

SOUTH PARK GARDENS

Management Plan

2012-2015

Updated January 2014



London Borough of Merton



Vision

“To encourage healthier lifestyles, strong inclusive communities and an appreciation of nature through the provision of an attractive, high quality space with facilities that are modern, safe, clean, sustainable and accessible to all”.



Foreword

This application for South Park Gardens is the fifth submission from the London Borough of Merton for the Green Flag Award.

Central Government, the Greater London Authority and partner agencies are placing an increasing emphasis on the role of open spaces in creating safe, healthy and sustainable communities in the 21st century. The London Borough of Merton has been committed to investing in our open spaces and related facilities through the implementation of our Merton Open Space Strategy. We are striving to ensure we are responsive to our communities and provide the highest quality of service. The Green Flag Award is recognised as the quality benchmark for our open spaces.

The Members of Merton Council and the Friends of South Park Gardens are pleased to submit this application. South Park Gardens is an excellent example of co-operation between the Council and the community. This application is submitted with the full support of the Council and the Friends Group.

Should you require any further information with regards to this application please contact Doug Napier our Green Spaces Manager on 020 8545 3657 or doug.napier@merton.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

South Park Gardens is one of the London Borough of Merton's flagship parks, a site providing mainly for leisure and healthy living. It is registered on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest as Grade II.

The Gardens form a valuable part of Merton's open space network of parks and open spaces. Green open space covers nearly one fifth of the Borough's land use making Merton, while generally suburban in character, one of the greenest boroughs in Greater London.

18% of the borough area is open space, compared to a 10% London average. Merton has extensive parks, green and wild spaces that offer recreation, relief, contrast and structure to the borough's built environment and this is one of the major attractions for residents. A defining characteristic of the borough is the disparity between the more prosperous west and the poorer, more deprived east of the borough. This presents particular challenges for the local area. Bridging the gap between the east and the west of the borough is the main theme of the Merton Partnership's Local Area Agreement, and of the Community Plan.

Merton's vision is for a linked and integrated open space network that not only enhances Merton residents' quality of life and provides them with opportunities to experience a diverse range of accessible open spaces but also protects and enhances natural ecosystems and the cultural heritage features that contribute to the Borough's unique identity.

In addition to enhancing the quality of life, Merton recognises that parks and open spaces are an asset to the community which provide physical and intellectual learning opportunities and contribute to healthier lifestyles, social cohesion and safer communities, regeneration and improvement of the environment and which contribute to the local economy and prosperity of the Borough.

The London Borough of Merton is developing management plans for each of its flagship parks, elite sports grounds and amenity parks and open spaces. The main purpose of this three-year management plan is to guide the development, improvement, maintenance and

management of the Gardens by the London Borough of Merton in consultation with the community and partners.

In doing so this management plan seeks to,

- Reflect Merton's Open Space Study, 2012 to achieve Merton's vision and outcomes for parks and open spaces and meet the needs of all sectors of the local community
- Meet Merton's standards for the equitable provision of high quality parks and open spaces
- Outline plans for the development, improvement and maintenance of the Gardens which give due consideration to capital and revenue implications
- Inform funding decisions on the development, improvement and maintenance of the Gardens to ensure effective and efficient use of resources and to provide the basis for securing additional internal and external resources
- Provide information to the Garden's stakeholders including those who live, work and learn in the Borough and those who visit to encourage further engagement in the development, improvement, maintenance and management of the Gardens.
- Recognise the contribution made to the Gardens by the active involvement of the very active local Friends Group (the Friends of South Park Gardens – FSPG).

The management plan is being developed by the London Borough of Merton's Leisure Operations Group, part of Merton's Environment & Regeneration Directorate in consultation with the local community. The specialist grounds and property maintenance, nature conservation, arboriculture and horticulture skills of the Leisure Operations Group have been drawn upon in the preparation of the plan together with strategic and operational planning input from the Environment & Regeneration Directorate's Support & Development Department and other specialist input from across the council.

The London Borough of Merton wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the Friends of South Park Gardens to the ongoing development, improvement, maintenance and management of the Gardens since their formation in 2002 and for their contribution to this management plan to date.

2. Strategic, Economic and Political Context

This Management Plan articulates the vision for the improvement and management of South Park Gardens and provides detailed objectives and action plans to direct Merton Property and Leisure to achieve this vision over the next 5 years. This section looks at the context within which the London Borough of Merton is operating.

Each organisation or public body operates within an external context. Its visions, plans and targets will be affected by the political, economic and social environment around it. These external factors will inform all the decision it makes.

Economic environment

The UK is experiencing an economic recession; it is also feeling the effects of a general global economic downturn. This overall economic context informs much of our national and local decision-making. Generally, budgets are being cut and austerity measures are being adopted.

The London Borough of Merton has a duty of care to ensure that it sets a fiscally prudent budget, that budget holders operate within those constraints and that it balances its books and maintains an appropriate level of reserves. It also needs to ensure that effective procedures are in place to make certain that budgets are continually monitored and reviewed to ensure that resources continue to be targeted towards meeting key objectives. This financial year it needs to make budget savings of at least 4% on its medium term fiscal strategy. This need for efficiency savings will inform the Council's overall targets and objectives.

Political Context

National

The coalition government elected in May 2010 has yet to announce detailed strategies and plans for parks and green spaces. However a statement on the Direct.gov.uk website states:

Good quality parks enhance the quality of life in towns and cities. Parks provide a focal point for communities, a place for relaxation or recreation, and the opportunity to experience nature in an urban environment.

The previous government had a range of initiatives in support of parks and green spaces, including six Urban Green Space Taskforces, Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener', 2002,

and a Community Plan, 'Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future', 2003. A regional programme of action for London included: ensuring communities are prosperous, safeguarding green and open space and well designed, accessible and pleasant living and working environments. However all these policies are now under active review.

Regional

The Government Office for London is being scrapped by the coalition government.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is a strategic authority with a London wide role to design a better future for the capital. While the Mayor and the London Assembly are elected by Londoners, the staff of the GLA is a permanent body that provides continuity in the ongoing development and delivery of strategies for London.

The Mayor's London Plan is the overall strategic plan for London. It sets out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital over the next 20 to 25 years. It has 6 main objectives including:

A city that delights the senses and takes care over its buildings and streets, having the best of modern architecture while making the most of London's built heritage and which makes the most of and extends its wealth of open and green spaces and waterways, realising its potential for improving Londoners' health, welfare and development.

The Greater London Authority has signalled its support for parks in the capital by launching several new initiatives including the Programme for Parks and Trees in 2009, with an investment of £6m to be spent on selected parks. In addition it has made £4m available to fund the planting of an additional 10,000 street trees.

In 2010, the Mayor launched a new Safer Parks Award. The overall aim of the award is to recognise good practice in:

- Tackling specific problem of anti-social behaviour and/or crime
- Challenging public perception that a specific park is unsafe
- Encouraging greater use, and enjoyment, of parks
- Encouraging and supporting community action to improve safety in London's parks.

South Park Gardens applied for and was awarded a Silver Safer Parks award in January 2011. It went on to win a Gold award in 2012. This application is made jointly with the local police.

The application requires the input of up to date crime figures and hard evidence to show that the park is perceived as safe by its users and that crime is generally below average for the area.

Local

London Borough of Merton is under no overall political control. It is run by a Labour minority administration. The composition of seats is Labour 28, Conservative 22, Merton Park Residents 3, Liberal Democrats 2, Merton Coalition 4, independents 1.

Trinity ward, where South Park Gardens is situated, has three Conservative councillors; Simon Withey, Krystal Miller and James Holmes. Trinity ward has a population of 8,835.

Significantly, the objectives for all of the Management Plans for LB Merton's open spaces have been developed with the wider strategic objectives across the borough in mind. These objectives are defined in the Merton Community and Business Plans.

Merton's Community and Business Plans

Merton's Community Plan 2009-2019, has been developed and implemented by the Merton Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership), which sets out what will happen over the next 10 years to improve the quality of life for everyone in Merton. It covers a range of issues about living and working in Merton, such as housing, the environment, the economy, transport, safety, health, culture and the needs of particular groups like carers, disabled people, older people, children and young people. The key themes of the community plan are:

- Sustainable Communities
- Safer and Stronger Merton
- Healthier Communities
- Older People
- Children and Young People

The development, improvement, maintenance and management of Merton's parks and open spaces including South Park Gardens is impacted on by an increasing range of national, regional and local policies, strategies and initiatives.

The Plan sets out Merton's aspirations for the local area, and is based on a wide range of evidence, data and consultation that has identified the key concerns for residents, and the big issues that the Partnership needs to focus upon to ensure it improves the quality of life for everyone who lives in Merton. The Council itself has undertaken a significant consultation exercise with local people, known as the Mission for Merton. The results of this have contributed to the vision and priorities contained within this Plan. The Plan also sets out the key actions the Partnership will be taking to ensure we achieve our vision and priorities.

The summary of the Community Plan states: Merton's parks have enjoyed the benefit of more than £2 million capital investment since 2006, with access, signage and children's play improvements being especially prominent. Green gyms have been installed in several green spaces around the Borough and these have proved to be very popular.

A key action point from the Community Plan is to 'Manage parks and gardens to protect and enhance local biodiversity by integrating biodiversity management methods into parks management plans.' Some 2,500 new trees have been planted in local open spaces and along the borough's highways. Biodiversity enhancements have focused upon heathland re-creation and pond restoration works.

