

Towards a strategic plan for Gunnersbury

Summary

1. Where we want to be

We want to make Gunnersbury not just good but also outstanding.

First and foremost this means that Gunnersbury must be welcoming and safe, with excellent facilities which are always maintained to the highest standards.

But more than this, we want to excite and delight. We want Gunnersbury to offer a rich variety of experiences and services that attract the widest possible range of visitors and add value to their lives.

Gunnersbury is exceptionally fortunate in both heritage and landscape. We want to restore and open up our buildings and gardens and parkland, and provide a rich mix of cultural and museum and learning services. We want to encourage discovery, with opportunities for people to explore and learn about the past that has shaped our present times, and understand and appreciate the natural world we inhabit.

Furthermore, we want Gunnersbury to be known as a resource for health and well-being, with areas of natural and informal beauty, quiet spaces, family activity, sport and exercise, recreation and play.

Above all we want Gunnersbury to be alive all the year round with people, from all backgrounds and cultures, income levels and walks of life. And beyond the park we want our offsite work and digital platforms to reach out and engage people from every part of Ealing and Hounslow, and beyond.

We want to make it possible for residents from across the two boroughs not just to enjoy Gunnersbury, but also to contribute actively to its success. So that they feel, as a result, that this is our Gunnersbury.

And last but not least, we want to safeguard the future of Gunnersbury. This means fulfilling our long term stewardship role, safeguarding the future of the estate, contributing to efforts to tackle climate change, and operating as a successful social enterprise, placing Gunnersbury on a sound financial footing.

2. Where we are now

There have been some very considerable improvements over the last decade. A total of £38m has been raised for the park and estate, safeguarding historic buildings, restoring heritage gardens, providing new facilities for the museum, and a major new sports centre, and reversing what has been often described as decades of 'managed decline'. The Park has achieved a Green Flag award and visitor numbers have increased to 1 million a year. New partnerships have been formed and existing relationships, including with the two local authorities, have been maintained and have become much more positive.

These achievements have been made possible by the leadership and support of the two local authorities (Ealing and Hounslow), alongside the support and commitment shown by a combination of agencies, including Historic England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, a range of independent trusts and foundations, the Friends Group, as well as the two newly created bodies the Gunnersbury Estate (2026) CIC and the Gunnersbury Museum and Park Development Trust.

Furthermore Capel Manor College has invested considerably in its teaching accommodation, horticultural facilities and pens for the animal collection.

Despite the very considerable challenges of Covid, and also a fire which destroyed the newly built café, it has been possible to adapt fast and successfully. A major and potentially catastrophic collapse in festival income in 2020 was offset by highly successful grant fundraising, public donations, and an increase in filming fees. The recent improvements to the planting and gardens, achieved to a high standard by a very small gardens team, have won particular praise.

So there is a lot to celebrate. But there is still a great deal to do. The major outstanding works (which will require capital funding in the order of £30-35m to address) include:

- Restoration of the Small Mansion and Stables (weather-proofing works are underway, but this is only the start of what is needed).
- Restoration of other historic features including the Potomac Lake and the Japanese Gardens.
- Tackling the derelict model farm site.
- Completing the restoration of the Grotto and finding a purpose for the Bath-house.

Furthermore, there is urgent work to be done to enhance the quality of the visitor experience, not least improvements to paths and signage, improving access from different sides of the park, and generally making the park more welcoming.

In addition, there are several problems which need to be addressed to improve management of the estate, not least tackling the inadequate drainage in several areas, and the lack of a suitable and secure on-site maintenance depot.

The financial challenges remain substantial, not just to raise the finance needed for major capital works, but also to generate the income required to maintain the day-to-day services and to bring about the necessary improvements. Our business model to achieve financial sustainability is set out below (section 6).

Set against these multiple challenges, there are however many opportunities, not least the following:

- The local communities (residents, local businesses, voluntary associations) are a largely untapped resource, with huge potential. With imagination and flair it should be possible to considerably increase the level of volunteering and participation.
- While the Covid pandemic has been extremely challenging for Gunnersbury, limiting many activities, and increasing the financial challenges, it has also reinforced the realisation that Gunnersbury is of major importance in terms of health and well-being, for all sections of the community, and not least those experiencing social disadvantage. Looking ahead, it should be possible for Gunnersbury to establish itself as a significant health and well-being resource for West London, and attract partnerships and funding accordingly.
- Work is underway to establish a new unified governance structure with a refreshed and enhanced Board, able to operate independently but in close partnership with the two councils and others. This should provide opportunity for new impetus, and overcome the current fragmented governance arrangements, which have proved an impediment to fundraising, as well as to winning public trust and confidence, and help to establish a coherent strategic approach to the opportunities and challenges ahead.

3. The principles that will underpin our strategic plan

Our strategic plan starts with some underlying principles, against which any future proposed actions can be assessed.

- We should always remember our long term stewardship role, and we should be mindful of the needs of future generations, not just those of the present day.

- We should ensure that Gunnersbury becomes firmly established as a shared community asset, of value to all the diverse communities in the surrounding areas.
- We should ensure we are an attractive resource for families, across generations, and across all divides of wealth, race, etc.
- We should engage with residents in meaningful and creative ways, listening without a pre-determined agenda, and offering opportunities for co-design and co-production.
- We should seek to provide facilities and spaces which can attract visitors to all areas of the park.
- We should not over-manage the park, and should avoid unnecessary rules or restrictions.
- We should ensure the park is welcoming, and that the way we manage it encourages active exploration, participation in design and delivery, and people looking out for each other.
- We should integrate the different elements (park, gardens, heritage buildings, museum service, sports facilities) as much as possible, so that the sum is greater than the parts, and demonstrating that Gunnersbury is a single entity.
- We should not introduce more car parking. While it may be necessary to improve temporary vehicular access to the park to support events for example, there should be no new permanent usage roads.
- There should be no net loss of green space to hard standing.
- Additional lighting should be kept to a minimum to deliver park activities and for security. However, this should be designed to minimise light pollution, illuminating only those areas requiring it, and minimising impact on wildlife.
- Any new buildings should be of natural materials, such as timber or stone and subject to carbon audits.
- We should work in partnerships wherever possible, as we can often achieve most by joining forces with others.
- We should ensure long-term financial viability, so that sufficient income is generated to cover maintenance as well as ongoing operations and natural growth.
- When considering proposals for commercial activity, we should wherever possible prioritise those which can provide clear benefits for park users alongside income generation.

4. Headline positioning

The fully restored Gunnersbury will be able to hold its head up high in the company of West London's other great historic parks. But it should not seek to simply emulate these.

Gunnersbury has potential to become celebrated for many things, both wonderful facilities, and superb services. These include: the historic buildings and museum service, the wide-open spaces, the gardens, the festivals and other events, the sports and play facilities, the health, well-being and educational services. All of these should be part of the Gunnersbury story, because each element will be significant to very large numbers of individuals and families and groups of friends at different points in their lives.

Therefore Gunnersbury will be most successful if it can build on its wide range of amenities, its distinctive history, and the rich diversity of its surrounding communities, and so position itself as *a place of discovery and well-being, for everyone, from every walk of life.*

5. Strategic priorities

We live in highly uncertain times, and any list of strategic priorities will need to allow adaptability, as circumstances change. Some of the things set out below may need to be postponed, and in other cases it may be possible to bring things forward. Moreover, when the proposed governance changes are in place, a new Board will want to take stock, and doubtless make some adjustments. So the following, drawn up by the Trust and the CIC, is offered as a summary of current thinking, rather than a final definitive statement.

