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PARK NEWS

April 2020



This city's parks, like Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, are amongst our greatest assets, made all the more precious during these exceptional and challenging times.

LLDC's Executive Director of Parks and Venues, Mark Camley, explains the role we can all play to keep them open, used and safe.

"With the beautiful weather of the last week, parks like ours would normally be full to bursting with people out enjoying themselves, the parklands and the fresh air.

Yet, while COVID-19 keeps us at home for most of the day it's been great to see people still using the wide-open spaces of the Park responsibly, keeping to the social distancing rules, for their once-a-day outdoor excursion. Many people who live locally don't have

access to gardens so the Park has a vital part to play. And, it's a safe space, too, thanks to the essential work of our security team who continue to work through the day and night looking after our visitors and venues and the parks team who help ensure that it is well-maintained and litter free.

Sadly, our venues are closed for the time being with events cancelled but it's great to be able to play our part in the 'Clap for Carers' initiative on Thursday nights with the big screen on the London Stadium lit up to thank the great work of the NHS and other caring services.

And while we are working to keep the place ticking over before we can all return as normal, we are also working with local authorities and our partners to make sure that those same venues can be used by the NHS and emergency providers if needs be.

Construction work at East Bank is paused but it's important to remind ourselves that in the not-too-distant future what is now a building site will be full of students, musicians and museum and theatre-goers visiting state-of-the-art buildings and world-class institutions.

Places like Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park remind us what we can achieve – creating amazing venues, homes, jobs and parkland out of spaces that were once out of sight and out of mind.

The Park helps to bring people together to celebrate and have fun. It will continue to do that for those seeking their daily exercise today and for the crowds who will flock back in the future.

I'm looking forward to getting the fountains switched on again and for children to scream with delight as they paddle their way through them."

KEEPING THE PARK SAFE, FOR EVERYONE

Parks are incredibly important during these challenging times. They offer space for us to keep active, which is vital for both our physical and mental well-being. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park remains open seven days a week for you to use for your daily exercise, should you need to use it. However, all venues, attractions and playgrounds are closed. You should visit a maximum of once per day, alone, or with members of your household. When visiting, you must keep at least two metres apart from other visitors

at all times. Groups of more than two people are banned and if you're bringing your dog, please keep them on a lead. The Park should be used for exercise only – you should not be sunbathing or having picnics. The vast majority of our local communities are already following this guidance and we thank you for that. You can stay up-to-date with all the latest information by visiting our **dedicated coronavirus updates page** on our website. We know how important the Park is to so many of you, please help us keep it open.

HAVE YOUR SAY ON TWO OF THE PARK'S NEW NEIGHBOURHOODS

East Wick and Sweetwater both sit in the western side of the Park and, once built will bring at least 1,500 new homes to the area. There will also be community spaces, such as a health centre, as well as retail and business units. So the local community can comment on the emerging plans, you can view and feed back on proposals for the new homes, retail and business spaces online. Visit eastwickandsweetwater.commonplace.is to take part.

THE PARK'S SHIFT IN FOCUS

While it's been disappointing not to be able to go ahead with the exciting programme of events on the Park this spring, it's important we adapt – both as a destination and as a community – in response to the current situation.

We're using Europe's largest digital screen on the side of London Stadium to show our support for NHS heroes and other amazing key workers for the hard work they are putting in. From the retail teams keeping the nation fed to delivery drivers, refuse collectors and cleaners, thanks for everything that you do – and look out for our message on the Stadium screen.



LLDC has been in close contact with Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest councils, as well as local NHS trusts, to support them in any way we can. Alongside transforming space in the north of the Park into a storage and sorting facility for food packages to help vulnerable residents, we're also offering space and solutions to nearby hospitals who need to store additional equipment.

It's been amazing to see the incredible innovation taking place around the world in response to this crisis. Engineers from UCL, one of the East Bank partners, have formed part of a collaborative team working with Formula One engineers and clinicians at UCLH to develop breathing aids for the Government to send to hospitals. Over in Here East, Hobs 3D have been using their 3D printers to produce both respirator valves and PPE face visors to supply to hospitals and care homes in need of supplies.

LOCAL SUPPORT NETWORKS

During these difficult times, the organisations in and around Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park have been adapting to help local people in different ways.

For example, social enterprise Bikeworks, based at Lee Valley VeloPark, has rapidly repurposed itself to provide support to vulnerable and isolated people across London. Cyclists are aiming to ensure vital food, medicine and other supplies are delivered to those most in need. The scheme is in operation across Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Islington.

Bikeworks works with a range of partners, including pharmacies, the NHS, community groups and councils, to manage the deliveries. Jim Blakemore, Bikeworks co-founder and chief executive, said: "The people we are helping are some of the people we normally work with who are not able to get out."

Badu Sports, an organisation based in Here East, is working with vulnerable families as part of their 'One Community' campaign, making sure people get the food and medication they need and running online weekly fitness programmes for young people. Economy of Hours, a skills trading network, have been collecting useful resources and guidance for employees, employers, freelancers and small businesses. This includes everything from practical advice to tips on working from home.

FIND OUT MORE

Whether you – or a family member – need assistance or you're looking to support a group through volunteering or donations, here are some of the ways you can find more information and get in touch.

BIKEWORKS: visit bikeworks.org.uk/cycle-delivery-service-covid-19 or email enquires@bikeworks.org.uk

ONE COMMUNITY SUPPORT LINE: 07494 906206 open daily for emotional support and advice from 11:30am–9.30pm

ECONOMY OF HOURS: visit economyofhours.com/whispers/ for the regularly updated list of resources

WAYS TO...

...KEEP ACTIVE

While the Park is there for a daily walk, run or cycle, there are lots of ways to get active in your own home too. The Better gyms at East Village, Copper Box Arena and the London Aquatics Centre might be closed for the time being, but they are offering all members free access to home workouts and online classes via the Better UK app – simply download to your phone or tablet and log in with your membership details.

...KEEP THE KIDS HAPPY

Follow the Discover Children's Story Centre on Instagram for a regular timetable of the

best live streams for little ones, including theatre and storytelling. If they'd rather get involved themselves, Sadler's Wells, one of the East Bank Partners, is hosting fun family dance workshops or sign up to The Maker's Guild digital arts club, hosted by The Yard theatre, for free make-at-home craft challenges.

...EAT WELL

Hopefully you've got plenty of supplies (see above if you need help with this), but sometimes it's nice to have an extra treat – and support local businesses along the way. Order boxes of supplies from vegan café Mother on Canalside, punchy chicken from Randy's Wing Bar or get your Sunday

roast for delivery from Barge East. Signorelli are also delivering baked treats to East Village residents. Remember, when picking up orders you must follow social distancing guidelines.

...BE ENTERTAINED

Alongside their dance workshops, Sadler's Wells is providing entertainment for adults too with 'digital stage' performances. Get creative with Stratford Art Social's craft sessions for grown ups, hosted via YouTube by Stratford Circus, and look out for screenings of classic sporting events on the BBC throughout summer – including moments from the London 2012 Games!

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