

DEPUTATION MEETING REPORT

Date & Time	28 th September 2022 @ 3pm
Deputation Group	Make Watergate Park a Safe Place
Deputation Attendees	Jess Spear, Barbara Sharlott, Philomena Foster
Elected Members	Cllr Mick Duff, Cllr Madeleine Johannson, Cllr Lynn Hagan Meade, Cllr Teresa Costello, Cllr Liam Sinclair
Council Officials	Margaret Farrell, Marian Travers, Micheal Murtagh, Brendan Redmond, Eamon Harnett, Thos McDermott, Jed McDermott
Apologies from	Cllr Charlie O'Connor

Cllr Mick Duff presided.

Items discussed

1. Park Lighting in Watergate Park

The group recognise that lighting is a challenge given the parks proximity to houses and that lights negatively impact local animals and insects. Would ask the Council to consider options that would balance the need for lighting to keep people safe and that wouldn't negatively impact biodiversity. The group highlighted the area along the N81 bypass, where there is a pedestrian entrance opposite the Plaza Hotel

Brendan Redmond replied to the groups query

Commitment given

- The public realm section has engaged with the public lighting section to assess the connectivity of the lighting in the park. The plan is to connect into the current lighting to bring in new areas within the park and then look at ecology, in consultation with the Heritage Officer. A timeline to be given as to when the lighting would be put in place

2. Increased Presence of Park Rangers

The group expressed concerns that the park is not used as much as it should be due to fear that it is not safe. The increased presence of activities and Park Rangers would build confidence and make users feel safer. The group stated John Lahart had been quoted in the papers as saying there was funding available for Park Rangers. They pointed out that there have been serious incidences in the park and that

increased footfall in the park would reduce anti-social behaviour. The groups wish to push for a permanent Park Ranger for the park.

Eamon Harnett replied to the groups queries

Commitment given

- Park Rangers visit on a daily basis and there is also one full time member of staff Monday to Friday, reviews currently ongoing as to how to resource and cover the park as best as possible. Will investigate how the Council can resource an increased presence in the Park. In the next week will follow up with the Councillors by email and on social media regarding planned upgrade to the playground which should bring more footfall. Are putting out a lot more on social media to encourage people into the park as the more people use the park the less anti-social behaviour there is.

3. Park facilities (benches, exercise equipment, bins)

The group expressed a desire for more benches, exercise equipment and bins in the park, with a view to increasing footfall in areas that are not well used at the moment, like the wetland area adjacent to Watergate Park. This increased footfall would again reduce anti-social behaviour. It was highlighted that there is a particular need for family picnic benches.

Brendan Redmond replied to the groups queries

Commitment given

- There is an ongoing works programme to replace and install benches in the park. Will include picnic benches in the draft list of improvement works for next year. Will have site meeting with the deputation and the councillors

4. Extension of Activities in Sean Walsh Park

The group acknowledged that the Council are trying to get activities into the park. They suggested the Council and Libraries reach out to schools to visit the wetlands for the biodiversity/science studies. Would like to see the installation of exercise equipment/ monkey bars similar to Tymon North to encourage footfall.

Thos Mc Dermott replied to the groups queries

Commitment given

- Should local community groups come to the Council with programmes they wish to run in the park the Council will help to facilitate them, with the proviso that the group/individual provide insurance for the activity and indemnify the Council. Funding available through the Community Department for existing and start up groups. The Council to liaise with the group regarding the extension of activities currently existing in other parks.