

NEWS ITEM

Date: 28 February 2011

VICTORIA PARK UPDATE

SKATEPARK

Work started on installing the new skatepark on 21 February 2011. Contractors, Maverick Industries, estimate approximately 12 weeks for completion, subject to weather conditions. The total cost of the project is £200,000. The facility is funded from contributions from Greenham Common Trust, the Playbuilder Scheme and S106 payments. As a "permitted development", planning permission is not required, but the planning application as submitted generated some useful feedback. Firstly, on advice from the West Berkshire Council Tree Officer, the skatepark location was changed due to potential damage to large tree roots. Its position is now slightly north of existing skatepark. This has the advantage of allowing the ongoing use of the existing skatepark while the new one is built. Secondly, there was a request for an archaeological survey, which has been executed, with the results being described as very worthwhile by the West Berkshire Council Archaeological Officer. The smaller half-pipe structure is remaining and will stay in its original position.

PLAYGROUND

Work will start on the first phase of the new play area in the week commencing 4 April 2011. Again, as a permitted development, planning permission is actually only required for the tower, as it is in excess of 4 meters in height. The first phase does not include any boundary definition / fencing, in line with current playground design advice. Construction will take approximately 6 weeks, subject to weather conditions. The existing play area will be removed, therefore there will not be any play facilities in the park whilst the construction is undertaken. Given that the skatepark has moved further north, the playground will also move further north, to maximize its future potential for expansion. This will also ensure that if the proposed Pavilion goes ahead it will not encroach on the new facility. Total cost of the first phase of project is £90,000. The play area is being funded by contributions from Greenham Common Trust, a donation from Maverick Industries, S106 payments and a contribution from Capital reserves. If / when new funding becomes available it is planned that additional play equipment will be installed in further phases.

HERITAGE LOTTERY BID (HLF)

We had planned to present a bid to the HLF by 28 February 2011 to provide funds for selected improvements to the Park. To date (28/02/11) we have not received the final Victoria Park Hydrogeological survey report (i.e. causes of the subsidence/cracking in the Park) and have been advised by the HLF that our bid should be delayed until August 2011 to give adequate time to review and consider the findings of the report.

OTHER PARK NEWS

A programme of tree planting is being established, including the replacement of the large chestnut tree recently removed from the park adjacent to the canal.

Ground water levels appear to be returning to normal. Following initial assessment that the football pitch is now safe to play on, we are arranging a football game to be played on the pitch in the near future to test out the condition / durability of pitch playing surface.

Work is progressing on establishing the full cost and feasibility of moving the statues of Queen Victoria and her Lions to a site adjacent to the main Park entrance, possibly on a replica of the original 1903 plinth.