown of incidents over the past two year shows an improvement since the introduction of CCTV. However, there are still ongoing issues.

#### SBC:

78 incidents over the past 2-year period (excluding any entries which have been generated via Tasking/Patrols/Other).

Of these, the table below shows the variety of addresses that the incidents are linked to:

address	Total
Landing Stage At River Tees, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe	5
North Lodge, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-On-Tees, TS18 3RQ	1
Preston Hall Museum, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-On-Tees, TS18 3RH	9
Preston Hall, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-On-Tees, TS18 3RH	2
Preston Lane, Stockton-On-Tees, TS18 3RG	1
Preston Park Cafe, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, TS18 3RH	3
Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, TS18 3RH	49
Public Toilets, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, TS18 3RH	1
Rivershack, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, TS18 3RH	2
Skatepark, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, TS18 3RH	5
Grand Total	78

The following table shows the range of issues against the month they occurred:

catg	2016												2017										Grand Total
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct			
EN5 NOISE - Industrial/Commercial											1											1	
EP4 NOISE - Loud Speakers																1						1	
V01 Individual - ASB Issues									1	1	1	1				8	1	1	1	4		19	
V02 Groups - ASB Issues			1		4	2	5	2			1		6			3		1				25	
V03 Noise / Animal Issues	1						1								1	1						4	
V04 Alcohol/Tobacco Issues										1												1	
V05 Fire Issues					1					1												2	
V06 Littering / Rubbish / Graffit									1					1			1	1				4	
V08 Vehicle Issues				2	1	2	1	1	1	3	1				1	1		1	1			16	
V09 Crime Issues		1							2	1			1									5	
Grand Total	1	1	1	2	6	4	7	3	5	8	3	1	7	1	2	14	2	4	2	4		78	

## Evidence

### Police:

In addition to the SBC incidents, the police have received 57 complaints of anti-social behaviour, shown in the table below:

Count of Closure Code(Text)	2016										2017							Grand Total						
Row Labels	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Grand Total
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - NUISANCE		2	4	4	3	7	7	2	5			2	2	3	3	4	1	2	1	1				53
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - PERSONAL	1					1						1	1											4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>57</b>	

### Crime:

In addition to anti-social behaviour, there has also been criminal activity at Preston Park during the past 2-year period, with 49 crimes recorded at Preston Park, shown in the table below against the Common Place Name:

Row Labels	Count of Common Name
PRESTON HALL MUSEUM	4
PRESTON MUSEUM SUB STATION	1
PRESTON PARK	40
PRESTON PARK CAFE	3
TEES CRUISING	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>49</b>

Offences are shown on the table below, against the month they occurred:

	2016									2017							Grand Total								
Row Labels	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Grand Total
01 - Violence Against The Person			2	2	3	3							1	2			2	1	1						17
02 - Sexual Offences						1		1													1				3
03 - Burglary				1					1				1												3
05 - Theft and Handling Stolen Goods			1		1	1				1					2	2					1				9
07 - Criminal Damage	2	3			1	1	1	2	1				1				1	1					1		15
09 - Other Offences						1	1																		2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>49</b>	

## **Evidence**

### **CARE FOR YOUR AREA**

#### ***Street Cleansing***

A team of three dedicated staff look after the park with overtime shifts during higher footfall periods such as summer holidays and events. Two FTEs worked from 7am – 8pm (including weekends), one FTE worked the additional hours on evenings during summer months and weekends. The park was well kept and tidy.

These staff were a regular presence in the park, engaging with the public and they tended to be the first to witness or discover damage.

Staff duties included keeping the park clean, for example litter picking (including dog fouling), first aid, public information etc. In the busier summer periods this was challenging with current resources.

#### ***Enforcement***

Although there had been a decrease in incidents of anti-social behaviour, over the past year, there were still ongoing problems such as damage to street furniture and fences and damage to the toilets. Although there had been less incidents of graffiti in the skate park areas, this was also still an issue.

The toilets had been closed earlier to try to alleviate problems. However, following requests from park users for the toilets to remain open until 9pm, an increase in damage had been experienced, and objects had been used to deliberately flood the toilets.

Recent figures showed a substantial reduction of incidents during the period April to August 2017 compared to 2016, although it was recognised that the number of incidents in 2016 had been much higher than usual.

It was recognised that park and the museum contained a number of valuable assets and this made it especially important to increase security measures.

