

First-time fleet for Chessington

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With over 40 rides in 10 themed lands, a zoo with over 1000 animals and a Sea Life centre, plus daily live shows and seasonal events, Chessington World of Adventures Resort in Surrey offers a host of attractions for all ages throughout the summer months.

New for 2016 are the Pandamonium live show, a brand new Explorer Glamping accommodation site and the UK's 30th Go Ape Adventure – the first ever to launch at a UK theme park. The Tree Top Junior course allows children as young as six (who are at least 1m tall) to swing through the trees and unleash their inner Tarzan.

Behind the scenes, estates manager Alan Soutar, team leader Lee Harper and Chessington's grounds staff keep the whole resort clean and tidy. In addition to two hotels, the zoo, the rides areas, formal gardens, large grassland areas and car parks, the team is responsible for all the trees on site and conservation in the surrounding (some of it ancient) woodland.

To help maintain the site, Chessington's owner Merlin Entertainments Group has invested for the first time in a John Deere fleet supplied by local dealer Godfreys Golf & Turf at Wokingham.

Delivered in spring 2015, the fleet includes three HPX 4x4 Gator utility vehicles, a 1550 front rotary mower with 72in deck and a 4066R compact tractor with H180 front loader. Additional ancillary equipment includes a JCB digger, a GreenMech chipper for use with the tractor, and SnowEx rear-mounted salt spreaders for the Gators.

"We worked out the equipment list with Godfreys' area sales manager Dave Searles," says Alan Soutar. "Lee used to work for Reigate & Banstead Council, who used John Deere equipment, so he was familiar with the kit. I originally bought a 1026R compact tractor when I started here in 2013, as it was a good size for getting into the animal enclosures for example.

"This replaced a bigger John Deere 6530 120hp agricultural tractor, which is just not useful on a site like this. The 1026R is now used constantly, and suits the size of the resort really well. Attachments such as a grass spiker for this tractor would also extend its usefulness.

"Our new 4066R does the meatier jobs, and we use the loader constantly on this machine. It's a real benefit that the tractor takes both front and rear attachments, including the chipper. We also bought a rear-mounted cutting deck for this model, which we use on the larger grass areas in the car parks.

"In addition, the 1550 ride-on rotary mower is used on the picnic areas and larger grass areas within the park. We have to cover over 60,000m² of grass in total, so the mowers are kept very busy in the growing season. The chipper gets a lot of use too, as we do most of our own tree work in-house. We also carry out extensive recycling and re-use the chipped material in the animal enclosures and shrubberies.

"The Gator is a really handy piece of kit as well. Our HPXs are always buzzing around the site every day loaded up with materials and tools, or equipped with the gritters for winter road and path clearance."

Source: John Deere GmbH & Co. KG; ASM Public Relations Ltd

John Deere 4066 R On LECTURA Specs