The Community Plan 2009-19 includes such relevant actions as E10: Manage parks and green spaces to protect and enhance local biodiversity by integrating biodiversity management methods into parks management regimes.

For further information go to: <http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/communityplan>

The Merton Business Plan 2010-2013, developed following consultation with residents, aims to make "Merton - a great place to live, work and learn" by directing the overall improvement of local services. The Council's broad ambition is: "To be excellent in the delivery of the services that matter most to our residents, and to provide leadership to the community through effective citizen engagement and partnership working". The 5 key priorities for the business plan reflect the themes of the Community Plan. The day-to-day work of the Council, and the key targets for services are addressed in the separate service plans of each service division. The current corporate business theme is "service transformation" and is being developed and refined through a 'Target Operating Model' process at the time of writing. The current transformation exercise in Greenspaces focuses on achieving a reduction in operating costs of some £700k over the period to the financial year 2017/18.

For further information go to <http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/businessplan>

Cultural Strategy

Our parks and open spaces are central to the variety of cultural activities offered by the Council. **Merton's Cultural Strategy 2007 – 2010**, will support and direct the Merton Partnership on the value of culture in achieving the objectives of the Community Plan as well as being a key driver in ensuring a range of local cultural aims and ambitions are delivered.

For further information go to <http://www.merton.gov.uk/leisure/culturalstrategy.htm>

Although the original cultural strategy document has now expired, there are no plans to update it at this time although many of the principle aims of the strategy remain valid and have been enshrined within the approach the local authority has adopted in respect of the local cultural offer.

The Corporate Cultural Framework document was developed in 2013 will replace the Cultural Strategy from its implementation in 2014..

Merton Open Space Strategy (MOSS)

Below the Community and Business Plans and the Cultural Strategy, under the “sustainable communities” theme, sits the Merton Open Space Strategy (MOSS). The range of sub-strategies can be viewed in Figure 2.1 below. The MOSS was developed from detailed studies of the borough’s open spaces and after consultation with local residents. First released in 2004, the MOSS identified the key open space issues and defined a vision for the future.

The MOSS was revisited in 2010-11 in order to provide a more up to date audit of Merton’s open space facilities and their spatial distribution. Unlike the 2005 study, the refresh included publicly accessible private land and was undertaken in the context of revised demographic and population predictions This refresh study was published in 2011 and comprises an action plan that will enable the local authority to deliver a network of accessible recreational spaces that will meet the Borough’s future needs.

The MOSS will be delivered by a number of means, including the Merton Local Development Framework, and corporate strategies such as the Climate Change Action Plan and sub-regional open space partnership aspirations such as the proposed Wandle Valley Regional Park and the All London Green Grid (Area Framework 8).

For further information on the MOSS go to:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/living/environment/openspaces/moss.htm>

The 2010/11 refresh of the MOSS can be found at:

http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/openspaces/moss/2010-2011_moss_final.pdf

Significance of South Park Gardens

South Park Gardens is an important component of the overall Merton open space network. It is a historical and flagship park. It also has an important role to play in assisting the local authority meet its wider strategic objectives. Merton's Community and Business Plans articulate the key social, environmental and economic themes around which Merton Council is seeking to improve the quality of life for its residents.

The table below shows how South Park Gardens delivers London Borough of Merton's strategic objectives under the key headings:

Sustainable Communities	Safer, Stronger Merton	Healthier Communities	Older People	Children & Young People
Lawn management improving local water, soil and air quality.	Accessible facilities for people living with disabilities.	Regular and varied fitness classes.	Plenty of good quality seating.	Annual South Park Gardens Music Festival
Accessible by Public Transport	Inspected and well-maintained facilities.	Easily accessible toilets	History of the Gardens on notice board	Space for informal sports.
Protecting local urban amenity.	Good policies and facilities for safe dog walking.	Good pedestrian access to all parts of the site.	Safe and accessible paths.	Safe trees for climbing.
Good links to adjacent private open spaces.	Engagement with the local community & police.	Regular (monthly) health tips on notice boards.	Engagement through local history group	Shrubberies to explore. Natural play opportunities.
Active Friends group.	Gold Safer Parks Award 2012	Safe paths for power walking.	Annual over 60s free cream tea	Many family friendly events organised by the Friends.

User satisfaction

Merton's residents' satisfaction rates for parks has increased from 65% - 70% during the past year and, in part, this improvement has been due to the valuable contribution of a network of 24 parks friends groups who are involved in management, development and fund raising activities. All of Merton's key parks have an up-to-date and comprehensive

management plan and this has enabled the authority to secure Green Flag Awards for four parks in 2012.

Merton was a host Olympic Borough and hosted tennis in August 2012. The Community Plan recognises this status and states - Merton's community facilities and green spaces provide the opportunity for people to engage in sport and benefit from the Olympic legacy.

The environment chapter of the Community Plan, 'Creating a clean, sustainable environment to hand onto future generations' includes a specific outcome for parks and open spaces, 'to improve the condition of parks and open spaces by 2015'.

Safeguarding the natural environment

Merton recognises the importance of green space and wildlife; pursues policies to defend sites of interest from development and manages its parks and open spaces with nature conservation in mind. The Unitary Development Plan highlights ways in which the natural environment can be protected and enhanced. The Plan directs how Merton's physical environment will alter and provides safeguards that the Council can impose to ensure that the Borough's wildlife is protected from injurious development schemes. To further demonstrate its commitment to nature conservation the Council has designated 13 Local Nature Reserves and intends to declare more in the future.

A management plan for the Gardens has been developed. A Tree Survey prepared by the London Borough of Merton was carried out in 2002.

Implications of the restoration on the policies and strategies for the Gardens

The restoration of the Gardens in 2008/9 has made it a more popular local amenity for residents and visitors. There has been a subsequent increase in litter, especially during summer months as many more people visit the Gardens to have picnics. This has been taken into account when drawing up the maintenance plan and the gardeners have to spend slightly longer on litter picking duties. In addition an extra visit later in the day at weekends is helpful and a temporary ranger, funded by the HLF grant money, currently undertakes this duty. In future volunteers could carry out this duty.

The landscape architects and contractors have drawn up a new maintenance plan which the maintenance team has adopted.

The restoration included the installation of power in the Gardens and the development of a flexible performance space and this means that the Friends Group and others can undertake a wider range of activities and events.

The improvement to the paths has meant that they are now more suitable for running and exercise. Subsequently many more people are using the Gardens for individual training, 1:1 personal training and for exercise within a recognised exercise class. Currently 5/6 classes are taking place every week. These include a buggy-fit session for parents with babies.

There are now many more seats in the Gardens (35 in total) and this has maintenance implications. Since restoration the Friends have undertaken bi-annual maintenance of the benches, charging the local authority a small amount to cover materials (£210 in 2010). Further maintenance is currently taking place (Nov 2013/April 2014).

The Friends have installed additional notice boards on the railings by 3 of the gates. These provide valuable information for users of the Gardens, such as park opening times, emergency numbers and the times of regular meet up sessions and events.

The expectation of many park users was that the toilets would be upgraded too, but this was not originally part of the restoration project, as, at that time, the Heritage Lottery Fund, were not funding restoration to buildings. Subsequently, the issue of the toilets has been one of the main causes of dissatisfaction. The HLF has now agreed that the remaining project funds may be used to upgrade the toilets and plans are being developed to refurbish the gardeners' compound area to include a new building with meeting room, storage facilities and new toilets.

The increasing popularity of the Gardens and the growing attendance at the many community events supports this planned redevelopment. Currently additional temporary toilets have to be hired in for some events.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Merton operates under a range of legislative frameworks, including:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- CRB vetting of staff
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Health and Safety Training

As part of London Borough of Merton, South Park Gardens has a Health and Safety policy displayed in the Park Office. Risk assessments and the Health and Safety Policy are available to view at the Hillcross Depot.

Within the Parks Service there is a programme of staff training that includes:

- Chainsaw use;
- Appropriate Pesticide Use;
- First Aid;
- Safe operation of Machinery;
- Customer Care;
- Manual Handling;
- Dispute Resolution;
- The Inspection Programme.

CRB Vetting of staff

Wherever any member of staff is likely to be engaging with unsupervised children, they are given full CRB checks.

Environmental Protection Act 1990

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) is an Act of Parliament which defines the structure and authority for waste management and the control of emissions into the environment. Local authorities have duties to collect controlled waste and to undertake recycling. There are criminal penalties on households and businesses who fail to cooperate with the local authorities' arrangements. In this context the relevant sections are Part II, outlining regulations for controlled waste and IV regarding litter. Some of the provisions in this Act have been superseded by...

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

This Act aims to make provision relating to litter and refuse, graffiti, fly-posting and the display of advertisements; to make provision relating to the transportation, collection, disposal and management of waste; to make provision relating to the control of dogs and to amend the law relating to stray dogs; to make provision in relation to noise and noise abatement.

The waste disposal protocols carried out in South Park Gardens comply with both of these Acts. Notices are posted in the Gardens with regard to the safe disposal of litter and control of dogs and the Dog Warden number is displayed to be used if any dogs are seen to be out of control.