Short term (by March 2024)

- Improve paths and signage.
- Establish a maintenance depot.
- Invest in income generation infrastructure including extension to the Orangery, a (non-permanent) marquee, catering facilities, and power and toilet facilities for festivals or other events.
- Achieve an extension to the entertainments licence.
- Lay the foundations for a vibrant and active volunteering programme across all parts of the Estate.
- Improve our impact assessment and evaluation competencies to better evidence our added social value and enhance the quality of our public programmes.
- Expand our digital offer, to enable remote use of collections and learning resources, to attract new visitors to the park and museum, and add value to their experience.
- Establish a medium to long term capital funding strategy for implementation of the revised Masterplan.
- Increase staffing resources for capital and revenue fundraising and commercial income generation.
- Introduce a communications and marketing plan with a clear brand identity to attract new users, partners, and funding.
- Secure the short and medium term commitment from the local authorities to the management agreement, at a level which reflects the realities of the management and maintenance responsibilities, and the reduced income-generation opportunities (eg from the Sports Hub) in the post-Covid period.
- Preserve the ability to attract capital investment by agreeing an extension of the lease with the local authorities, either via a longer time frame, or renewal on a rolling basis, so that there is never less than (at minimum) 20 years remaining.

Medium term (by March 2026)

- Embark on the major renovation of the Small Mansion and Stables.
- Co-design a solution to the Model Farm site.
- Improve access to the park, with improved safety at the Popes Lane entrance, restore the 18th century gate between the walled garden and the Round Pond to provide public access to Capel Manor site at weekends and in holidays, and assess whether (and if so how) to establish a more permeable Western/South Western boundary to encourage visitors from Brentford.
- Carry out repairs where needed to the boundary wall, entrances and fencing.
- Establish waste and recycling facilities in the park.

- Engage local communities in new ways, such as co-curation of the museum service, and involving groups of young people including girls and young women, to design and manage spaces in the park.
- Drive visitor numbers up, not least in terms of museum access, and digital engagement, as well as expand our off-site detached and outreach working. Introduce methods to assess not only visitor number but also socio-economic characteristics, and the quality of visitor experience/engagement.
- Expand the reach and range of our learning offer, with more schools, a wider geographic distribution, and more engagement with secondary schools and colleges and universities, as well as development of adult learning.
- Establish new spaces for outdoor play and fitness, including for young people, as well as community performance.
- Establish Gunnersbury as a place which fosters health and wellbeing, with special areas in the park such as a sensory garden, a quiet meditation area, and with a significant social prescribing offer in partnership with others.
- Achieve a phased shift away from large-scale high-income but disruptive festivals towards a year-round programme of smaller events, accompanied by an increase in other income-generating activities including expansion of wedding/hospitality, rental income and a more substantial retail offer.
- Build income from corporate sponsorship as well as private supporters and donors, and launch a legacy giving programme.
- Build up staffing resources for management of major capital works, and expand the gardens team, including a paid internship/ apprenticeship programme.
- Achieve three months unrestricted reserves.

Longer term (by March 2032)

- Achieve the capital fundraising goals.
- Restore the remaining historic garden areas including the Japanese Garden, and establish the Potomac Lake as a water and wildlife eco-system and a centrepiece for biodiversity across the Estate.
- Redevelop the Model Farm site and adjacent areas, with enhanced family play and well-being facilities and new income-generating enterprise activity appropriate to the wider social mission.
- Achieve improved connectivity with the developing Brentford town centre and new residential quarters to the south of the park.
- Achieve full accreditation and quality assurance for the park, heritage, and museum services.
- Establish Gunnersbury as an exemplar for tackling carbon change, achieving a net carbon neutral position in line with Government targets (as a minimum), for example by means of renewable energy generation, energy conservation and efficiency, recycling and reuse, and the use of sustainable and efficient design and materials.
- Establish Gunnersbury as a high quality museum service, bringing all the collection back on-site, and refreshing the museum galleries.

- House the archives and local studies libraries for Ealing and Hounslow and their staff, along with the Thomas Layton Trust's collection in the refurbished Stables, with study and display space.
- Bring the Sports Hub into unified Gunnersbury management (subject to financial viability).
- Improve harmonisation across the park and estate so that (through connected services, common branding, and appeal to all sections of the community) it operates as a unified whole rather than a collection of distinct and unconnected parts.
- Achieve annual visitor numbers beyond the 1 million target in the management agreement (potentially by a further 50% by 2032) while also tracking improvements in social-economic diversity of visitors, and in the quality of their experience and engagement.
- Establish the value-for-money case to win additional public sector contracts, and also to maintain the local authorities' estate management contract on a long term basis.
- Achieve six months unrestricted reserves, to safeguard long-term financial viability.

6. Business model

Achieving financial viability for the whole estate including all the associated services and facilities will not be a simple task. The funding agreement with the two local authorities is invaluable and while significant this only contributes a portion of the annual costs. There will be a continuing need for fundraising and for generating substantial trading income, by delivering contracts, charging for services, or renting out space. And in order to lift the level of income it will be necessary to make some critical investments in fundraising and in the infrastructure required for outdoor events (eg power, water, toilets, access routes), catering, retail etc.

Originally it has been hoped that the Sports Hub would be a net contributor to the overall running costs of the Estate. However, at present, owing to the pandemic, the contractor GLL far from generating surpluses requires a subsidy to provide the service (generously provided by Ealing Council).

In future it is hoped that the Sports Hub will be able to generate the planned surplus, and the contract oversight can be brought within the new unified governance arrangements, and so fulfil to goal of contributing to financial viability. But the timing of this remains uncertain, and in the meantime this leaves an extra £130k a year to find.

As the remaining capital improvements are eventually accomplished, phase by phase, in line with the revised master-planning process, there will be increased management and maintenance costs, and eventually repair costs as well. But provided that the necessary infrastructure is put in place, there should be opportunities to generate additional earned income, to help address the funding gap and build financial resilience. However, the positive effects of this are unlikely to be realised before five-ten years into the future, at least.

So, for the coming period, we are left with a big financial challenge. We estimate that the revenue income target will be in the region of £2.2m (short term), £2.6m (medium term) and £3.0m (longer term) per year.

This level of income is required for maintaining the park and associated services, delivering the priority areas set out above, making provision for repairs (including historic liabilities) and to increase reserves over time to a level that provides minimum financial security (i.e. at least £0.5m of

unrestricted funds) and which makes provision for cyclical repairs (estimated at £1.8m over a ten year period).¹

The annual revenue budget is summarised below.

Annual revenue budget				
	Short term	Medium Term	Longer term	
	to 2024	to 2026	to 2032	
	(£000s)	(£000s)	(£000s)	
Annual Costs				
Parks and gardens	700	770	847	
Historic buildings including routine maintenance and repairs	263	289	318	
Museum service	100	110	121	
Learning and educational services	190	209	230	
Community activities	150	165	182	
Retail, front of house	160	176	194	
Additional income generation costs	234	422	464	
Management, admin	300	330	363	
Total annual costs (£000s)	2,097	2,471	2,718	
Annual Income				
Local authority fee	655	600	600	
Festivals, outdoor events (phased shift from large-scale to smaller-scale year-round events)	650	750	750	
Other commercial trading (e.g. weddings, room hire, catering, retail, filming, car parking, rentals)	504	759	835	
Public sector contracts (contribution to core)	100	125	250	
Grants and donations	300	400	550	
Total annual income (£000s)	2,209	2,634	2,985	
Surplus: annual contribution to reserves/cyclical repairs fund (£000s)	112	163	266	

As can be seen, to achieve the necessary level of income will require:

- A continuation of the local authority fee at the current level in the short term, and at £600k in the medium to longer term.
 - This fee is an essential supporting contribution which provides the necessary foundation for long-term impact and sustainability. At the levels proposed the local authority contribution would reduce over time as a proportion of total income (from 30% to 20%). At the same time it would generate greater financial leverage (from £1.55m to £2.4m, a ratio increase from 1:2.4 to 1:4).
- A successful transition from a small number of large scale Summer festivals to a larger number of smaller-scale year-round events, while achieving an overall increase in this type of income.
- A considerable increase in trading income from both trading activities, and also from net surpluses from public sector contracts (more than doubling by 2032).
- A considerable increase in grants and donations (almost doubling by 2032).

To achieve these targets will, as noted above, require investment in dedicated staffing to drive up fundraising and income generation. The increase in trading income will also require capital investment in income generating infrastructure, as noted below.

