

Report on	Extended opening hours at Maghera Walled Garden
Date of Meeting	Tuesday 13 November 2018
Reporting Officer	Terry Scullion, Head of Property Services
Contact Officer	Eunan Murray, Grounds & Cemeteries Manager

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report										
1.1	To update members on the extended opening hours at Maghera Walled Garden from June to August during the 2018 growing season.										
2.0	Background										
2.1	During the 2018 growing season Maghera Wall Garden open to the public from Easter until 31st October as normal. It open at 10am to 5pm Tuesday to Saturday. From 1st June to 31st August summer hours it stayed open until 8pm each Tuesday and Thursday. Council agreed this season that extended opening hours each Sunday from 1pm to 5pm from June to August were trialled and reviewed at the end of the season.										
3.0	Main Report										
3.1	<p>The table below shows the total monthly visitor figures to the Garden for the period from June to August 2018:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="229 1576 730 1798"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Visitors</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>880</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>1307</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>4211</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>August is evidently the much busier month and may reflect that period is which the garden looks its best during the summer season.</p>	Month	Visitors	June	880	July	1307	August	2024	Total	4211
Month	Visitors										
June	880										
July	1307										
August	2024										
Total	4211										

3.2 The table below shows the total visitor figures per day of the week for the same period:

Day	Visitors
Monday	151
Tuesday	537
Wednesday	826
Thursday	698
Friday	713
Saturday	875
Sunday	411

There are a significant number of visitors to the site each week with Wednesdays (826) and Saturdays (875) being the most popular days. Local community groups such as Sure Start are regular visitors each Wednesday, whilst Saturday seems to be the preferred option for families to visit.

3.3 It was anticipated that Sunday opening would create additional footfall and give new visitors the opportunity to experience the garden. The garden welcomed 411 visitors on Sundays over the summer period. With additional promotion, and the planned development of the town walkway adjacent to the garden, this figure could increase.

3.4 Whilst not included in the figures above the largest turnout this year was at the beginning of September where more than 3,500 descended on the Garden to take part in the 'Peter Rabbit event' delivered by Council's Tourism and Regeneration teams. See Appendix 3 for photos of the event.

4.0 Other Considerations

4.1 Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications

Financial:

By opening the facility on the 13 Sundays across the summer period it resulted in an increase in costs through signage changes and increased wages costs, totalling approximately £1,000.

Human:

Revisions to staff rotas including an additional operative required to work 1.00-5.00pm each Sunday from June to August.

Risk Management:

N/A

4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are requested to note the contents of the report and advise on the continuation of the extended hours for 2019 season.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Photos of the ‘Peter Rabbit’ event