

SENIOR RANGER'S REPORT FOR September 2011 to March 2012

STAFFING

- It has been decided that John Craig is the new Green spaces Manager and Judi will continue with the co-ordinating role.
- Total restructuring of countryside will be necessary to formalise roles of all remaining staff, once future budget cuts have been established. The original plan of another two redundancies and a saving of £100,000 still stands.
- With the changes within each department, our accountant is now Nigel Green

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers: Sept to March inclusive: 674 this includes volunteers who managed to come in over the cold and snowy days!

COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE

Number of Groups/people from beginning to September 2011 end Feb 2012 was as follows:

	Groups	Number of People	Income
01/10/06-28/02/07	132	2544	£12,000
01/10/07-28/02/08	139	3218	£17,000
01/10/08 – 28/02/09	172	3845	£20,300
01/10/09 – 28/02/10	173	3786	£25,000
01/10/10- 28/02/11	136	3307	£20,278
01/10/11 – 28/02/12	121	3665	£17623

These figures include income from all headings to the countryside centre, room hire, Teas & coffees, equipment hire etc.

These included such groups as: Cambs Advisory Service, Early Years & Childcare,

Income is down. We are still noticing that many organisations are telling their clients to bring packed lunches (not having so many buffets) and some organisations are only having half day meetings (reducing income from room hire)

CAFÉ

- Café supervisor has been on long term sick since middle of September. Judi has covered all the office work and many of the actual hours. Part timers have been carefully used to cover essential hours but this situation cannot continue. It is not yet known whether the supervisor will be able to return.
- As a result the predicted savings made on salaries (through cutting hours and dropping permanent staff to 4 days a week) has been lessened. However indications show that there is still a substantial saving of approx £5000
- Young people undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh award continue to volunteer in the café and we have a regular adult volunteer helping on Saturdays.
- The weather has been very good during the last 6 months and there is a direct correlation to the café income compared to the same winter months last year, the café income is up £6000 compared to last year's winter income.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

- Rangers have started producing their own events leaflets and are once again running cost effective activities
- Santa's grotto was again extremely popular. This year 257 children visited Santa. In 2012 we think we will have to run over 2 days
- Hosted a number of sports events including HDC sports taster day and Sport relief Mile
- Wildlife trust plant sales

WIDER DISTRICT

- Holt Island –following the board walk improvements, work to improve the gate and the hut is now underway
- Thicket is now benefitting from regular visits by volunteers to undertake litter picks and some tree work has been started. Much has been identified
- Spring Common -redid the stone work around the spring head
- Views Common –removed fence along the path edge as plants are now better established and have introduced a better mowing regime to improve plant diversity
- Colne Graveyard - replanted some of the hedgerow which hadn't taken the previous year

PARK MANAGEMENT

- Tree surveys & associated work is up to date
- Along the A14 approx 100 m of hedge has been laid
- Finished the bird hide on the main lake
- Added more play equipment for younger children and relocated gym equipment
- Introduced hay cut around the lake as better meadow management
- Toilets have been redecorated

FRIENDS OF HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK

- The Christmas Shopping day raised £280
- FHCP are organising an Easter trail and again plan the Christmas shopping fair
- This year they have an additional 3 interpretation boards around the lake

We have recently heard that Huntingdon Freeman's Charity are donating £12,000 to replace the battery powered wheel chairs.

BUDGET CUTS

Following the redundancies and staff reshuffles, countryside has identified that to continue offering all the services that they currently do, Rangers are stretched to the limits when the unexpected occurs. Staff structures and responsibilities are to be fully reviewed.

FINANCIAL PARAGRAPHS – HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK MARCH 2012

With the changes within each department, our accountant is now Nigel Green

Financial Information

The table below shows the latest budget and forecast for the year 2011/12 together with actual income and expenditure for the first 11 months of the year (April to February).

2011/12	Latest Budget £'000	Forecast £'000	Actual £'000	% of Budget Spent
Employees	253	253	231	91
Premises	25	18	18	72
Transport	5	4	2	40
Supplies & Services	51	50	43	84
Irrecoverable VAT	3	3	0	0
Repair & Renewal Fund Contribution	10	10	10	100
Total Controllable Expenditure	347	338	304	88
Income	197	187	162	82
Net Controllable Expenditure	150	151	142	95

Premises reduction is made up of several items most significantly NNDR refund on business rates which is permanent and a saving on electricity so far. This may change as the boiler recently failed and is being totally replaced at no cost to us, however we are currently relying on electric heaters in this building.

Income looks as if it is down because the original budget for the café was very high.

x.3 The table shows the original budget for the coming year 2012/13.

2012/13	Budget £'000
Employees	257
Premises	26
Transport	5
Supplies & Services	47
Irrecoverable VAT	2
Repair & Renewal Fund Contribution	10
Total Controllable Expenditure	347
Income	198
Net Controllable Expenditure	149

x.2 The 2011/12 Medium Term Plan (MTP) set Countryside Services a target of £199k savings to be achieved of £101k in 2011/12, £149k in 2012/13 and £199k each year thereafter. Some of these have and will impact on Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.

How the further savings for 12/13 onwards are under review. Every effort is being made to identify areas where more income could be generated or where staff could be used more efficiently to achieve the remainder of the savings target.