Partners and Stakeholders

Merton works with a range of partners and stakeholders in the development, improvement maintenance and management of South Park Gardens including the Friends of South Park Gardens, national, regional and local environmental agencies, funding agencies and local Councillors. Merton is seeking to develop its partnership working with existing and new partners including,

- National, regional and local parks and open spaces, environmental and heritage agencies
- Development organisations and agencies
- Funding agencies
- Friends Groups
- Councillors
- Recreational and sports organisations
- Private sports facility providers
- Health organisations
- Educational establishments including schools
- Local businesses
- Community and voluntary groups, particularly those for and representing children and young people, older people the disabled and ethnic minorities,
- Neighbouring boroughs
- Police and community safety agencies

The Community Plan states, 'Safer and stronger communities are key to the well-being of our residents, the success of our businesses, and the enjoyment of visitors to the borough. A sense of safety and strong relationships across communities are vital to establishing a sense of place in which residents have pride, businesses wish to invest, and people want to visit'.

Key action points include:

- Implement the Third Sector Strategy.
- Deliver and promote Merton Compact codes of practice and related action plans.
- Development of a community capacity building programme to strengthen capacity within voluntary and community sector organisations.

- Work with voluntary and community organisations to provide local services to meet local needs.
- Increase the number of people taking part in formal volunteering to enable volunteers to gain new skills and make a positive contribution.

3. Vision and objectives for South Park Gardens

The overall vision for South Park Gardens is to:

- Provide an attractive, peaceful, well-managed green space for the local community, which is accessible to all, safe, clean and fun.
- Manage the Gardens in ways which are sympathetic to the needs of wildlife and still fulfil the obligation of providing a flexible resource for all to enjoy.
- Manage the Gardens in a sustainable way, which takes account of bio-diversity and environmental concerns.
- Provide a wide range of community events, designed to appeal to a variety of audiences, and developed in a way to encourage more community cohesion.

The objectives to achieve this vision for the area,

- To work closely with stakeholders and partners, both existing and new to find out about local people's needs, aspirations and concerns about the Gardens.
- To develop plans for the development, improvement and maintenance of the Gardens based on local people's needs, aspirations and concerns, which are in keeping with the overall design of the site.
- To encourage and support the Friends of South Park Gardens to apply for further grants for improvements.
- To continue to bid for capital funding and section 106 money for improvements when it is available based on the priorities for improvement.
- To explore the feasibility of creating a community building within the Gardens, in the gardeners' compound area.

- To look at different options for storage facilities in the gardens – both for gardening equipment and for the Friends’ equipment, needed for events (gazebos, tables etc).
- To ensure that there is a reduction in the costs of maintaining the Gardens but at the same time provide a range of high quality, accessible facilities.
- To manage the mini-beast sanctuary according to the Conservation Management Plan for this site and to continue to promote its educational value.
- To ensure that known concerns and issues are kept under consideration, including the unlocking and locking of gates, reducing vandalism and graffiti, cleaning of the toilets, managing volunteers and generally ensuring members of the public can feel safe when using the Gardens.

This information will be reviewed regularly and will be expected to evolve as funding and other opportunities arise and the service is transformed during the course of the next 4-5 years.

The vision and objectives for the Gardens are aligned with the Merton Partnership’s Community Plan, the Council’s corporate objectives and the Merton Open Space Study, 2010/11; and to The Key Green Flag Criteria which are summarised below:

1. Creating a Welcoming Space
2. Ensuring the Park is Healthy, Safe and Secure
3. Keeping the Park Clean and Well Maintained
4. Sustainable Management of Resources
5. Appropriate Management of Conservation and Heritage Features
6. Encouraging Community Involvement
7. Marketing the Facility Effectively
8. Implementation of Effective Management Strategies

1. Creating a Welcoming Space. The access to the Gardens is designed to give a positive impression, with information boards giving good quality and easy to read information. Sight lines throughout the Gardens have been improved to give attractive vistas and to make the Gardens welcoming. The paths are accessible, and, being a small space, most of the facilities of the Gardens can be viewed from every vantage point. Each of the side gates opens onto a well laid out shrub bed; the main Dudley Road has the main notice board and horse trough and the Trinity Road gate has the Green Flag, notice board and a fantastic view

through the Gardens. This makes it a very inviting space. Anecdotally, users have said that they often take a small detour to walk through the Gardens, rather than adjoining streets on their way into Wimbledon town centre.

2. Ensuring the Park is Healthy, Safe and Secure. Good sight lines around the Gardens mean there are few hidden corners, making it a very safe open space. It is well used at all times of day, giving it a secure feeling. Encouraging a healthy lifestyle is one of the council's key objectives so support is given to a range of healthy activities in the Gardens, including a wide range of fitness classes and personal fitness regimes. The police regularly patrol the Gardens and the council maintains a presence through the Community Park Warden and regular visits from the garden maintenance and ranger teams.

3. Keeping the Park Clean and Well Maintained. Litter picking is carried out twice a week in winter but the Community Park Warden and volunteers and park users also tend to pick up litter daily to keep the Gardens looking neat. The flower beds, grass and shrub borders are all maintained in line with the maintenance schedule set out elsewhere in this document.

Dog walking is a popular activity in the Gardens and the Council wishes to encourage responsible dog ownership across the Borough. Dogs are allowed in the Gardens on a lead and under control.

Dog mess is not generally a problem, as most dog owners pick up and dispose of their dog's waste properly. They also keep an eye out for any other dog walkers and ensure they comply too. The policy of London Borough of Merton is to treat dog waste as separate rubbish. It is emptied weekly from the 4 dog bins in the park by the Council's Waste Services Division. Information regarding the Council's dog policies is displayed in the park on the main signs. There are also separate notices on each of the gates advising users that dogs must be kept on leads and that their waste must be disposed of properly

Information regarding the Council's dog policies is displayed in the park on the main signs. LB Merton has implemented the "traffic light" system for dog control across all open spaces (including housing and highways land) in the Borough:

- Red = No dogs
- Amber = Dogs on Lead
- Green = Dogs off Lead and Under Control

Leaf sweeping is carried out twice weekly in the autumn to keep paths clear.

4. Sustainable Management of Resources. Sustainable waste management is a high priority for the London Borough of Merton. There is a green waste recycling facility on site. A new chipper/shredder was purchased in early 2009. This now ensures that all green waste is kept on site for future use on beds and borders. A key goal for this management plan at South Park Gardens is to improve the standard of horticultural maintenance in a fully sustainable way. Leisure Facilities and Technical Group have a general policy to reduce the use of pesticides in the maintenance of all parks and open spaces. The use of pesticides has been minimised from all areas of the Gardens. Within most of the Gardens weed growth is suppressed with hand weeding, hoeing and mulching. Vehicle use in the Gardens is kept to a minimum, with a pull-along wheeled trolley used for most gardening activities. No peat is used in the Gardens.

5. Appropriate Management of Conservation and Heritage Features

The main heritage features of South Park Gardens are the layout and design, the fountain and horse trough, which are both later additions. The project has ensured that the overall design was retained and enhanced and the two main features have been fully restored. The new furniture was made from sustainable resources. The emphasis is on maintaining existing facilities to a high standard to avoid waste. Water, electricity and gas bills are closely monitored to ensure leaks and efficiencies are addressed promptly. Climate change is putting up new challenges for Open Spaces Management, with extreme weather events becoming more likely; including heat waves as well as storm events. On average winters are becoming wetter and warmer while summers will be hotter and drier. Merton's open spaces are pleasant pockets of green space which not only offer the space to relax and enjoy amidst the busy city life, but are also of vital importance to wildlife. Additionally, their effect on microclimates is gaining more importance as the climate becomes warmer. Areas where trees are planted can result in reduction of peak summer temperatures.

6. Encouraging Community Involvement. South Park Gardens is a community space that provides opportunities for local people to take part in a number of open space activities. The support of local people, user groups, partners and other stakeholders is recognised by the Council as fundamental to the success of the facility as a safe, healthy, clean and sustainably managed open space. Merton Council works closely with the Police to discourage anti-social behaviour and protect the users and facilities of the park. Improving the coordination, communication and cooperation between different stakeholders in the Park is vital to the success of this management plan. The very active Friends Group organises regular monthly meet up groups and a range of different events throughout the year. These include: Easter Egg Hunt, Annual Picnic and Big Lunch, Over 60s Cream Tea, Teddy Bears' Picnic, Music Festival, Fireworks event, amongst others.

7. Marketing the Facility Effectively. The Marketing Strategy is implemented across the borough's parks and leisure facilities, through the various council initiatives including signage outside the park, pamphlets for potential users and information on the council website. Word of mouth is also important. The Council's 24 Friends Groups produce a number of newsletters to publicise their specific park. The Council, in conjunction with the Friends of South Park Gardens have developed a marketing PR & Promotions strategy which is set out in Appendix 6 of this management plan. It sets out the effective promotion of the Gardens to a range of audiences. A regular newsletter is produced 2/3 times a year and is delivered to around 3,000 homes in the area around the Gardens. A Perspex box with the latest newsletter is attached to the back of the main notice board and the website also has a download facility. The latest newsletter is also displayed in the notice boards around the Gardens. Emails are utilised to publicise the activities of the Friends and upcoming events.

8. Implementation of Effective Management Strategies. South Park Gardens is owned and managed by LB Merton and is accessible to the general public year round. This Management Plan for South Park Gardens has been developed to advance the aspirations of the London Borough of Merton and those of our local communities. The management plan has been developed around our commitment to the objectives of Green Flag and is key to the implementation of our Open Space Strategy (2011). It provides a clear and coordinated management strategy based on the characteristics of the site and the communities that use it. It will be a living document, updated annually to reflect new knowledge, successes and failures.