While these targets are ambitious, we believe they are achievable. The new unified governance structure will include a trading subsidiary, which will help to focus surplus-generating efforts while also remaining true to the social and stewardship objectives of the parent charity. Liability for corporation tax will be minimised (provided that surpluses from the trading subsidiary are gift-aided to the parent charity). The most significant opportunities to address the £600k uplift required in overall trading income are likely to include:

- **A larger number of festivals/open air events (even though smaller scale); Increased venue hire from weddings and private events;**

¹ Rodney Melville, Gunnersbury Park Museum Maintenance and Management Plan, 2014.

- Increased income from public catering, with potential for multiple outlets;
- Increased retail sales linked to the museum and park.
- Increased income from filming, car parking, and other activities.
- Achieving new public sector contracts which can contribute to core costs.

(NB: this budget does not include the Sports Hub. When this is brought into unified management it will be on the basis that it will fully cover its costs, generate sufficient surplus to address future planned costs (e.g. replacement of the sports pitches) as well as guard against unforeseen contingencies, and over time make a positive net contribution to achieving the trading income targets.)

Furthermore, significant capital investments will be required, without which the revenue model (and especially the increase in trading income) will not be achievable. The most important capital investments, indeed those most likely to attract external funding, are set out below:

	Short term	Medium Term	Longer term
	to 2024	to 2026	to 2032
	(£000s)	(£000s)	(£000s)
Paths, boundary walls, gates, and park infrastructure (incl. toilets, power, water, depot etc)	1,000	1,000	
Orangery	750		
Small Mansion and Stables		19,000	
Initial community engagement and enabling works (eg community archaeology) for Potomac and Japanese Gardens		250	
Model Farm Redevelopment (est.)			10,000
Total capital fundraising targets (£000s)	1,750	20,250	10,000

These figures are still provisional and will need to be supplemented later with the full capital cost of Potomac redevelopment and restoration of the Japanese Gardens.

There is significant diversity of opinion on the further extension of the Horseshoe Pond but that offers an opportunity to engage park users, heritage professionals and stakeholders in a thorough, transparent consultation and engagement process at the appropriate time. If the East Horseshoe Pond were to be restored that would require additional funding in the region of approximately £750k.

Additional infrastructure will also be required to generate additional commercial revenue (e.g. an improved retail offering, a large wedding marquee etc).

It should also be noted that while the capital requirement estimates for the Small Mansion and Stables are nearly complete (as a result of a recent feasibility study) the requirement for the Model Farm redevelopment is not possible to determine with any accuracy at this stage, and will be influenced by forthcoming consultations on the Masterplan revisions.

7. Assessing our impact

We will be developing an impact methodology, underpinned by data capture and an evaluation model which is capable of the following:

- Demonstrating our value to funders and supporters, showing progress against published targets and our contractual commitments to the local authorities and others, and building the case for further investment
- Creating a space for reflection and learning by the staff team and Board, listening to the views of others, and holding ourselves accountable to our communities, so that we can improve what we do.

8. Further strategic planning

As noted above, the new Board will want to take stock of the ideas set out in this document. We suggest that further work might include development of more detailed plans in the following areas:

- A gardens plan, informed by international experience, and supported by a Gardens Advisory Group.
- A plan to develop the story of people and place, supported by a Museum and Heritage Advisory Group.
- A fundraising plan for the major capital appeals, supported by an Appeals Committee, with close engagement with the local authorities and Historic England and the Gunnersbury Friends.
- A communications and marketing plan, to help bring more people to Gunnersbury, more often – paying particular attention to those in Ealing and Hounslow, from lower income groups for example, who are not making use of the park but could benefit from it.
- An environmental audit, to identify how to enhance Gunnersbury's contribution to tackling the challenges of climate change, with a phased now, soon, later approach to implementation.

Appendix A: Restoration and Renewal of the Estate

(Note from Trust/CIC discussion on 16th July 2021)

Where we want to be

By 2026, we aim to complete the following works: the paths and park infrastructure and the Orangery, , as well as undertake initial community engagement and enabling works for the Potomac site and Japanese Gardens. We also aim to achieve completion or at least advanced progress with the Small Mansion and Stables. We will need to raise around £15m to achieve this.

Within a 10-15 year timeframe, we would hope to complete the full restoration and renewal of the estate, including the Potomac, Japanese Gardens, and Model Farm area.

We aim to do so in a way which has environmental sustainability at its heart, establishing a balance between nature and people, with energy from renewable sources, with excellent recycling facilities, and serving as an exemplar in responding to the carbon challenge.

We also want to use the restoration programme to retain the individual character and tell the distinctive story of different parts of the estate, exposing layers of history, and building a narrative of people and place.

And we also want the restoration to be achieved with creativity and flair, taking the opportunity to add something from our generation to the evolving story of Gunnersbury.

Without good partnerships none of the restoration could be accomplished. Looking into the future we want to continue the spirit of collaboration, and be seen as a generous and collaborative partner, always open to joining forces with others where that can add value.

This is ambitious but if the detailed plans for each element and the costings are realistic and we can demonstrate a clear sense of priorities external funders should be convinced that they are worth supporting.

Once the capital works are complete we envisage that the Estate can substantially pay its own way, while remaining open and accessible to everyone.

Where we are now

Context

A relatively neglected, run down and under resourced public asset has undergone the first phases of regeneration and with further investment has the scope to become a hugely well used, popular and sustainable community resource.

As a Grade II* registered park Gunnersbury is in the top 30% nationally of registered parks and gardens.

With 22 Listed Buildings and structures at Grade II or Grade II* listed status Gunnersbury is in the top 10% nationally of sites of listed buildings – and nine structures remain on the national ‘At Risk’ register.

Alongside the historic buildings our physical assets include sports and play facilities, a café (soon to be restored following a fire in 2020) and toilets, as well as the gardens and the open spaces of the park itself.

Partnership working has been fundamental to achieving the progress to date and will remain key to future successful development.

Progress so far:-

- (a) Heritage Quarter in North West of Park has seen substantial (£20 million plus) investment in Historic Gardens, Large Mansion and Museum and detailed feasibility study for the Small Mansion and Stables with start on £3.5 million essential repair works
- (b) Sporting Quarter in North East of Park has seen substantial (£20 million plus) investment to create brand new Sports Centre and Hub for new and regenerated sports pitches

There has been major refurbishment in recent years including works on the Large Mansion (now housing the Museum) the Orangery, Bath House (though not complete) and Temple, as well as reinstatement of the Horseshoe Pond and Round Pond.

Essential weatherproofing of the Small Mansion and Stables is underway and is due for completion Summer 2022.

We have been able to re-open and expand the museum, while developing online capacity and delivering exhibition programmes and community learning.

Challenges

The liability for legacy repairs is yet to be fully quantified (a conditions survey by Hounslow Council has been delayed because of Covid - hopefully this will be completed by the end of 2021/22) – however it is clear that the current budgets for maintenance and repairs are not adequate .

Some parts of the Estate, notably the Small Mansion and Stables, do not currently fall within the lease or management agreement held by the CIC.

The size of Gunnersbury is its biggest strength and its greatest challenge, as demonstrated for example when considering the task of footpath maintenance.

The Masterplan revision points to works outstanding and lack of investment in the South West Potomac Quarter, Central Model Farm area and South East Quarter.

In addition the overall Park infrastructure needs urgent attention from boundary walls and fences, entrances and signage to and within the Estate, electrical and water supplies, public toilets and the very poor condition of paths. All of these are not only essential to the security and quality of public experience of the estate but also to income generation possibilities.

There are issues of population growth, community engagement, underrepresentation of BAME communities, reaching out to deprived neighbourhoods and generally communicating effectively to a wider audience across the two boroughs and further.

We made a commitment to Lottery funders to continue free access to the Museum. It will be a challenge to maintain and expand museum and learning services and community programming without resorting to regular charging, unless we can increase income from schools to cover full costs for learning services, attract additional contract or grant funding for such activities or cross-subsidise from other trading income.

Opportunities

Both Borough Plans note the significance of heritage assets and open space for place making and the Hounslow Local Plan notes Gunnersbury “contributes significantly to the environmental and cultural wealth of the Borough”

Both Borough Regeneration Strategies see economic development and regeneration as co-dependent with the social and environmental elements creating sustainable development and Gunnersbury with its sporting, cultural, environmental and heritage offer is identified as of strategic significance.