Surveillance measures put in place have had a sustained impact, with more structured enforcement mechanisms and CCTV – three cameras, monitored the park 365 days a year.

Members requested a breakdown of offences relating to incidents pre 2016 to establish trends.

A map showing the location of cameras was shown, although some areas were not covered. For example, no cameras were sited at the waterside. A fourth camera near the birdcage (to monitor the back of the museum) had been considered, although funding was not available at the time.

Members enquired if the cameras provided clear photographic evidence which could be used in prosecutions. It was confirmed that the cameras were good quality with pan, tilt and zoom and excellent night vision. Footage had been used to show parents evidence of their children involved

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in anti-social behaviour and could be used for prosecutions.

Members asked about the cost of cameras and how they were funded. The cost of each installed camera was £1600 plus £1000 per column. Average camera lifespan was between 5 – 8 years.

Reuben Kench advised that there were plans to thin the woodland behind the museum and an aspiration to reconstruct the conservatory on the riverside; an additional camera could possibly be used for coverage in that area.

Signage around CCTV areas was currently under review to raise public awareness of cameras and hopefully further reduce the number of incidents.

The skateboarding area of the park was very popular, attracting a mix of groups and ages. Anti-social behaviour in this area was not only committed by young people but adults also. Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults was a concern as some children were dropped off and unsupervised for long periods.

Adolescents (16 plus) and young adults tended to be committing the offences.

There was inappropriate use of cars, particularly at night and mostly involving adults.

Car Parking and traffic control was also an ongoing problem including the problem of containing cars in the car parks. Due to the numerous points of access to the park it was difficult to clear the site at closing time with current resources. Reuben added that there had been an increasing need to bring in staff to help with marshalling.

No regulation orders were in place for car parking although some existing controls were in place. Lack of power had not proven to be a problem as enforcement officers had the power to seize vehicles. A lot of enforcement and education had taken place over the last year and there had been some improvement. The introduction of CCTV might also have contributed.

With regard to parking issues in nearby estates when events were taking place, more powers might be needed such as Clearway Orders

Members asked for clarification around the park lock up procedure. It was noted that security surveillance was an important part of the security checks. The café, toilet, skate park and overflow parking checks were carried out, then the main gate secured, followed by Preston Lane to secure the back car park. Two residents on site had keys for the park gates to enable access and egress and there were no issues with this.

Members expressed concern that it was not difficult to gain access to the park at night, and discussion took place around possible improvement measures including:

- Fitting barriers
- Clearer signage around opening/closing times, particularly when clocks changed and warnings that vehicles may be locked in
- Reducing number of access/egress points
- Controlling access to safeguard public areas

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The riverside was recognised as a vulnerability. However, it was important that that any solution would need to provide access for emergency services.

Unauthorised access points caused further damage to fences etc.

Members asked if substance abuse was a problem in the park. It was noted that there was evidence of recreational drug use (not dealing) and alcohol consumption in the skate park area.

Parking was currently a self-managed system, except for events when a security organisation was brought in.

Members discussed whether a parking fee should be charged to generate income for improvements. Although it was recognised that administration costs would need to be factored in, the revenue to reinvest in the park could be significant. It was common to pay for parking in other parks and Members asked for details of charges at other parks and what the possible income could be based on visitor numbers at Preston Park.

## ***Youth Direction***

The service included a preventions team managing the caseloads of 8 -17 year olds, a youth support team and youth patrols diverting young people into positive provision

In August 2016, concerns about asb and safeguarding issues had been brought to the attention of a JAG meeting. Concerns included:

- ASB
- Issues around use of the skate park
- Jumping in the river and dangerous use
- Older males and females in cars
- Safeguarding concerns
- Recreational cannabis use

In response to the concerns, non-threatening outreach patrols were deployed on Tuesdays between 6 and 8pm when there could be between 40 – 70 young people in the park. This was extended to Sunday evenings.

There was a mix of young people and conflict was occurring between skateboarders and other young people in and around the skate park. Low level asb included littering and bad language. Other concerns related to males and females in cars and young people smoking cannabis in the play park. Some young people were vulnerable and referrals were made to the Switch (CSE) project through VEMT procedures.

During the five month outreach period, staff made good relationships with the young people and links were established with All Saints Church Youth Club. 10 young people were supported to make changes through “lifeline” and other services.

Young people took part in a workshop at half-term, working with Community Safety, the Fire Brigade and Police learning about consequences.

## **Evidence**

Prisoners spoke to young people about how prison could affect lives.