4. Description

Location and Local Demography

South Park Gardens is a triangular shaped park, 2.4 hectares in size, situated near Wimbledon town centre. It lies between Trinity, Dudley and Kings Roads within the South Park Gardens Conservation Area within Trinity ward just to the north of Wimbledon town centre. It is just 5 minutes' walk from Wimbledon station and the busy Broadway, with its wide array of businesses, shops, cafes and bars. It is one of the more affluent parts of the Borough, but still has relatively high-density housing, with a significant number of flats.

Wimbledon is a busy commuter town with mainline trains and District Line underground trains, plus a tram service and a wide range of buses, giving access to many destinations. Waterloo is just 20 minutes away.

The London Borough of Merton is an outer London borough, situated to the south-west of the capital. It is suburban in nature, with many residents commuting into and out of the Borough to work. 67% of residents work outside the borough, one of the highest figures in London. The borough is, on the whole, well-connected, but transport links are poorer in the east of the borough. It has a population of 199,300 (ONS mid-year 2007 estimate)², and the population is younger than the national average with an average age of just under 37. Like many London boroughs, Merton has experienced high rates of migration and population change in recent years. Between 1992 and 2005 Merton had the largest increase in population of any outer London borough, with the population growing by 13.93%.

This growth is predicted to continue, with the population reaching 220,300 by 2025. In particular, the numbers of children and young people and over 85s are predicted to rise.

The Gardens are surrounded by mainly houses and flats, Appendix 4. The Gardens are just a few minutes walk from a diverse range of shops, restaurants, bars and other commercial businesses. Many retail and office workers are within walking distance from the Gardens and it is well used as a tranquil place to sit and eat lunch or take a break during the working day. According to the last census, around 35% of local homes do not have access to a garden, making South Park Gardens a vital green resource in the area.

Local Significance and Usage

The location of the Gardens, near the town centre of Wimbledon, means that it is heavily used. The Gardens is one of several parks in Trinity ward, the others being Haydons Road Recreation Ground and Garfield Road Recreation Ground. The Gardens are conveniently

situated between an area of high-density housing and the town centre and therefore the potential demand for the Gardens is high.

The Gardens are very popular with parents and young children during summer week days as it provides large flat areas of amenity grass. During the weekends, the majority of users are parents and young children who use the Gardens for informal play. Other reasons for the use of the Gardens include dog walking, picnicking, and visiting the site during lunch hours.

Merton is intending to develop the collection and analysis of user information to inform the development, improvement, maintenance and management of parks and open spaces. Appendix 5 outlines the current usage of the Gardens.

The usage of the Gardens had declined since the mid-1990's due to budget cutbacks and staff reductions impacting on the facilities. However, since the formation of the Friends' Group in 2002 and additional investment (especially the restoration funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund) there has been an increase in the usage of the Gardens. This has been mainly due to the formation of the Friends Group and their organisation of events and the general improvement of the Gardens.

Groups who regularly use the Gardens for a variety of activities include: boy scouts, girl guides, play groups, nurseries, YMCA, disabled youth groups, fitness classes, church youth groups, churches and schools.

The Gardens provide a green oasis, just minutes' walk from the bustle of The Broadway. It is well used by a wide range of people throughout the day.

Income generation is being developed through the fitness classes and by the provision of a temporary and mobile kiosk which sells coffee, tea, soft drinks and ice cream throughout the summer months.

The Friends Group is constantly looking at new ideas for events which would appeal to current and potential park users.

Geology and soil type

The underlying geology of the Gardens is London clay. Topsoil above the clay is up to 5 cm deep with an acidity level of PH 5. The site is relatively flat with an underground stream (the River Effra), running from northeast to southeast across the Dudley Road boundary. As a result of the geology and overall topography, the Garden's and surrounding land are subject to impeded drainage that can result in water logging. This geology is fairly common to most of the Borough.

History of South Park Gardens

In maps drawn up in the 18th and 19th centuries this area is shown as farmland and orchards.

The fields to the south of Wimbledon Village were owned and managed by four farms – Manor (or Wimbledon Park Farm), Cowdrey Farm, Warren Farm and Watney Farm. Cowdrey Farm owned the land immediately to the south of the current railway line in the stretch of land roughly between Haydons Road, Queens Road, Merton Road and what was to become The Broadway.

The opening of the London and South Western Railway (L&SWR) in 1838 brought a station to the south east of the village at the bottom of Wimbledon Hill. The location of the station shifted the focus of the town's subsequent growth away from the original village centre.

Until then Wimbledon had been centred in the village and had consisted of 400 or so homes, ranging from hovels to houses. In May 1838 the London and South West Railway opened just south of Worple Road and from then on, the focus of Wimbledon shifted to the lower plateau at the base of the hill. The prominence of the town over the village soon became well established reflecting the relative ease with which workers could travel to their places of work, using the railway and the introduction of more frequent bus services, which again converged on the new Wimbledon town centre.

The route of the railway was originally planned to be north of its present alignment, crossing Worple Road near its junction with Spencer Hill and following a course about midway between the present route and the Ridgway. However, the Earl of Cottenham, who owned the fields west of Pepys Road, opposed the railway line being so close to his house, and the railway company was obliged to move it further south. This original route would have led to a very different overall layout of Wimbledon, with less of a gap between 'The Village' and 'The Town'.

The time then taken from Wimbledon and Merton station to Nine Elms was only 18 minutes. From there, commuters could board a river steamer to the city.

The arrival of the railways accelerated suburban growth when the coming of the trains made travel easier, and gradually cheaper. With this link to the City, areas like Wimbledon with much open space, attracted families who bought large houses, needing many servants to maintain them and an array of shops to keep them supplied. In the early 1850s, houses began to go up north of the Ridgway and small cottages were built in the area below the Ridgway, going down Wimbledon Hill.

After 1838 this land became more valuable as building land and quite quickly land was sold off in large plots to speculative builders. Initially homes were built in the area south of The Broadway, beginning with Pelham Road. This area, now known as Abbey ward was soon filled with rows of terraced houses, built by a range of different builders and sold to landlords who rented them to working people. After a number of years, the owner of Cowdrey's farm realised some of his asset by selling the area south of the railway to the developer who built Queens Road, which abuts the railway line and then later to another who built Craven Gardens and Anchorage Close.

By 1865, south of the Ridgway, dozens of roads had been laid out ready for development, and Wimbledon grew extensively. Many people who worked in the city and the west end of London started moving into Wimbledon because of its good rail links. The Cottenham Park Estate was completed, leaving a small area of park in its midst. Pepys Road, Cottenham Park Road, Durham Road, Copse Hill and others were developed and Christ Church was built in 1859.

The population increased from 4,650 in 1861 to 9,000 in 1871, almost 16,000 by 1881 and to 25,000 in the 1890s. It could then be described as a London suburb. In 1871 the Commons Preservation Committee was formed to prevent Earl Spencer from enclosing much of the 'untamed' Wimbledon Common as a public park.

By the end of the 19th century, as the Victorian era gave way to the Edwardian era, the majority of redevelopment had been carried out, with just infilling of houses being built in the already created roads. The layout of the South Park area was well established by the end of the century with houses being built around the Gardens first and then extending along the roads off – Faraday, Effra, Clarence, Florence.

The London Underground was also being developed at this time. The first section of underground railway was opened in 1863 and this soon rapidly spread throughout London and the suburbs. The District Line was extended from Earls Court through to Putney in 1880 and then on to Wimbledon by 1889. This further consolidated the position of Wimbledon as a most desirable suburb of London with excellent transport links. Although it is called the underground about 55% of the service is above ground – as is the Wimbledon branch.

Charles Hamlet Cooper was the Borough Engineer at the end of the 19th century. He commissioned the design of the Gardens and oversaw their creation. They were designed in a Beaux Arts style – with serpentine paths and curved flowerbeds. The overall shape of the Gardens can be described as a rounded shield or curved elongated triangle. The design incorporates a number of circular paths including a circular patch of grass at each of the four

gates. From above it has a similar shape to a butterfly's wings. It was designated a Victorian Pleasure Ground and was finished and opened to the public in September 1901, just 8 months after the death of Queen Victoria.

A potted history of the Gardens is displayed on the main notice board by the entrance opposite 3 Dudley Road, together with a number of historical photographs.

References:

The History of South Park Gardens by Helen Fuller and Jil Hall to be published by The Friends of South Park Gardens and The Wimbledon Society.

Ownership and Responsibility

Ownership of the land forming South Park Gardens was transferred by way of a Conveyance in 1899 between a Mr J T Smith and the Council. It is wholly owned by the Council.

London Borough of Merton manages the Gardens. Maintenance is carried out by a mobile team of gardeners managed by the Parks Manager.

A large role is undertaken by the Friends of South Park Gardens in managing events, promoting the Gardens and liaising with the local community and the borough. Regular park users display a high degree of ownership of the Gardens and ensure that any anti-social behaviour or potential problems in the Gardens are reported promptly to the Community Park Warden or the gardeners.

The Community Park Warden's mobile number is displayed on the notice boards. She manages to resolve many issues, such as; people getting locked in the Gardens at night, dog owners not picking up dog waste, lost property, potential damage to trees and benches, litter and use of litter bins for domestic waste.

The Wimbledon Police Station is located just a few minutes' walk from the Gardens. Officers, including Community Support Officers, regularly patrol the Gardens and are a reassuring presence in the Gardens.

The Police usually attend the larger of the organised events in the Gardens and maintain a good ongoing relationship with the Friends Group.

The 1992 agreed byelaws are posted on a notice board at the Trinity Road gate of South Park Gardens (see Appendix 8 for details.)