Furthermore, the Creative Economy is seen as a key part of the regeneration agenda and the Mayor of London has designated the area adjoining Gunnersbury as a Creative Enterprise Zone which has implications for the Estate as a whole and Small Mansion and Stables in particular.

A revised Masterplan in draft form has been drawn up by consultants appointed by Historic England, on behalf of the Project Board. Alongside the revised Masterplan a Built Heritage Survey has been prepared by Simpson & Brown (Conservation Architects) as well as an Energy and Sustainability Report by Harley Haddow (M&E Consultants).

A feasibility study for the Project Board proposed that the Stables could house the museum's reserve collections and the local authority archives, and also provide managed workspace, and the Small Mansion could be used for cultural and educational purposes

Because of its central location the derelict Model Farm could be brought into a range of different positive uses, with implications for the future design and positioning of the whole estate.

While much of the works that are needed require very significant capital fundraising, there is also potential for smaller-scale fundraising to achieve smaller improvements (e.g. urns, terrace, gardens, and Bathhouse/Grotto).

We need to be willing to 'look outside the box', and draw inspiration from experiences elsewhere in the UK and internationally, as we take forward the programme of restoration and identifying new uses for different parts of the estate.

As the estate is restored, there will be increased management costs, but also opportunities to grow income, to help to address the significant funding gap. It will be vitally important to ensure that the restoration programme includes the investment needed to maximise potential income streams, without which the future sustainability of the estate will remain at grave risk.

Strategic Priorities (proposed)

To address all of the possible identified regeneration projects will need a timeframe of 10 to 15 years to enable prioritisation, feasibility, fundraising and phasing.

An initial target date for immediate priorities to be achieved by the centenary date of 2026 for Gunnersbury will require partnership fundraising of at least £15 million, including the following as of primary importance:

- Small Mansion and Stables: £10.8 - £18.7m million
- Orangery: £750k
- Paths and Park Infrastructure: £1 million
- Initial community engagement and enabling works (eg community archaeology) for Potomac and Japanese Gardens: £250k

In addition, it will be necessary to increase the annual maintenance budget from around £100k at present to at least £200-£300k to meet the growing maintenance and repairs needs as the estate is restored, as well as to deal with the historic legacy of under-investment.

Short term (by March 2024)

- A 12 months urgent repairs and maintenance schedule needs to be carried out. the lottery funders required a Management and Maintenance Plan to be submitted and we will endeavour to fulfil what was promised there. Smaller scale improvements that can be made quickly, to paths, archways, etc. will send out a positive signal to residents, partners and funders, and help to encourage the larger scale investments we need.
- In order to deliver the revised Masterplan:

- The Board leadership will need to be clarified. Currently the Masterplan is overseen by the Project Board. If this responsibility were to be transferred to the new unified body the active engagement of the two local authorities and Historic England would need to be retained, perhaps via a special Committee.
- Senior designated staff responsibility would be required. This could be the CEO (with backfill so that other responsibilities can be covered) or a new part-time post of Project Director.
- We will establish a medium to long term funding strategy for implementation of the Masterplan. This needs to include a communications and positioning plan, including reference to the centenary year, and should consider how to maximise the funding contribution from different sources including heritage and public institutions, trusts and foundations, corporates, high net worth individuals, and public appeals.
- We will also start the process of fundraising for smaller scale capital projects, to achieve 'quick wins'.
- We will establish a sustainable/renewable environmental strategy, starting with an audit of what can be done. This could include, for example, consideration of ground source heat pumps, bore holes. The additional costs for this would need to be balanced against the indirect financial and other benefits of building a reputation for progressive action in this space.
- We will review the arrangement for grounds maintenance, and consider the option of bringing the gardens and heritage elements in house.
- We will preserve the ability to attract capital investment by agreeing an extension of the lease with the local authorities, either via a longer time frame, or renewal on a rolling basis, so that there is never less than (at minimum) 20 or 25 years remaining.

Medium Term (by March 2026)

- We will implement a medium term legacy repairs and maintenance schedule (above ground and below ground).
- We will implement the major capital fundraising strategy.
- We will establish a realistic target completion date for the major capital improvements, in partnership with the local authorities, Historic England, and other key partners.
- We will also continue to raise funds for smaller-scale capital improvements.
- We will continue to build the capacity of the organisation, so that it can successfully transition from estate management to estate management and development. The restoration of the Small Mansion and Stables will be the major task in the medium term, but progress with the Orangery and the paths and park infrastructure also of great and pressing importance, not least for future financial viability.

Longer Term (by March 2032)

- We will implement a longer term legacy repairs and maintenance schedule (above ground and below ground).
- We will achieve further regeneration of the Estate, supported by a successful programme of fundraising, aiming for completion of the restoration programme (although noting that the Model Farm redevelopment is likely to take longer).

Appendix B: Gardens, Recreation and Biodiversity

(Note from Trust/CIC discussion on 29th July 2021)

Where we want to be

We are ambitious for the gardens and for the recreational and biodiversity opportunities the park affords.

To be a good park, we need to be welcoming and safe, with well-looked after spaces and facilities. But beyond that, we want to be a great park. This will come from a wide variety of high quality experiences throughout the park, balancing play and sport, heritage and contemporary interpretations, formal and informal gardens and open spaces.

Above all the park will become a great park when it is brought alive by the people who use it, especially if many of them, from all diverse backgrounds, are also able to play a part as volunteers, friends, co-creators and co-designers of what happens in the park.

Where we are now

Context

A Conservation Management Plan was drawn up in 2014 and revised in 2018; this set out five distinct character areas for the 186-acre park:

- House and Gardens (Large and Small Mansions, Heritage Garden Areas, Round Pond and Italian Gardens)
- Ornamental Parkland
- The Working Estate (Walled Garden, The Stables)
- Potomac and Environs
- Historic Enclosure / Playing Fields

The CMP identified features of high significance (including the ornamental parkland planting, the Round Pond, the Potomac Lake and Horseshoe Pond) and medium significance (the Italian and Japanese Gardens and the Carriage drives).

The park is rich in natural resources. For example, a 2016 survey found 2,500 trees with the most common being sycamore and other maples, horse chestnut, lime, oak, yew and plane.

Challenges

There is no secure on-site maintenance depot to store plant and machinery, as well as for plant propagation and composting. In the past the grounds maintenance contractor IDVerde has lost expensive equipment to theft when storing it on the park. The challenge is to identify a suitable permanent site for this, which does not impact on public amenities or income generation.

Some but not all of the gardens and recreational areas of high and medium conservation significance have now been restored. Outstanding works include, for example:

- Restoration of the Potomac Lake (currently fenced off to the public and only accessible by an angling club)
- Upgrading and expanding the existing play area
- Improving footpaths (and new footpaths)
- Restoration of the Japanese Garden

- Restoration of the grottoes at Princess Amelia's Bath House (a bathing pool inside and a fern grotto outside)

There is significant diversity of opinion on the restoration of the East Horseshoe Pond but that offers an opportunity to engage park users, heritage professionals and stakeholders in a thorough, transparent consultation and engagement process at the appropriate time.

The gardens team is small, and additional resources will be needed to realise the potential of Gunnersbury's gardens and open spaces.

There are several areas which detract from the overall experience of visitors to the park. For example, the draft revised Masterplan notes that 'the Stables and Japanese Gardens area is especially run-down in appearance and the surrounding security fencing and scaffolding is unsightly, making the community garden area beyond somewhat uninviting to explore.' It also notes that 'There is poor access from the south and south-west of the park, an area adjacent to a burgeoning residential population, with no lighting in this part of the park.' In addition, there is a pressing need to improve paths. There is also room for improvement in provision of toilet facilities, and signage needs to be improved, to provide species information and historical context, for example.

Opportunities

The small in-house gardens team has achieved big improvements in recent times, with some very attractive planting, and this is a success that can be built upon. For example, planting of 80 Japanese cherry trees is proposed in Autumn 2021, to tie in with the postponed 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

It would be possible to improve signage, wayfinding and interpretation at relatively modest cost.