A restorative justice approach was adopted and one young person who had set fire to a bin paid for the damage and attended the workshop with parents.

Street-based education was used to divert youngsters already known to police and enforcement for anti-social behaviour.

Information was shared around vulnerable children and young people at risk.

Funding was obtained from Tesco for 17 youngsters to play weekly football at Ingleby Barwick.

It was recognised that sometimes young people did not want to engage in services or youth clubs. However, re-educating them that they were in a public park was still important.

In response to the interventions, there had been a significant improvement and the last time the issue was discussed by the JAG was in December 2016. Youth Direction still maintained a presence in the park with outreach patrols deployed between 6 – 8pm in the summer months and responding to any issues.

In order to improve security and safety, Youth Direction recommended that the overflow car park should be closed at 5pm to deter inappropriate use and force activity into the main car park in full view of CCTV which would be easier to monitor. Any measures which could be put in place to reduce the number of pedestrian access points would also help.

It was recognised that there was a reliance on the public to report anti-social behaviour, particularly in areas without cameras. More volunteers would be beneficial, with training for staff on how to approach youngsters who sometimes ask for help if unattended, and how to report any safeguarding concerns.

Youth Direction advised that young people were aware of the CCTV cameras; considerate users welcomed it and the cameras were pointed out to young people involved with inappropriate use.

## **Catering**

The park had a tearoom in the museum and the main café near the skate park which had been broken into last year.

Café staff were sometimes subjected to abuse, more from adults than young people. Café staff could contact surveillance for assistance and museum staff gave support where possible. The café also had a panic alarm. It was confirmed that there was never a lone worker in the café.

There had been significant improvements since the CCTV cameras had been installed nearby.

Customers often attempted to eat their own food in the café, particularly if it was raining. Although there were notices displayed, staff had suffered verbal abuse when challenging members of the public. It was suggested that an external sheltered eating area(s) might help.

## Evidence

Members expressed concern over the staff abuse and advised that the Audit Committee should be made aware of verbal assaults. It was noted that the Café Supervisor recorded incidents of this nature.

Members discussed whether a CCTV camera could be installed within the café to deter behaviour of this type.

In addition, a number of complaints had been received from members of the public who had been ejected from the café for bad behaviour. If a camera was installed the recordings could be reviewed.

The café opening hours were extended during the busier summer months when it was well attended but staff had the flexibility to lock up earlier when it was quiet.

The Supervisor felt that staff were supported with CCTV and by the anti-social behaviour team.

## Evidence

### Site Visits - Riverside Park



Riverside Park is managed by the Leisure and Culture Directorate within Durham County Council. This site was chosen as a comparable site to Preston Park due to its close proximity to houses, the river, various play areas and multiple access routes.

Currently the site has regular Care for Your Area operatives managing the cleansing and security of the site, with added support from their Sports Development and Countryside Team.

ASB does affect the site and this includes activities ranging from misuse of the river, drinking and drugs, littering, conflict in the play areas and general vandalism of the street furniture. To counteract this DCC have installed CCTV, increased staff presence and delivering community outreach projects to educate those groups likely to be involved. They've tried to reduce issues with vehicular access to the site with the introduction of locked boom gates, fencing and car parking charges and monitoring.



## Evidence



There is 24 hour access to the park and play area.

Car park charges are:

- 80 pence for up to one hour
- £1.20 for up to two hours
- £2.00 for up to four hours
- £3.10 for up to six hours
- £4.20 for over six hours

### *Dogs*

Dogs are allowed off their lead along the riverside walk areas, but they must be on a lead in the gardens.

The Public Space Protection Order authorises officers to enforce against owners who do not have their dog on a lead in specified areas. A designated dog exercise area is available and dogs can be exercised off their leads in this area. Dogs, even on a lead, are not allowed in the children's fenced off play area.

### *Staff Levels*

2 FTE Cleaning Operatives (Winter)

4 FTE Cleaning Operatives (Summer)

Support from Sports Development for the Care and Management of the Splash Pad

Support from the Parks and Countryside Team for Biodiversity Work (i.e. woodland and wildlife Meadows), Education Sessions and volunteer work Parties

Café is not run by DCC but an independent trader

Friends Group established in 2014 with support from the AAP

## Evidence

### Hardwick Park



Hardwick Park is a countryside site managed by the Leisure and Culture Directorate within Durham County Council. This site was chosen as a good comparable site to Preston Park Museum & Grounds, sharing a similar audience demographic and numbers. Unlike Preston Park, the grounds at Hardwick Park have received significant external investment through the Parks for People HLF award back in 2009. This resulted in the site creating a visitor centre with toilets, learning room, offices and café. There was also investment in signage, car parking infrastructure and walkways.