Facilities and Services

South Park Gardens provides a range of facilities for informal play, recreation and educational opportunity for all ages. The following outlines the facilities and services provided and is cross referenced to the sites maintenance programme map, which can be found at the back of this plan at Appendix 3.

The Gardens have a network of resin-bonded gravel footpaths that connect all areas of the site and provide a good surface for walking and for children's cycling, scooting and roller blading or skating. The paths are wide enough to facilitate these activities without conflict with pedestrians. Cycling by the over 12s is discouraged. It also has a number of litterbins and dog-waste bins throughout the site. The Gardens are popular with dog walkers who use it throughout the day. Notices asking dogs to be kept on leads and that owners should clean up after their dogs, are prominently displayed on each of the 4 gates.

Mini-beast sanctuary

There are 4 log piles situated in the north east corner of the Gardens near the junction of Kings and Trinity Roads. These provide a suitable habitat for stag beetles, cockchafers and other native beetles and insects. Access to these 'mini-beasts' can be achieved by lifting the vertical logs out of the ground carefully.

Benches

The Gardens have 35 benches sited throughout the park and providing places to sit in both shade and in the open and providing pleasant vistas across the Gardens and of flower displays. A number of these benches have been dedicated by local residents and display brass plaques. Provision has been made to install further benches, should the demand require it.

The benches are maintained bi-annually by the Friends of South Park Gardens, who charge a nominal amount to the Borough for this service. The money raised in this way, and through events and fundraising is ploughed back into the Gardens.

Toilets

The two toilet blocks were repainted in 2011 and plans are being drawn up to redevelop the site to include a new gardeners' mess room, community meeting room, kiosk and storage facilities, together with the toilets.

Fountain

The fountain has been restored and is now a very effective and useful water fountain. This is very popular with park users. Dogs, especially in hot weather, use the dog bowl at the base extensively. The lettering has been restored and the inscription is now much easier to read. It can be lit up at night with 4 angled lights set into the path surrounding it.

Horse trough

The granite horse trough at the Dudley Road entrance (near the gardeners' compound) has also been restored and is planted twice a year with bedding plants by the on-site gardeners. It makes a great feature and is much loved by park users.

Lights and Power

Tree lights, fountain lights and a number of power outlets were installed as part of the restoration project. The power outlets in particular have been extremely useful providing power for a range of facilities during organised events.

Friends' Equipment

The Friends have invested in a few items of new equipment, including notice boards for the gates, 4 high quality, pop up, aluminium-framed gazebos and 2 new barbecues. They also own 12 folding tables and sundry lights, tea urns and other essential items. Some of these are currently stored in a section of the gardeners' store with the gardening equipment.

Notice boards

There are 3 notice boards in the Gardens. One at the Dudley Road entrance (opposite the horse trough) has a permanent display outlining the history of the Gardens. It also has two display areas with windows where notices can be displayed. The Community Park Warden uses these to display FSPG and Merton materials. The second one by Trinity Road gate displays the current byelaws and the third is a small one by the gardeners' mess room displaying their notices.

On the outside of the Gardens there are three additional small notice boards facing out, displaying FSPG notices, which can be read when the Gardens are closed.

Access

South Park Gardens is a site of open access to the general public. The Gardens are open during daylight hours throughout the year, generally from 06:30 hours Monday to Friday and 09:00 hours Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays with seasonal closing times. These times are displayed on the notice boards around the Gardens. The gates are opened by local resident key-holders and are locked at night by the Council's ranger service.

The entrances to the Gardens are situated in Dudley Road (2 gates), Kings Road and Trinity Road. The entrance opposite 3 Dudley Road is the main vehicular access and provides a route into the gardeners' compound and store-room.

The paths form a serpentine pattern around the Gardens, totalling 4 kilometres in total length. However one circuit around the Gardens totals just 570 metres. Information has been posted on each of the notice boards about fitness sessions and the Community Park Warden regularly posts information about keeping fit in the Gardens. Five circuits provides around 3,000 average length steps and therefore constitutes the amount of brisk daily walking recommended by the NHS' Walk Yourself Fit Campaign. Free pedometers are on offer to any park user wanting them.

Transport Links

The Gardens can be reached by local bus 200, which stops in Queens Road near to the Debenham's entrance of Centre Court. It is also within 5 minutes walk of other bus routes along The Broadway and the main station at Wimbledon with its underground (District Line) and main line train services. Buses go from The Broadway to Kingston, Putney, Morden, Mitcham, North Cheam and Sutton including 93, 163, 164, 131, and 57.

A regular tram service from Wimbledon station serves Croydon, Beckenham, Addiscombe, New Addington and Elmer's End.

The local area has relatively good public transport accessibility.

Car parking is available on all adjoining roads, but is subject to on street parking fees currently £2.30 per hour. Car parking is also available in the underground Centre Court car park.

Visual Access

The Gardens are signposted at the main entrance. A Friends Group notice board and an information panel are situated just inside the main entrance – opposite 3 Dudley Road. The notice board provides information about matters affecting the Gardens, often inviting the community to comment and information on the facilities and services available. The information panel provides a map of the Gardens and information on the site's history. A separate notice board at the Trinity Road entrance displays the current Council Bye-laws.

The Friends have added 3 additional notice boards next to three of the gates, enabling residents to see information even after the Gardens have been locked for the night. The gardeners also have a notice board by their compound.

Accessibility of Infrastructure

A level resin-bonded gravel path system connects all areas of the Gardens making it accessible for pedestrians, pushchairs and wheelchairs. There is a disabled toilet – accessed by Radar key – next to the ladies toilets near the main entrance.

Availability and Affordability

The Gardens provides a simple open space, which is free for the public to enjoy. The Friends of South Park Gardens regularly organise community events, which are open to all and sometimes require pre-booked tickets to be purchased. Many of these events are run in the Gardens without the necessity of closing the Gardens to other members of the public. So the Gardens can continue to be used by the public alongside any events – for example the annual picnic, over 60s cream tea, Teddy Bears' Picnic and Jazz Sundays. Exceptions to this are the Hallowe'en, Fireworks and Christmas events, which take place after the Gardens are closed for the night. In these cases, access gates are fully staffed, ticket-holders only are admitted and lights are utilised to ensure the safety of the public.



Fitness

Regular fitness sessions take place in the Gardens. These range from an early morning 'commuter' session to 'Buggyfit' sessions for parents of under 5s. The fitness sessions involve running and exercises incorporating portable gym equipment (such as weights and balls), and also use benches for step ups. These sessions regularly attract 10/20 people into the Gardens. They run throughout the year.

Two regular 'boot camp' sessions take place in the Gardens run by British Military Fitness. These provide a more intensive work out for park users.

Community involvement

The Friends of South Park Gardens have been involved in the development, improvement, maintenance and management of the Gardens in consultation with Merton since their formation in 2002. This involvement has included,

- Consultation with Merton regarding the priorities for improving the Gardens.
- Application for the funding of improvements with support from Merton.
- Locally raising money for improvements.
- Running community events in the Gardens.
- Promoting the park to potential users.
- Full involvement in the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund – leading to the restoration of the Gardens in 2008/9.

- Maintenance of the notice board with information about the Gardens and their facilities including providing the community with the opportunity to comment on issues affecting the site.

In addition to this, several other community groups, churches and businesses have been involved in the restoration of the Gardens and have an interest in their continued maintenance and improvement. These include Queens Road Church, South Park Estate Residents Association (SPERA), Holy Trinity Church, YMCA, Polka Theatre, Ellisons Estate Agents, Domestic & General plc, CIPD, Wimbledon Town Centre Management and the Police.

The History of the Friends of South Park Gardens

In the 1990s the Gardens continued to decline, with broken down boundary fencing, regular occurrences of vandalism and instances of rowdy behaviour and litter dropping. Concerns regarding the security of the Gardens and the locking of gates at night led to many local residents lobbying the Council for improvements. Residents started to talk to each other and coordinated their representations and a series of local meetings with Council officers were organised, leading to the agreement by a rota of residents to become key holders and open the gates every morning.

However the final straw came in 2002, when one set of ornamental gates at the Trinity Road entrance was stolen. This led to a public meeting and the setting up of the Friends of South Park Gardens. The Friends resolved to halt the decline of the Gardens and restore and improve them for the good of the community.

Initially the Friends Group was just a lobby group, liaising with the Council over improvements it wanted to see. Then it started fundraising to help to fund research into park improvements.

The Council and the Friends collaborated on undertaking a feasibility study to restore and improve the Gardens and applied for a grant to the Heritage Lottery Fund. After a number of years' hard work, a grant of just over £1m was achieved.

The Friends developed a programme of community events, building on the regular annual picnic, which had been taking place since the Silver Jubilee in 1977. A range of events has taken place over the years including Bookfest events, treasure hunts, Christmas carol singing, charity events and picnics. The Friends now organise a series of family events including their core annual events: Easter Egg Hunt, Annual Picnic, Music Festival for young people, Teddy Bears' Picnic, Over 60s cream tea and Fireworks and Bonfire Party. So far they have raised over £70,000 to be used for improvements to the Gardens.

The Friends draw in a huge number of volunteers who help organise the events. Around 80 different people were active in some way during 2011. Involvement might be as little as baking a cake for the Over 60s Cream Tea, to regularly organising and running some of the more complicated events, such as the Music Festival and Fireworks and Bonfire Party, which each bring in more than a thousand attendees and have complex health and safety issues to be resolved.

The Friends of South Park Gardens is an active member of the Friends' Forum – a group of friends groups from across the borough, which meets to discuss overall parks policies and other matters affecting parks.