The Potomac Lake site in particular has scope to become a centrepiece for biodiversity. There is also an opportunity for a community archaeology project there on the site of the old pottery.

As well as reinstating missing features from the Rothschild era each generation should leave something unique of its own, and so we should therefore seek to add new features to the gardens too.

It would be possible to organise special initiatives to open up the Gardens to local residents who might otherwise not normally visit, or who are suffering and / or who are disadvantaged in some way, and for whom the gardens can provide some relief, benefit and hope.

Strategic priorities (proposed)

Short term (by March 2024)

- We will establish a maintenance depot for onsite storage of equipment and for plant propagation, as well as toilet/refreshment facilities for grounds and maintenance staff and volunteers.
- We will achieve further improvements in gardens and recreational facilities, including paths and signage.
- We will undertake a costed options appraisal on whether to bring aspects of grounds maintenance in house (e.g. those related to heritage and horticulture) including an apprenticeship programme.

Medium term (by March 2026)

- We will establish a detailed gardens plan for the estate, with input from a Gardens Advisory Group, drawing on international examples, and also drawing on conversations with groups of local residents, including children and young people and others who tend not to be listened to in such exercises.

- We will implement further phased restoration and enhancement of the gardens and parkland areas (also longer term).
- We will implement improvements to the play offer e.g. a play trail or a new play space which will attract families to explore more of the park. This must include design input from women and girls, to achieve greater gender equality.
- We will plan and establish a range of open-air fitness trails, as well as outdoor gym space to encourage cross-generational usage, including sympathetically designed outdoor exercise equipment to maximise use of the park for non-team based informal exercise and well-being (also longer term)
- We will introduce green waste recycling/volume composting onsite.
- We will provide waste recycling bins (glass, metal) for park visitors.
- We will build up the gardens team and also increase the opportunities to volunteer.

Longer term (by March 2032)

- We will establish the Potomac Lake as a small but complex water and wildlife eco-system.
- We will re-orientate footfall across the whole park, for example by creating better access across the Western boundary with Brentford.

Resource implications

We will need to build up the gardens team, offering good terms and condition to retain good staff, and provide more apprenticeships.

In a short term we will need to find significant funds for a maintenance depot, and for improvements to the paths.

In the medium to long term we will need to invest in grounds maintenance equipment (if partly brought in-house), recycling facilities, and open-air fitness trails or areas.

The restoration and development of the Potomac Lake and other elements of the historic landscape will require significant capital funding.

Appendix C: Museum and Heritage Services, Public Programming and Learning

(Note from Trust/CIC discussion on 12th July 2021)

Where we want to be

We are contracted to provide a museum *service* to the populations of the whole of Ealing and Hounslow. As such we must work to ensure that not only is the museum recognised as an outstanding attraction to visitors to the park, but also that our service reaches out beyond the physical confines of the building and the location into all areas of the boroughs, local schools, community settings and across digital platforms.

We want Gunnersbury to become celebrated as an exemplary museum service providing a regional centre for culture, heritage and conservation.

We want the Gunnersbury heritage assets, celebrating achievements over 1,000 years, curated, conserved and managed for the benefit of the communities of Ealing and Hounslow.

We want to offer a consistently high quality stimulating and inspiring education and learning programme.

And while we certainly want the museum and heritage and education facilities to attract those who are the most likely audiences, we also want to reach out much more widely, to those who are currently least engaged, building deep and enduring relationships.

We believe we can best do this with an offer that feels both local and also of universal appeal, and which draws on Gunnersbury's heritage in ways which feel fresh, contemporary and relevant, and where people from the communities that surround Gunnersbury are able to have had a hand in curation, telling stories of people and place, and helping to bring those stories alive.

Where we are now

Context

The CIC is contracted to manage and develop the museum services – with one of the largest collections held by any local authorities in London. for the two boroughs of Hounslow and Ealing over a 25-year term to 2043, serving a combined population of over 625,000 people – a potential audience comparable to the populations of many large UK cities.

Pre-pandemic, visitor and digital engagement levels were 35,000 (excluding schools).

Challenges

The Covid pandemic of 2020 resulted in the forced closure of the museum March 2020 to August and from November 2020 to July 2021 and the loss of revenue caused by the Covid-related cancellation of the majority of the CIC's commercial activity and the collapse in demand for education services from the schools sector.

The potential for the Museum Service to develop in scope, scale and significance depends to a large extent upon the 50,000 or so objects in the current collections and the skill and creativity of its staff team. The first items to come into the museum included collections from local experts and, because the Park and Museum were run by smaller local authorities before the creation of the London Boroughs, new acquisitions came from what is now the western end of the modern boroughs. The pattern of collecting changed with the appointment of different and more outgoing curatorial staff in the 1970s onwards who understood community engagement. Despite very limited funding and little space in which to work some innovative projects engaged a variety of local groups in celebrations of their culture and history, most of which resulted in new acquisitions. F

The fact that much of the collection is poorly catalogued and most is stored off site means that current team have had little time to become really familiar with the Museum's holdings. Once the material is moved to Gunnersbury there is great scope for a more participative approach in which volunteers supported by curators can take on cataloguing and researching. Understanding what the Museum holds and where there are yawning gaps in the representation of different localities, communities and activities, has to be the first step in identifying new forms of interpretation. This will make it possible to develop a more participative, accessible co-curation approach, working with a diverse range of community partners to help with the search for future acquisitions and their presentation.

One of the main influences of the character of this part of West London has been the fluidity of the population and the impact, whether permanent or temporary, of immigrant communities from all over the world, since Roman times. Some of these communities are under-represented in the collections and the museum should be proactive in addressing this. The creation of the South Asian archive has begun this process, which should be continued with other communities. The material collected should reflect people's lives in West London rather than being just a token representation of a certain religion or culture. From such collecting activities new audiences, who discover the Museum, need to be nurtured to ensure they return.

Opportunities

The service, and the Gunnersbury Park Museum, is a local history museum whose collections celebrate and record the history of the communities and places within its two boroughs. Its visitor base is however drawn from a rather narrow section of the local populations of the two boroughs. The potential is to position the services (including digital), museum collection, display, interpretation, public programming and learning services as a heritage and cultural provision which can attract a greater range of the local population, as well as people from the wider West London region.

There is also an opportunity to position the museum service as a contributor to the health and well being of the local population, with innovative programming and partnerships.

We can make a lot more of what we currently have. Revisiting the curatorial and interpretation scheme of the museum to establish a display, curatorial and collecting policy which is coherent and relevant could position the museum as a credible partner with larger and national institutions as a venue for touring exhibitions and significant loans.

It may be possible to establish consortia with other West London museums and historic buildings to collaborate in marketing and promotional activities.

Strategic Priorities (proposed)

Short term (by March 2024)

- We will rebuild the profile of the museum, and restore visitor and digital engagement levels (establishing targets for this to place us in the front rank of local authority-owned museum services), as well as the well-respected schools programme.
- We will build on the innovative use of digital engagement and programming which was trialled in the Covid lockdown.
- We will make regular small changes to the display to include new acquisitions or acknowledge a local event or anniversary
- We will establish a strategy to reduce the gap between the number of museum visitors from Black and Ethnic Minority communities and White communities.

- We will work towards putting community engagement at the heart of our work, developing co-curation practices and, increasing our outreach programmes. We will work on delivering our commitment to forging partnerships with a diverse range of community and civil society organisations to develop our capacities to enable and interpret the stories, experiences and heritages of the multi-cultural populations of Ealing and Hounslow. We will start to articulate and share these narratives and curate the objects which animate and reflect these.
- We will blend the museum operation with the heritage landscape and multiple listed buildings and structures across the park to present the entire estate's potential to offer an immersive heritage experience.
- We will work with colleagues in the West London Museums Group and other relevant consortia, to assist with marketing and promotion.