Current staff levels within Hardwick are as follows:

**Evidence**

1 Senior Ranger  
2 Rangers  
2 Attendants  
2 Learning Staff  
1 Visitor Experience Manager  
1 Café Manager  
Pool of casuals and volunteers to support

Improvements have been noted to ASB within this park since its restoration project. The reduction in ASB with vehicles has been significantly reduced due to the relocation of the car parks from the woodland to a more visible area, the introduction of street lighting, CCTV, ANPR camera, car parking charges and more structure opening and closing times of the park gates.

Staff presence on the site is also important. Within the car park area a new purpose built ranger compound was created. This has high fencing, CCTV and alarms and is an important space for securing high valued items. In the past the park did suffer from theft and damage to their plant, tools and equipment so this was deemed an important investment.

Despite much investment and changes to the infrastructure occasions of ASB do still occur at Hardwick Park. This includes minor littering and dog fouling, drinking – however this has reduced over the years and some major incidents such as attempted break - ins to the café and car parking machines.

# Evidence



## **Evidence**

### *Dogs*

The park has a dog on lead policy. The Public Space Protection Order authorises officers to enforce against owners who do not have their dog on a lead. The dog exercise area allows dogs off their lead in a designated area. Dogs, even on a lead, are not allowed in the children's fenced off play area. Dog foul must be picked up and disposed of in the bins provided.

### *Car parking charges*

Pay and display charges apply at all times:

- cars - up to two hours £2.00/full day £3.00
- coaches and minibuses - all day £9.00
- motorcycles - free
- blue badge holders - charges as above

Twelve-month parking permits are available at a cost of £80.00.

## **Park Partners – Preston Park**

### **Butterfly World**

Repeated incidents including brake-ins and vandalism. During one brake in, there had been 15 – 20 youths in the park in the early hours of the morning and the brake-in had resulted in a lot of damage to the plants due to the cold.

At the suggestion of the police 8 CCTV cameras had been installed externally up to the perimeter of Butterfly World. The cameras recorded the date and time. However, youths were using BB Guns to shoot at the cameras and with the guns could shoot at the building outside of the range of the CCTV cameras.

### **Small Gauge Railway**

Dennis Kidson advised that there had been various incidents over the years including brake-ins at the shed and rails being ripped up, vandalism of the toilets. More recently there had been the theft of three locomotives from a trailer and a fire in the workshop which had resulted in the loss of the workshop and machines, although it could not be established if this was deliberate or accidental damage.

One problem was that there was no CCTV coverage of the car park by the railway.

### **Rivershack**

Rachel Dodds advised that rowing boats were stored at the river and there was a middle pontoon and landing for passenger boats. Nothing else was left at the riverside.

Issues included:

## **Evidence**

- Vandalism to boats (even if in the river) from children to adults in early 20s. This also poses a health and safety risk
- Damage to equipment – only robust signage is used and this is removed out of season
- Damage to fencing which has necessitated repairs
- Drinking, intimidating and aggressive behaviour from men in early 20s – enforcement were called but it often took time for them to attend – a greater on site presence would help. Staff taking photos puts them at risk
- BBQs – dangerous behaviour
- Swimmers – open lake swimmers are professional. However, peak season leisure swimmers are unaware of the risks, not realising that the river is more dangerous than the sea

Members acknowledged the need for closer working with park partners and the correlation between the reduction in staff resource and asb issues. The opportunity to review working hours for the two newly appointed park keepers in conjunction with gate closing times was highlighted. Other measures such as the introduction of number plate recognition were discussed. The designation of a safe swimming area was not considered to be practicable.

## **Local Residents**

Local residents from Clifton Gardens reported problems with “boy racers” in the main car park when the main gates were open– a constant problem in the summer; quieter in the winter.

A local Councillor reported similar problems in the North Field.

Members agreed that this this provided an argument for restricting access and reviewing gate opening times.

Local residents also highlighted security problems arising from a small section of public footpath near Clifton Gardens. The Director of Leisure, Arts and Events advised that, as far as he was aware, there was nothing in the master plan which would prohibit the diversion of this section of the footpath and undertook to discuss this with the relevant Council officers.