The Friends work very well with the Council, having regular meetings with both officers and councillors.

Other groups which regularly use the Gardens include: Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, YMCA youth groups, groups for the disabled, Holy Trinity and Queens Road Churches, fitness groups, local primary schools, nursery schools and playgroups.

Environmental Sustainability

The Gardens contribute to Merton's aim for environmental sustainability in a number of ways.

The Gardens have a number of litterbins to maintain a clean and safe environment. Where possible all green waste produced in the maintenance of the Gardens is either left on site or removed and taken to a green waste collection point elsewhere in the Borough to be recycled. Recently a new solar powered 'Big Belly Bin' has been installed in a busy location near a popular gate. It sends a text message to Council staff when it is getting full, so they can come and empty it. It has been a big success.

When several trees had to be taken down as part of the restoration process, the trunks were cut down on site and used for the open air seating area (under the Cedar of Lebanon tree) and in the mini-beast sanctuary. Other sections of trunk have been placed in the shrub border to be used as stepping-stones.

Timber seating in the Gardens are from sustainable sources. All materials used in the future development, improvement and maintenance of the Gardens will be hard wearing, vandal resistant and where possible, recycled.

The Leisure Facilities and Technical Group have a general policy to reduce the use of pesticides in the maintenance of parks and open spaces.

Pesticides are not used in South Park Gardens. Dead leaf matter is blown onto the shrub borders to provide natural mulch. Watering with hosepipes is kept to a minimum. Organic waste matter is collected separately from other waste and recycled at the borough's recycling facility. Some hard organic waste, such as fallen branches may be chipped on site and used as mulch.

Green spaces and biodiversity

The new Community Plan states that: Merton's abundance of green spaces will have become an even more important asset for the borough and will be managed in a sustainable way. Tree canopy will have been increased by a comprehensive tree planting programme to provide shading to help combat the increasing danger of heat stress from long periods of hot weather. Trees and other plants will be used as part of the sustainable urban drainage systems developed to address flooding risks whilst the design will seek to maximise access and health benefits and minimise personal safety concerns. Planting programmes will have resulted in the plant life of Merton being less water intensive and more drought resistant.

Action points from the plan include: Manage parks and gardens to protect and enhance local biodiversity by integrating biodiversity management methods into parks management plans.

Protection of Significant Habitats and Ecosystems

A bat survey was carried out in the Gardens in August 2008. Three species of bat were found, including: common and soprano pipistrelles. These were recorded feeding in the Gardens at dusk. There was also a distant pass of a noctule bat overhead.

The bats were found mainly in the area near the Kings Road entrance. Enhancement of soil invertebrates and aerial insect prey could be considered to encourage this activity.

Around 23 different species of birds have been spotted in the Gardens including: jays, chaffinches, Gold Crests, robins, Jenny Wrens, redwings, Great Spotted Woodpeckers and a range of tits and sparrows. The woodpeckers are a fairly recent visitor to the Gardens and their distinctive tapping can be heard in the morning and at dusk. The fountain attracts birds as some water lies in the shallow bowl and can be easily accessed by small birds for drinking, although there is not generally sufficient for them to bathe in.

Discussions regarding the provision of bird boxes to encourage small birds are underway and the local primary schools may be involved in this activity. Two bird boxes were installed in 2013.

Crime

The overall crime rate in Merton went down in 2009/10 to 14,839 (from 15,030 in 2007/8). The crime rate compares favourably at 5.61% with other nearby London Boroughs – Croydon 7.18%, Wandsworth 6.36%.

As Trinity ward incorporates part of The Broadway, with its range of bars and opportunities for excessive drinking and related minor crimes, it is one of the wards in the Borough with the highest crime rate. The highest proportion of crimes committed in Merton comes under the heading 'anti-social behaviour'. The most common type of other crime is burglary with 119 incidents being reported in December 2010.

The ward is served by the Metropolitan Police Community Support Officers. Trinity has not been identified as a hot spot for crime in the Council's Crime and Disorder Strategy audits and therefore does not have a Neighbourhood Warden. The ward is currently a Safer Neighbourhood and Merton aims to have Safer Neighbourhoods in every area of the Borough by 2008. The immediate residential area around the Gardens is a Neighbourhood Watch Area. Regular meetings take place between the Friends of South Park Gardens and the police Crime Prevention Officer to improve the safety of the Gardens.

The main pedestrian and vehicle entrances to the Gardens have lockable gates. The site is fenced on all three sides with cast iron railings. The site has lockable storage areas behind wooden gates for the safe storage of equipment and machinery. This works area is accessible by a vehicular graded pathway for general vehicle access and for maintenance vehicle access.

The equipment is inspected several times a week by the Park Ranger and other Council staff and by annual independent inspection carried out by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

There are a number of dog-waste bins within the Gardens which dog owners are encouraged to use.

Regeneration

Since the plans for a major regeneration of the centre of Wimbledon (with a hotel and performance venue) have been put on ice, there are no large regeneration schemes in the

area which would impact on South Park Gardens. There are plans to extend the YMCA site at the corner of The Broadway and Trinity Road, but this is on a small scale.

The area is one of regular residential refurbishments and local estate agents report anecdotally that demand for houses in the area has increased since the Gardens were restored and reopened. It is generally considered to be a sought-after area for families moving into SW19.

Satisfaction with the greater security and improved amenities in the Gardens can be seen in the comments made during collection of information from park-users during the annual User Survey – appendix 5.

Usage of the Gardens has increased substantially with over 1500 visits logged on the day of the survey in September. Extrapolating those figures over the year suggest that the Gardens may attract over 250,000 visits in a year. Further head counts at various events throughout the year suggest that over 2,000 visitors may be in the Gardens at popular events.

Education

The Community Park Warden has maintained a high level of consultation with 4 local primary schools – Holy Trinity, The Priory, St Mary's and Pelham. The schools use the Gardens for a variety of educational and recreational activities. These include: Nature Study, Sports Days, Sponsored walks, picnics and informal play time. Each of the schools sent children to plant a tree during the restoration and also participated in the Over 60s cream tea, where Year 6 pupils helped serve the teas and interviewed attendees for the inter-generational history project.

The mini-beast centre is available to the schools and the nearest school, Holy Trinity, uses the 'open-air classroom' in the summer months for open air lessons. A history project for Years 5 & 6 has been prepared and distributed to schools, in which children study Victorians and in particular will explore the subject of children's play. Work sheets have been prepared for the schools.

A range of reproduction Victorian/Edwardian play equipment has been obtained for these activities in the summer term. These are lent to each school in turn to help support their school projects.

The Priory School used the Gardens in 2010 and 2011 for very successful charity sponsored walks and is considering making this an annual event. Now that the Gardens paths have been measured out, it will be possible to use it for maths lessons when children are learning about distances.

Children have been encouraged to take part in the annual Music Festival in July. The youngest performer so far has been 7 years old. The event is supported by the Merton Music Foundation and Cherry Pie Music which organises a wide range of music lessons for young people.

Schools were also invited to the Art Event in the Gardens in September 2011 and many children did come and took part in a range of art activities, including drawing, painting, collage and water colours.

Healthy Lifestyles

The Community Plan states that 'On average the population of Merton tends to enjoy better health than most Londoners. However, within the borough there are variations in standards of health linked to the way people live their lives and the opportunities available to choose healthy lifestyles in their communities'.

One of its stated aims is to 'Work with voluntary and community organisations to provide local services to meet local needs'.

It is promoting a healthy lifestyle through a variety of methods. Exercised is encouraged through the siting of a number of green gyms on green spaces throughout the borough.

In South Park Gardens, exercise is encouraged through fitness classes and the Focus on Fitness notices written and displayed on the notice boards by the Community Park Warden. Free pedometers are on offer to any park user who asks for one.

There are currently at least 5 or 6 fitness sessions in the Gardens every week, including a 'buggy fit' session for parents of young children and a more intense 'boot camp' session for more full on training.

Schools are encouraged to use the Gardens for sports events and one off events such as sponsored walks.

Heritage and Culture

The Gardens have a rich heritage and reflect the era in which they were created. A book outlining the History of South Park Gardens is being written by Jil Hall, the Community Park Warden and Helen Fuller, the Secretary of the Friends Group.

There is a local history group which meets up around twice a year and which has contributed to both of the foregoing items. Its aim is to collect memories from local residents and add these to the archive, maintained currently by the Community Park Warden.

There are a great many photographs, which are stored on discs and will be added to this archive. They include a series of photos taken from particular vantage points of the Gardens before, during and after the restoration. Selected photos are being included in the book.

5. Management of South Park Gardens

Parks Management

Merton's Greenspaces team, whose head office is located in the Civic Centre in Morden, are responsible for the day-to-day operational management of South Park Gardens. The current service is an entirely "in-house" service provision with all staff directly employed by the local authority, except for occasional agency staff that backfill vacant positions and some seasonal roles. The team current structure was substantially established over the period from April 2010 to July 2011 and in response to budget cuts within the local authority which witnessed posts in its small parks development and events teams being deleted and substantial revisions to its grounds operations teams that were also designed to reduce costs. The current team structure is outlined in Appendix 7.

The Greenspaces Manager (Doug Napier) is the service head and oversees the ongoing development of the service and its performance. The service manages over 100 separate open spaces, including South Park Gardens, which is one of the major sites in the Merton parks portfolio. The Greenspaces Manager is supported by a Parks Manager (Danny Lovelock) and a Parks Support Team Manager (Dave Byles) who, between them, manage the majority of the ground-based staff with the support of three supervisors. The main duties of these teams include litter picking, garden maintenance and parks locking, amongst other tasks. Broadly speaking, the core duties are conducted by the same small operational teams of 3-4 staff who manage small geographical clusters of parks, but the service has been required to become more mobile and more flexible in recent years in response to resource reductions and, being a seven day per week operation, there is some flexibility in the deployment and supervision of staff too.