Medium Term (by March 2026)

- Positioning learning and education alongside working with our communities, we will broaden our education offers delivered from within the museum building, the 72-hectare grade II*listed park and in a range of dispersed settings across west London to secondary school students and adult learners.
- We will increase onsite visitors to the museum and to museum exhibitions and public programming delivered not just within the museum, but also the Orangery, temple and in outdoor settings. Our outreach programmes across Ealing and Hounslow will be developed in partnership with a range of community-based partners.
- Our digital programming will be refined and developed based upon the consolidation of lessons learned from the 2021/22 pilot.
- In preparation for the projected development of an onsite museum collection store by 2026, we will accelerate the rate of collection review. We will embark on a contemporary collecting programme, with the aim of ensuring that our collections and the way that they are interpreted are meaningful and relevant to all local audiences. We will also collect archive material and oral histories focusing on the 2020 pandemic.
- Recognizing the need to revisit our displays and interpretation, within the museum galleries and drawing on the greater input of communities and enhanced co-curation practices, we will begin a process of gallery redesign and reinstall with the overhaul of the "home gallery".
- We will develop partnerships to provide a programme of health and well being interventions, supported by evidence and impact assessment to maximize the contribution of the museum building, collections and curatorial and interpretive practice to contribute to health improvements and wellbeing in target populations.

Longer Term (by March 2032)

- We will redesign and reinterpret all seven galleries to better reflect community diversity and a co-curatorial approach and reinforce the position of the Museum and museum service as a notable West London resource.
- We will extend gallery and exhibition space, making full and creative use of the building, as well as establishing display spaces beyond the building.
- We will provide a sustainable programme of museum-based social prescribing to contribute to the improvement of long term health outcomes.
- We will increase museum visitor numbers (potentially doubling from 35,000 to 70,000) by attracting new people and encouraging repeat visits.

Appendix D: Sports, Health & Well-being

(Note from Trust/CIC discussion on 13th July 2021)

Where we want to be

We want to provide leisure activity for as wide a group of the community as possible (e.g. across age, disability and ethnic groups).

We want to increase park and museum usage in harder-to-reach communities, with a distinctive and high quality sports, health and well-being offer, for example:

- We want to increase the spaces that can contribute to sports, health and fitness, including (in addition to the Sports Hub, sports pitches, and existing play areas) outdoor gyms or fitness trails, adult play areas, and introducing cycling to the park in ways which are respectful of walkers.
- We want to establish spaces in the park that can contribute to mental health and well-being, for example a meditation area, a sensory garden.
- We also want to develop our services, including the museum service, in ways that make a distinctive contribution to well-being.

We want to meet shared goals with the Government and Local Authorities for improving the overall health of the community, mental & physical, for example by developing (in partnership) a highly regarded social prescribing offer.

We want to provide sports facilities and training for aspiring champions, including encouraging greater use by local schools.

In designing our sports, health and well-being amenities we want to have engaged in conversation with groups of local people, including young people, to understand what would work best for them.

And we want to be capable of adapting and changing, so that we remain always relevant and never stale.

To maximise the benefits we do not want to only provide activities, but rather we also want to enable others to make use of the park and its facilities, in ways that they themselves determine, provided only that they respect and contribute to the character and overall mission of Gunnersbury.

We want to achieve full Green Flag Award and Green Heritage Site Accreditation status.

We want to raise income for the estate (not just through charging but also by accessing finance from other sources).

Where we are now

Context

The new-build Sports Hub opened in April 2021, with a gym, exercise studios and sports hall, as well as outdoor pitches (8 tennis courts, 2 all-weather pitches, and 10 grass pitches for football, cricket and rugby).

A nationwide social enterprise GLL operates the Sports Hub and the all-weather pitches with Ealing Council acting, for the time being, as contract client on behalf of the two boroughs.

Challenges

The intention had been that the CIC would act as the contract client with GLL. However, following Covid, the CIC Board felt that financial risk was too high at this stage, bearing in mind the CIC's low level of reserves.

Because of this there is a risk that the Sports Hub activities are not well integrated into the wider activities of the park, thereby missing a valuable opportunity to achieve greater social inclusion for Gunnersbury as a whole. To mitigate this risk in the short term it will be important to build a good working relationship with GLL.

The park is used by independent fitness and sports coaches. Some are recognised, licensed, and fee paying (e.g. yoga sessions in the Orangery). Many others (especially over the last year) are operating in an unlicensed and disorganised way. A comprehensive licensing scheme would allow better planning of outdoor provision as well as improving income generation.

There will be tensions between outdoor sports and leisure users on the one hand and large scale events on the other – not least because access for large events will need to be across football and rugby pitches.

Opportunities

A major opportunity in the medium/longer terms will be to integrate the Sports Hub, with the all-weather pitches and tennis courts, into the wider Estate management. This will be dependent on a Board assessment of ability to manage risk.

There are a large number of pupils in the immediate vicinity who have limited access to green space sports facilities as well as limited resources to pay for them. We need to encourage off peak use at affordable levels which would further encourage the wider use of the park.

There is considerable potential to develop new outdoor sports, health and well-being activities, including a significant social prescribing offer, a free-to-use Trim Trail (an outdoor exercise course) and outdoor gym, and perimeter and other walking routes. It should be possible to introduce cycling, in a safe way. One further suggestion is a festival of sports every few years. These types of activities would complement the Sports Hub offer, and increase the range and volume of people using the estate to improve their health and well-being (including low income groups, and schools groups).

Furthermore, there will be opportunities to extend some sports, leisure and well-being activities beyond the confines of the park, often in partnership with others, bringing greater opportunity for participation to people across Ealing and Hounslow.

We have a unique opportunity to combine the museum and heritage and cultural offers and assets, with the park, gardens, sports and play facilities to provide a comprehensive site-wide well-being offer.

Partners are the key to success. They provide the expertise and skills Gunnersbury lacks, for example in the fields of sports and mental health. They also expand both the activities that can be offered and the degree of professionalism in their delivery. And they often have access to particular groups in the community, who might otherwise not engage.

Strategic Priorities (proposed)

Short term (by March 2024)

- We will build partnerships with suitable organisations to establish a social prescribing offer, drawing on the opportunities presented by our park, gardens, museum and heritage assets.
- We will explore with GLL ways to encourage off-peak use by local schools of the sports facilities at affordable levels.
- We will bring outdoor sports and fitness providers into a licensed scheme.
- We will renew the pedalo concession, on a 3-5 year basis, with a renegotiated revenue share.

- We will improve the paths, in ways which also allow the introduction of cycling into the park with clearly demarcated shared use routes, designed to accommodate the movement of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Improve the 40-minute external circuit walk (e.g. planting) and promote this, as well as shorter internal (10-20 minute) circuit walks.

Medium Term (by March 2026)

- We will position the organisation to take over the client contract role for the Sports Hub (timing subject to Board assessment of risk).
- We will build our relationships with local schools including developing policies which encourage off peak use of the Sports Hub facilities at affordable levels and which would further encourage the wider use of the park.
- We will establish places in the park that are designed to foster well-being, e.g. a meditation area, a sensory garden.
- We will establish a free-to-use Trim Trail, with equipment that is robust but also sensitive to the heritage site.
- With partners, we will deliver a social prescribing service on contract with public sector commissioners.
- Secure Green Flag Excellent status.

Longer Term (by March 2032)

- We will seek to ensure the Sports Hub is operating successfully as part of a unified and integrated Estate portfolio, and prepare for re-tendering of the ten year concession.
- We will establish ways to extend our sports, leisure and well-being offer beyond the boundaries of the park.
- We will build the social prescribing offer, winning additional public sector contracts.
- Secure Green Flag exceptional status.

Appendix E: Financially Sustainable Estate Management

(Note from Trust/CIC discussion on 19th July 2021)

Where we want to be

We want to reach the point where we are able to generate revenues, without over-dependency on one or two sources, sufficient to run the estate well and bring about the improvements that are needed. In addition we aim to generate around 10% annually in surpluses in order to build up an acceptable level of reserves, so that we have adequate provision for unforeseen events and for long-term repairs and maintenance.

Our financial modelling suggests that this will require raising our income level from £1.9m (pre-Covid) to c.£2.5m. (This does not include major capital fundraising).

To achieve this will not be possible, at least in the foreseeable future, without a continuation of the funding agreement with the two local authorities. On top of this it will require a sustained fundraising effort, and also a substantial uplift in earned income.

