

## Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

by EFDC external bodies representatives Councillors M Sartin and S Stavrou

### FINANCE

The levy on council tax payers across London, Essex and Hertfordshire which funds part of the Authority's work has been frozen for the year 2019-20, meaning that it remains at 81p per head of population. This follows on from eight years of reductions. The levy is now the same as it was in 2001/02.

It has decreased by over 47% (or £5.8m) in real terms since 2010/11; and in cash terms by 22% (or £2.8m).

### ACTIVITY

Over the last year:

- The Park has had 7.3m visitors.
- The Park hosted two world cups. Over 100,000 people visited the Vitality Women's Hockey World Cup, the most spectators to a women's tournament in the UK since the Olympics; and 17,000 people went to the UCI Track Cycling World Cup. The ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup takes place at Lee Valley White Water Centre in June this year.
- Lee Valley VeloPark was announced as the track cycling venue for the Commonwealth Games 2022, further cementing the venue's position as a thriving London 2012 legacy venue. 2022 will make it the only venue in the world to host an Olympics, World Championships and Commonwealth Games in the same sport.
- Other events across the park have included Cancer Research UK's Race for Life, with 1000 women and girls running a half marathon at River Lee Country Park, and Countryside Live which brought 3000 school children from 43 schools from 12 council areas face to face with nature.
- The Authority's Community Access Fund provided money to disadvantaged and hard to reach groups to remove the barriers of the cost of entry to the venues, coaching sessions or outdoor learning. Having just completed its third year it has brought 12,600 people from 263 community groups and schools to the park. This included 140 pupils from Hill House Primary School in Waltham Abbey last year and over 500 participants from various youth and adult community groups across Epping Forest District since 2016.
- The Authority's Youth and Schools Service engaged with 1,500 people from the District over the year through their diverse range of outdoor learning programmes which included:
  - 529 students who participated in Youth and Schools activities at events such as the Tulip Tea Party at Myddelton House Gardens, Essex Food and Farming at Writtle College and Countryside Live
  - 746 pupils from schools across Epping Forest District who participated in outdoor learning programmes
  - 137 pupils from King Harold Academy who attended a water safety assembly by Karen Wheeler (Youth & Schools manager) and the Robbie Lea Water Safety Partnership

- 72 visitors from the District participating in family events
- The Authority's Sports Development Team continuously engages with communities from across Epping Forest District and this year the team have linked up with Epping Forest District Council to run 6 led cycle rides in the Park on weekends from April to September.
- Volunteers are very important to the Authority and last year 800 people volunteered at the park with volunteering opportunities rising last year taking the total volunteer hours to over 26,000.
- The Almost Wild Campsite at Broxbourne ran for a second year, attracting 1200 people to its Ray Mears style 'back to basics' campsite, up a third on the previous year.
- The Park Authority is about to publish its 10 year Biodiversity Action Plan which sets out its aims for biodiversity, plus priority species and habitat across the 10,000 acre park. This includes:
  - A Barbel project in partnership with the Environment Agency, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife trust and local angling groups to maintain and expand the current distribution and abundance of Barbel in the Lee Valley through targeted habitat management of key watercourses
  - Glen Faba Reedbed Creation - an ambitious project to re-profile part of the edge of the lake. A large shallow area will be created and planted with Common Reed which will create an anticipated 0.35 ha of new reedbed, a key habitat in the valley, providing important resources for a range of animals

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

### The Wave

Groundwork investigations are underway at Lee Valley Leisure Complex in Edmonton to pave the way for a privately funded £40m inland surfing destination, completely reinvigorating this 100 acre site. The Wave will be a new regional and national world-class surfing destination, allowing people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to have a go at surfing, whether it be a child stepping on a board for the first time or a pro-surfer training for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

### Lee Valley Ice Centre

The Authority's much loved and hugely popular ice centre in Leyton is nearing the end of its operational life. Ambitious plans are being developed for a 'best in class' new centre with two Olympic size ice rinks to meet the enormous demand for ice in the region. There is a long way to go with this project as well as The Wave, but work is moving forward on funding, consultation and planning issues.

### Bittern Information Point

The Authority is investing half a million pounds to create a new Bittern Information Point and bird hide at Fishers Green, near Waltham Abbey. From spring 2020 visitors will be able to enjoy state of the art facilities including a new viewing tower providing a completely different perspective to watch wildlife and a two-tier viewing platform inside the hide for enhanced viewing angles and photography opportunities. A CCTV system will provide stunning up-close footage, along with new nest box cameras, allowing visitors to get closer than ever to the wildlife in this signature spot in the Lee Valley. The Bittern Information Point project will also include significant habitat improvement work, including building a Kingfisher Bank and further enhancing the reedbed habitat for Bitterns.