This operational structure arose out of a significant transformation of the grounds service that occurred during 2011 that previously had operated on a geographical basis - with teams base in Wimbledon, Morden and Mitcham - under three Area Managers. The new structure created just two operational teams which approximately half of the grounds staff in each team. One team, the core grounds maintenance team, reporting to the Parks Manager, now focuses predominantly on horticulture and sports pitch upkeep across the borough; the other team, the Parks Support Team, deals mostly with our customers and lettings duties and also with litter, pavilion cleaning and on-site cash collection. Weekend and evening tasks are therefore performed by the latter team in the main.

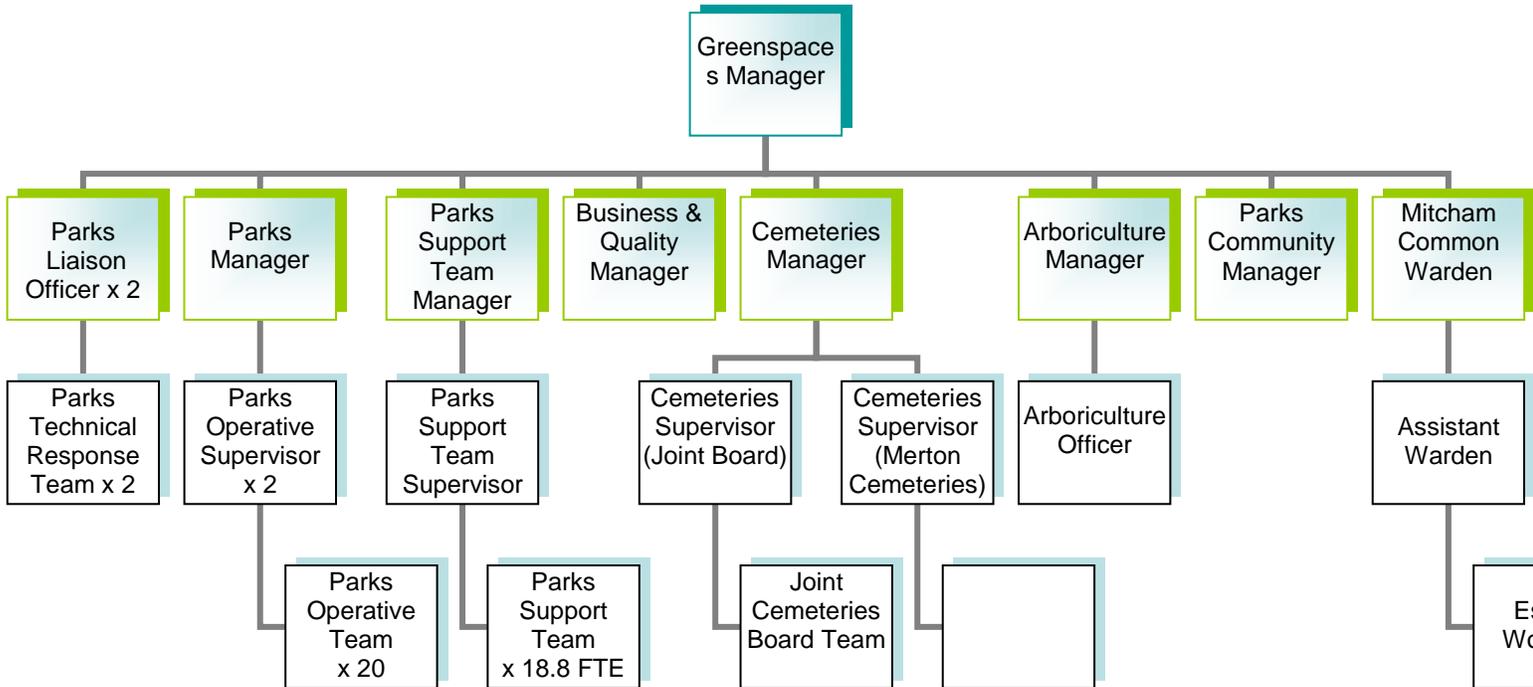
Large-scale grass cutting operations are carried out by a small team dedicated to that operation that operates across the borough and report to the Parks Manager. The service's technical staff (2 play technicians and one mechanical fitter) are similarly deployed across the borough or service borough-wide needs.

The Greenspaces Manager line manages two Parks Development Officers who are primarily involved in the delivery of the parks capital investment programme and for the repairs and replacement of the parks infrastructure: footpaths, gates, signs, bins, fences, etc. There is also a professional events officer and two professional arboricultural officers whose duties and responsibilities include the support of activities and conditions in South Park Gardens and all other open spaces. Both the development and repair works and the arboricultural works are mainly undertaken by specialist contractors commissioned by, and reporting to, the relevant professional officers. The events role is mainly concerned with providing support and advice, especially in relation to safety, for small-scale outdoor events produced by the local community groups, at least insofar as South Park Gardens is concerned as the capacity for larger events (fun fairs, circuses, faith group festivals and the like), is more limited there.

Broad details of the personnel involved in the management of South Park Gardens are outlined in Table 6.1 below and comprises individuals drawn from both the parks grounds team and Support Team working in tandem. The park formally opens at 8am (although in reality a team of local volunteer residents opens it at around 6.30am) and park staff close (the gates are securely locked by parks staff) at or about dusk Under the revised operational arrangements, staff are present in the park on most midweek days due to a combination of the park's Key Park status (with daily commitments in terms of litter collection and condition inspections allied to that). At weekends in the summer months, the popularity of the park ensures that there is a need for regular on-site presence. This is currently funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund project. Overall, the staff establishment is estimated at 2 FTEs, albeit that none is actually allocated to the park specifically under the revised operational arrangements now adopted.

Figure 1

Greenspaces Management Structure



6. Maintenance Programme

Figure 2 outlines the basic maintenance involved in SPG. The programme plot numbers refer to plots within the Gardens, which have been identified for the purposes of the maintenance programme. These plots can be referred to on a pictorial map at the back of this plan.

Plot Number	Detail	Maintenance Schedule	Who Does Work
1	PATHS	Carry out monthly inspection reports, sweep and clear litter as necessary.	Gardener and Ranger Service
2	AMENITY GRASS	Cut 10 times a year. Litter pick prior to cutting.	Gardeners to maintain small grass areas. Tractor Gang mowers on large grass areas.
3	FLOWERBEDS	Spring and summer bedding	Gardeners
4	MINI BEAST SANCTUARY	Maintain as per conservation management plan	Nature Conservation Contractors
5	NATURE CONSERVATION	Wildflower area to be left uncut to encourage wild flowers and long grass. One cut per year in autumn.	Gardeners.
6	BENCHES	To be rubbed down and treated with preservative oil every other year in autumn.	Friends Group.
7	TREES	Pruned annually, pits maintained as necessary. Full survey tri yearly	Gardeners Aboriculture manager
IP	INTERPRETATIVE PANEL	Remove graffiti from interpretative panels. Put up information monthly.	Ranger Service/Friends Group.
GENERAL	LITTER BINS AND DOG BINS	Empty litter bins twice a week in Winter, daily in summer. Empty dog bins once a week.	Ranger Service for Litterbins plus additional ranger at w/es in summer. Dog bin contract.

7. Monitoring and Plan Review

This management plan was adopted in January 2012 and will act as a working document for the management of South Park Gardens over a three year period. It will need to be reviewed during that time as several major issues will need to be addressed during that time. In particular, the redevelopment of the gardeners' compound, which is planned to take place in 2012/13, and the cessation of the five year restoration project part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which is due to finish in 2013. Informal discussions with the HLF have led to the extension of the project until the end of September 2014. This will have the effect of enabling the Community Park Warden and the temporary ranger to continue for the summer period. This will mean that major review of this management plan should take place in late 2014.

The day to day management of the Gardens and the progress of this planned development will be monitored regularly by the Greenspaces Manager, LBM park staff and the Friends of South Park Gardens.

The maintenance schedule was reviewed in the autumn of 2012 after a year of operation and updated to reflect levels of satisfaction by major stakeholders, taking into account operational factors and budgetary constraints. The Friends of South Park Gardens are discussing possible future volunteering opportunities in the Gardens, such as help with discrete horticultural tasks – weeding, bulb planting etc as well as possibly formalising the current litter picking arrangements. Information from this review and discussions will inform the budget process in December 2014.

Views on the operation of the maintenance and management of the Gardens were sought at the last user survey in September 2012, as well as through the public consultation on the redevelopment project. That was the last user survey funded through the HLF restoration project.

8. Satisfaction of Users and Non-Users

12% of residents surveyed in Merton's Annual Residents Survey 2011 expressed that a lack of recreational facilities in the Borough was of a concern to them. This is higher than the London rate of 8%.

70% of all residents considered that parks, playgrounds and open spaces were good or excellent, a 4% increase on 2010. 76% of those who use Merton's parks, playgrounds and open spaces consider them good or excellent, a 4% decrease on 2010. 61% of users of Merton's leisure and sports facilities were satisfied with the service, which is a 6% increase on the year before figures.