Where we are now

Context

The main trading income pre-Covid was:

- a) The estate management contract with the local authorities (originally £710k but on a taper - £655k at 2021).
- b) Large-scale entertainment in the park, with 2-3 festivals in the Summer, with up to 40,000 people per day, producing gross revenue of c £500-600k, of which c.80% was surplus.

Other surplus generating pre-Covid income included the café (c.£75k), weddings (c.£25k), museum shop (£15k), Capel Manor rent (£25k). Schools income was £55k gross but this didn't cover costs.

During Covid we were unable to operate festivals and this left a very major gap in our income. However, the estate management contract has held up well, with Hounslow deciding not to implement the planned taper – the contract currently stands at £655k.

During Covid we also achieved £65k of new film income. Recently we have re-negotiated the Capel Manor rent up to £80k. The recent planning decision in favour of the Pitch and Putt business should produce new income of at least £30k per year.

Challenges

We are over dependent on small number of commercial contracts (eg Lovebox). Impediments to diversifying our commercial income include:

- Seasonality of outdoor events business.
- Lack of infrastructure (power, water, toilet facilities, vehicle access).
- Shortage of space (weddings, shop).
- Lack of staff devoted to income generation activities.
- Low level of marketing and communications.
- Poor visuals & signage - parts of park boundary and interior remain dishevelled, and there is no proper entrance signage.
- Visitor numbers are still too low for some commercial vendors (particularly when weather is bad or in comparison with neighbouring estates).

- Limited investment budgets.

There will be several impediments to operating large scale income generating events in future:

- There may be an extended 'Covid hangover'
- Further maintenance and repair work to the estate will mean that some areas/facilities will not be usable for commercial purposes for extended periods.
- The establishment of sports pitches has reduced the areas available for commercial use, and work-arounds will increase costs of festivals, thereby reducing margins.
- Large scale events can be highly disruptive and are always likely to generate very significant opposition from some quarters. Experience elsewhere (e.g. Finsbury Park) suggest that large scale commercial events cannot be sustained over the longer term, as local resident opposition grows.

In the original business model the sports centre was projected to generate £135k net per year (and this was one reason for the taper in the local authority contract). However, this has not been achieved, and future projections are uncertain.

In some cases, exclusivity may need to be offered to commercial partners, in order to achieve the highest possible fee, or to share the costs of investment in infrastructure. However, there are risks of becoming locked into sub-optimal deals, and specialist industry expertise may be required in such cases.

Opportunities

Although we recognise the pressures on local authority finances it may be possible to construct a strong case to continue the estate management contract at least at the current level in this critical post-Covid transition period and beyond. An annual review with the local authorities would help to build confidence that the contract is delivering value for money, and to address any concerns early on, and would also be an opportunity for the local authorities to consider whether there are additional tasks they could usefully commission, in line with their priorities at the time.

More generally, it should be possible to win further significant public sector contracts, beyond the current estate management contract, in the fields of health and wellbeing, archive management, etc. It should also be possible to achieve a better cost model for the educational work with schools (which is currently loss making when the full costs are taken into account).

We cannot rely only on public sector funding, and events income will continue to play a highly significant role in our future sustainability. Looking beyond the current reliance on large scale festival events, it should be possible to generate substantial income through a larger number of smaller scale events, including some beyond the Summer period. This will however require a renegotiation of the event licence (currently only 28 days are permitted) and dedicated events management resources.

The commercial planning for the estate will need to be integrated to social, environmental and heritage goals, as set out for example in the revised masterplan, and it should be possible to achieve a large part of the investment necessary to build commercial income by including this as series of packages within heritage capital fundraising efforts, but this will take time. It should also be noted that while future capital improvements to the estate could eventually produce significant uplifts in rental and wedding/hospitality income, and potentially other income as well, it may be partly offset by increased estate management costs.

Gunnersbury already benefits from around one million visitors a year. While we will never charge for entrance to the park, there will be many ways to encourage visitor spend without undermining our social objectives. For example by expanding the retail offer connected to the museum and the

historic buildings, or by launching a garden centre or equivalent, as well as through online sales. In exploring this we can draw on experience from elsewhere and have potential to establish productive partnership with others, such as Capel Manor.

It should be noted that while there are many community-oriented activities which can make a contribution to income generation (to give a few examples: boating on the Round Pond, pop-up coffee bars, provision of personal trainers, guided tours) many of these will require additional management resources, and will yield only modest financial returns. The bigger challenge is to discover activities that are aligned, or at the very least not in opposition, to the overall social mission and which can also generate the substantial surpluses needed to address our funding gap. It has been suggested that a Hackathon, involving people with a range of commercial experience, could help to extend the range of high-yield options under consideration.

Within the new governance arrangements, it should be somewhat easier to achieve a good blend of commercial and community activities. The trading subsidiary will provide a means to focus estate-wide efforts on generation of earned income, and at the same time ensure that these efforts remain consistent with and do not undermine the wider social objectives of the parent charity.

Strategic Priorities (proposed)

In the short and medium term, to address the considerable funding gap and remain viable, and to achieve the up-front investments needed for long term viability, we have no option other than to continue to seek to attract significant income from a small number of large scale events.

We recognise that these can be disruptive for sections of the local community, especially residents close to the park. We will communicate the reasons for this, and attempt to mitigate the adverse impacts as much as possible, and our intention is to shift as quickly as possible towards a year-round programme of smaller scale and less disruptive events, as well as other income-generating activities, avoiding the need for the very large and disruptive events.

Activities to lay the ground for this shift in income generation will be prioritised in the short and medium term, as follows:

Short term (by March 2024)

- We will open discussions with the local authorities regarding the management fee.
- We will apply for extension to entertainment licence, from 28 permitted days to a minimum of 56.
- We will increase capacity for weddings/hospitality events including enhanced facilities at the Orangery.
- We will apply for planning permission for a (non-permanent) marquee on the South Lawn from April to October for weddings etc. This would increase capacity to c.250.
- The café rebuilding was due for completion in June 2022 and this is now further delayed to December 2022. The new café operator will need to be able to offer events catering (and invest in a suitable kitchen for this) although we are likely to also need a list of preferred providers to cater for large events to the highest standards.
- We will improve the infrastructure for commercial activities (power, water, toilet facilities).
- We will implement planned commercial developments, e.g. ensure Putt in the Park is running successfully, and introduce car park charging (with concessions for certain community uses).
- We will establish a plan to increase visitor spending, which continuing to grow the number of visitors.

- We will increase both fundraising and business development capacity within the team.

Medium Term (by March 2026)

- We will establish new/enhanced revenue streams producing additional £500k net income, including wedding/hospitality, enhanced rental income, building a stronger retail offer, and trialling all-season outdoor events.
- We will establish a viable solution for the derelict Model Farm, capable of generating net income, and appropriate for the listed environment.
- We will make further improvements to the infrastructure for commercial activities, e.g hard standing, car park extension (but avoiding an overall increase to hardstanding and vehicle traffic on the estate).
- We will develop a suite of additional services to sell to the public sector (social prescribing and other health and well-being activities, management of LA archives, etc), developing partnerships as needed for this purpose, maximising the contribution of the various assets across the park including the museum, and supported by evidence and impact assessments.
- We will achieve 3 months reserves.

Longer Term (by March 2032)

- We will establish a full all-season programme of income-generating outdoor events, reducing reliance on large scale festival events.
- We will secure an income-generating use for the Small Mansion.
- We will seek to maintain the local authorities' estate management contract, and win additional public sector contracts.
- We will achieve at least £1.8m trading income (including weddings/hospitality, rental, events, retail, and net income from public sector contracts) and at least £1.1m from a combination of the local authority management agreement and grants and donations.
- We will establish a surplus-generating enterprise use for the Model Farm site, appropriate to the wider social mission.
- We will produce an annual surplus of c.10% of turnover.
- We will achieve 6 months reserves.

Appendix F: Organisational Development

(Note from Trust/CIC discussion on 19th July 2021)

Where we want to be

We want to establish a new unified governance structure, with a parent charity and a trading subsidiary, independent of the local authorities but operating in close collaboration with them, and capable of managing and developing all aspects of the Gunnersbury estate, in raising the considerable capital funding needed to fully restore and renew the estate, and in achieving financial viability.

