

Report of[x1]: Area Coordinator

To[x2]: East Area Parliament

Date[x3]: 19th March 2008

Item

No[EM4]:

Title of Report [x5]: Aston's Eyot – Management Arrangements Review



Summary and Recommendations



Purpose of report[x6]: To advise East Area Parliament of the current management arrangements for Aston's Eyot by Christ Church College, and to seek views on greater involvement by the local community.

Key decision[x7]: No

Portfolio Holder[x8]: Councillor Caroline Van Zyl

Scrutiny Responsibility[x9]: Environment



Ward(s) affected[x10]: Iffley Fields

Report Approved by [EM11]

Portfolio Holder:[EM12] **Councillor Caroline Van Zyl**

Legal:[EM13] **Jeremy King**

Finance:[EM14] **Andy Collett**



Policy Framework[x15]: Green Spaces Strategy



Recommendation(s)[x16]:

East Area Parliament is recommended to:



- note the current management arrangements for Aston's Eyot by Christ Church
- consider the view of the Parks Manager that the City Council should not get directly involved in the management of Aston's Eyot
- consider the case for increased community involvement in the management of Aston's Eyot, and if supported, advise on any community organizations that could be approached to participate in the project

1. BACKGROUND

In July 2007 East Area Parliament requested that the Area Coordinator pursue the issue of the removal of knotweed at Aston's Eyot with Christ Church (who own the land) and also investigate the possibility of the City Council becoming responsible for the areas upkeep, once the knotweed had been eradicated.

The City Council leased Aston's Eyot (Eyot, pronounced "ate" means island in the river) from Christ Church for 10 years from June 1974 at a rent of £25 per year, and then gave up the lease –see attached plan as appendix 1. (It should be noted that any new lease or licence agreement may have to be considered by the Executive Board).

Christ Church has confirmed that they carry out a minimal amount of maintenance each year, clearing paths and dealing with anything urgent that crops up, and have little interest in doing much more. However they have suggested that they would be happy to agree a licence with the City Council broadly on the lines previously agreed, and would be happy to consider an arrangement with an amenity society. They confirm that such a Group would have to be properly constituted and financed. To date, they have not been able to identify such a body.

The site is designated as flood plain, protected open space, and as a conservation area in the local plan.

2. THE PRESENT POSITION

The view of the Parks Manager is that there is little benefit in the Council taking on the management of Aston's Eyot. It is apparent that people are already enjoying the site, which has well trod paths around it and a good balance of different habitats.

There are some management issues that need resolving, including the eradication of Japanese knotweed, removal of rubbish and management of dangerous trees. The Parks Manager suggests that the local community could work directly with the Christ Church College to resolve these. A local community group is far better placed to raise the third party funding for improvements to the site, and increase public use and involvement. Parks are more than willing to provide support in the form of advice to a community group, so that they could become properly constituted and do the necessary fundraising.

Further dialogue will be necessary with Christ Church on the management of Aston's Eyot if there is a community group willing to get involved.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

East Area Parliament is recommended to:

- note the current management arrangements for Aston's Eyot by Christ Church
- consider the view of the Parks Manager that the City Council should not get directly involved in the management of Aston's Eyot
- consider the case for increased community involvement in the management of Aston's Eyot, and if supported, advise on any community organizations that could be approached to participate in the project

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Background papers[x18]:

Former lease agreement -1974