In order to do this we want to have a diverse and well-respected Board, reflective of the communities served, with a balance of commercial and community skills and insights, and a clear commitment to Gunnersbury's social goals, with all posts recruited publicly, and capable of commanding the confidence and trust of the local communities as well as of other stakeholders.

We also want to build a capable and diverse staff and volunteer team (including apprentices), where the paid and unpaid workforce are given responsibility and control as well as space to develop.

We want to have in place trusted, effective and enduring relationships with a wide range of stakeholders and partners, not least the two local authorities, expert bodies like Historic England, our funders, the local health services, colleges and universities, local voluntary associations and community groups, including the Friends of Gunnersbury, and a wide range of local businesses as well.

We want to establish a clear and positive brand identity for Gunnersbury, with a clear statement of mission, vision and values, articulating our ambition, our distinctive offer and our story of change and impact. We want this to be supported by marketing, communications and relationship-building activities that help increase visitors from all parts of the local communities, encourage volunteering, build partnerships, and attract funding.

We also want to have in place the human resources, business systems and administrative processes to flourish as an exemplar social enterprise business operating a complex portfolio of assets and services including:

- An extensive park and gardens
- Historic buildings
- A museum service
- Learning and education services
- A major sports hub
- A wide range of sports, leisure, health and wellbeing activities
- Community engagement programmes
- Festivals, weddings and other events

And we want to run a financially sound operation, capable of achieving income needed to deliver high quality services, while also generating surplus to build our reserves to a level that provides minimum financial security (i.e. at least £0.5m of unrestricted funds), so that we have adequate provision for unforeseen events and for long-term repairs and maintenance.

Where we are now

Context

Both the Trust and the CIC are relatively new organisations, incorporated in 2014 and 2015 respectively (although the CIC remained a dormant company until 2018). The Trust has a capital

fundraising and partnership building role, while the CIC has management responsibility for delivery of the park, gardens, museum and educational services.

The two local authorities retain the freehold of the park and estate, and own the museum collection. A 25-year management agreement with the CIC was adopted in 2018, and a 25 year lease with the CIC was agreed in 2021. As sole members the local authorities can exercise control over the CIC.

The CIC had no capital reserves at inception, depending therefore on a £250k start-up loan at 5.12% interest.

The CIC turnover was £1.99m in 2019/20. With the advent of Covid, income fell to £1.43m in 2020/21. Income is expected to reach £1.88m this year (2021/22).

The current CIC staffing headcount is 30. Pre-Covid there were 96 volunteers.

Challenges

The current fragmented governance structure is not conducive to developing and delivering a unified strategic plan for the Estate. It is also regarded as an impediment to fundraising, and lacks clarity and transparency with the local communities and other stakeholders.

The current composition of the Trust and CIC Boards includes a range of relevant skills, in some cases of a high order. However, there are some skills gaps, and furthermore not all the CIC Board members were appointed through a competitive public process.

Especially during Covid, the staff team has been operating under considerable pressure and is over-stretched. In the past there have been some challenges around staff retention.

Achieving financial viability is a demanding task, and the prospect of diminishing local authority funding is daunting.

We have achieved a lot in recent years, and weathered the Covid-storm remarkably well so far. But nothing can be done without funding, and there are major fundraising tasks ahead, to address the revenue gap, as well as for the major capital investments which will be needed, both to improve the public amenities, and to enhance the ability to increase earned income.

Reserves are dangerously low, and the risk is that this leaves little protection against unforeseen events, and also inhibits the short-term spending on fundraising and business development which is required to achieve long-term income.

Opportunities

In the coming months we hope to establish a new unified governance structure, combining the Trust and CIC, capable of gaining the confidence of the two local authorities, of funders and partners, and of the local communities.

The Board of the new organisation will, it is proposed, be set up in a way that achieves a degree of interim continuity with the current Board and CIC membership, while also achieving the full range of skills and attributes that will be needed to address the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

There is a strong case to build the staff team in certain areas, to enhance fundraising and income generation, to manage the major capital developments that lie ahead, and to increase the capacity of the gardens team. However, it will be important to ensure that the team remains agile and flexible, and that costs are controlled firmly. There is no room for the organisation to live beyond its means.

There is a strong opportunity to build up our volunteering programmes. We are not starting from scratch, and we have demonstrated that we can attract volunteers successfully. But now is the time to move up a gear, and invest in volunteering programmes that not only help us deliver our services,

but also extend our reach into local communities and businesses, and provide Gunnersbury with the best possible ambassadors.

There is scope to build up, over time, a strong base of local supporters and donors, including private individuals and corporate sponsors.

The new proposed governance arrangement may provide the opportunity, it is hoped, to establish the funding agreement with the two local authorities, and also the lease arrangement, on a sounder and more durable footing.

Strategic Priorities

Short term (by March 2024)

Human Resources

- We will fill key staff gaps, improve recruitment and retention performance to minimize vacancy periods for key management posts and reduce turnover across all staff bandings.
- Workforce development: we will enhance staff training and professional development capacity and spend per head to improve productivity, effectiveness and improve retention rates.
- We will increase volunteer rates – volunteer numbers/average hours per volunteer and diversity of volunteer cohort.

Communications and marketing

- We will strengthen in-house marketing and communications capacity – establish departmental budgets, review staff capacity and focus communications and marketing activity in support of income generating activity.
- We will develop a communications and marketing strategy, to support fundraising pipeline, donor growth and cultivation.
- We will undertake an annual review of social media performance tracking platform take-up and engagement to maximise engagement and awareness of CIC role/services and offers.

Business systems and IT

- We will integrate all software systems to improve performance across business functions.
- We will market test outsourced IT systems provider and consolidate integration of software packages: events management (Priava), CRM (Beacon), accounting package (Sage), Retail Point of Sale (Shopify).
- We will introduce a ticketing system for in-house managed events.

Finance and audit

- We will build fundraising capability, from trusts, foundations, businesses, high net worth individuals.
- We will establish a strategy and resource capability for major capital fundraising.
- Finance – we will implement reserves policy with funds set aside for repairs, maintenance and business development, as well as operating capital (working towards 3 months reserves initially).
- We will establish comparators with a range of relevant organisations elsewhere to help us benchmark our performance over time.
- We will review level of management fee with local authorities and commence annual reviews.

Accreditation and quality management

- We will maintain and develop quality assurance and professional standards systems to achieve and retain a range of essential accreditation and quality thresholds including ACE museum accreditation, Green Flag.

Governance

- We will complete transitional arrangements for consolidation of new group structure with a parent charity and trading subsidiary, and with clear lines of reporting and accountability to the charity Board (subject to agreed timetable).
- We will negotiate extension of lease with local authorities.

Medium Term (by March 2026)

HR

- We will enhance SMT capacity to anticipate the early and effective assimilation of sports and leisure centre operations into business (subject to Board decision) .
- We will develop paid internship opportunities and apprenticeships to promote access to heritage and horticultural careers by local young people from underrepresented backgrounds.

Communications and marketing

- We will implement the marketing and communications strategy to support fundraising pipeline, donor growth and cultivation.
- We will develop strategy and capacity for in house lead marketing of events, weddings hires etc. to establish venue and brand as competitive across west London sub region.

Finance

- We will implement fundraising strategies, for both revenue and capital requirement (including a Centenary capital appeal), with resources in place to deliver these strategies.
- We will build up income from corporate sponsorship, and private supporters and donors.
- We will achieve 3 months reserves (by end 2024/25).

Governance

- We will build up our capacity to assess our impacts, and develop methods to hold ourselves accountable to the local communities and other stakeholders.

Longer Term (by March 2032)

Finance

- We will achieve increased revenue fundraising alongside increased earned income to address the strategic goals.
- We will achieve major capital investments for the Estate.
- We will achieve 6 months reserves (by end 2032/33).

Governance

- We will be able to demonstrate our impacts, with transparency and accountability to local communities, the local authorities, funders and other stakeholders.