Specific information about users of South Park Gardens' level of satisfaction with the Gardens has been collected in a series of annual user surveys since 2007. The results show that the level of usage has almost doubled since the restoration and users' comments about the Gardens have been overwhelmingly positive.

The latest user survey results (from September 2012) are attached in appendix 5.

Challenges

The challenges faced by Merton and its partners in ensuring that it achieves the vision for South Park Gardens as outlined previously in this plan, have been identified through a range of consultation, surveys and feedback.

The major issues affecting the Gardens which had been raised by the local community before restoration were:

- Vandalism
- Illegal entry at night
- Poor toilet facilities
- Poor communication by Merton up until 2004
- Lack of provision for older children and young people
- Poor state of paths

Although investment has been made into the Gardens since 2003, for many years prior to this investment had strictly been limited to emergency or urgent works. The areas where the lack of investment had become most apparent were the,

- Poor state of the pathways
- State of the boundary fencing
- Maintenance and upkeep of the flowerbeds
- Decline of other horticulture elements

These have now been addressed by the restoration – with the exception of the toilets, which could not be included in the bid. However, these have now been painted and other improvements are under discussion.

NB: regular park users often pick up litter and dog walkers use peer pressure to ensure dog waste is picked up and disposed of properly. The Community Park Warden does a regular litter check and manages the temporary ranger who is employed during the summer months at weekends.

Vandalism has not been a problem for the Gardens since the restoration.

10. Proposed Development Programme

The Friends group is working with the Council to develop plans for a community building which will incorporate a flexible room available to use as a meeting room, educational facility for visiting schools, fitness studio, rehearsal space and resource for park users.

Funded Development

Development	Capital Costs	Revenue Costs	Source of Funding	Timescale Installation/Implementation	Implications
Installation of community building	£300,000	£1000 pa maintenance (or contribution to sinking fund)	Existing funding and section 106 money	By end 2014	Will be sited in gardeners' compound.

Operational Development

Development	Capital Costs	Revenue Costs	Source of Funding	Timescale Installation/Implementation	Implications
Continue consultation and close working with the Friends Group and develop other partnerships	-	-	-	ongoing	
Encourage the Friends Group to apply for grants to improve the Gardens	-	-	-	ongoing	
Continue to bid for capital funding and				Ongoing	

Development	Capital Costs	Revenue Costs	Source of Funding	Timescale Installation/Implementation	Implications
section 106 money					
Provide good, clean facilities for community groups including the new building				Ongoing	
Develop marketing of the Gardens		Approx £2k pa	HLF grant and Friends	To be established and maintained (see Appendix 7)	
Manage the mini beast sanctuary as per Conservation Management Plan				Ongoing	
Development of a green waste management plan					

A pictorial representation of the planned area for the proposed development and improvements can be found at the back of this plan. Appendix 10.

Merton Open Space Study 2012

Merton Open Space Strategy (MOSS)

Below the Community and Business Plans and the Cultural Strategy, under the “sustainable communities” theme, sits the **Merton Open Space Strategy (MOSS)**. The range of sub-strategies can be viewed in Figure 2.1 below. The MOSS was developed from detailed studies of the borough’s open spaces and after consultation with local residents. First released in 2004, the MOSS identified the key open space issues and defined a vision for the future.

The MOSS was revisited in 2010-11 in order to provide a more up to date audit of Merton’s open space facilities and their spatial distribution. Unlike the 2005 study, the refresh included publicly accessible private land and was undertaken in the context of revised demographic and population predictions. This refresh study was published in 2011 and comprises an action plan that will enable the local authority to deliver a network of accessible recreational spaces that will meet the Borough’s future needs.

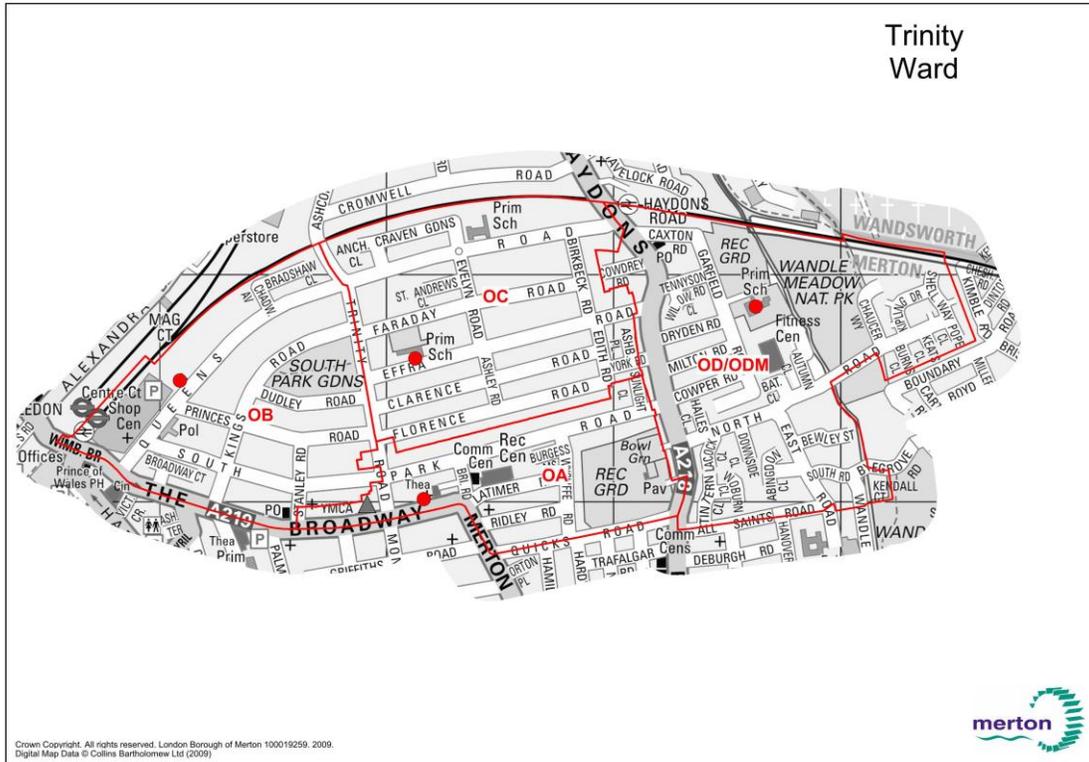
The MOSS will be delivered by a number of means, including the Merton Local Development Framework, and corporate strategies such as the Climate Change Action Plan and sub-regional open space partnership aspirations such as the proposed Wandle Valley Regional Park and Green Grid.

For further information on the MOSS go to:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/living/environment/openspaces/moss.htm>

The 2010/11 refresh of the MOSS can be found at:

http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/openspaces/moss/2010-2011_moss_final.pdf



Site Plan of South Park Gardens

Social, Economic and Environmental Profile of Trinity Ward

Extract of Census and Survey Information

Resident population

Total resident population (2001): 9559

Population rank as compared to all Merton wards: 7/20

Age of population in ward (%):

0-17: 22.0%

18-44: 42.2%

45-64: 22.3%

65+: 13.4%

Ethnicity

Ethnic minority population including white Irish (%): 30.9%

% Irish population: 3.1%

Health

% of people with limiting long-term illness: 17.4%

Rank of ward as compared to all Merton wards: 15 / 20

People with "good" health (%): 74.0%

People with "good" health (Rank): 5 / 20

People with "not good" health (%): 5.9%

People with "not good" health (Rank): 15/20

Education

Ward population with qualifications (%): 82.9%

Rank of ward compared to all Merton wards: 9/20

Households and Housing

One person households: 24.0%

Pensioner households: 21.0%

Households with dependant children: 32.5%

Households without central heating: 0.7%

Households with no car: 21.5%

Households rented from the Council: 3.1%

Households rented privately: 8.2%

Average household size: 2.6 people
Average number of rooms per household: 5.5 rooms

Crime

Total number of offences recorded (2003/4): 665
Rate of recorded offences per 1000 population: 69.6
Rank of crime rate in Merton: 17 / 20
Breakdown of numbers of certain offences:
Sexual offences (per 1000 population): 0.3
Robbery (per 1000 population): 1.8
Burglary from a dwelling (per 1000 households): 11.3
Theft of vehicles (total): 1
Theft from vehicles (per 1000 population): 4.8

Economic Activity and Deprivation

Employment rate for the ward (2001): 68.5%
Unemployment rate for the ward (2001): 2.2%
Average deprivation score (2004): 7.8
Average deprivation score rank: 18

User Perception of Local Issues and Services in the Ward Cluster

Cluster: 3 (Cannon Hill, Lower Morden, Merton Park, West Barnes)
Top 10 personal concerns (Merton Residents Survey 2004, %):
Quality of Health Service: 26%
Not enough being done for elderly people: 14%
Rising prices/Interest rates: 11%
Level of council tax: 57%
Crime: 41%
Standard of education: 20%
Pollution of the environment: 10%
Traffic congestion: 26%
Lack of affordable housing: 12%
Litter/dirt in the streets: 26%
Dissatisfaction with local services (Merton Residents Survey 2004, %)
Residents who responded 'poor', 'very poor' or 'extremely poor':
Public transport: 7%
Policing: 25%
Housing benefit service: 1%
Collection of council tax: 3%
Services for young people: 23%
Fly tip removal: 12%

FSPG South Park Gardens User Survey Report - September 2012

The fifth annual survey of Users of South Park Gardens was conducted in September 2012. This report details the profile of users throughout the day by looking at group size and composition, age of user, their post code and activity undertaken whilst visiting the park.

Number of Visitors

A total of **292 visitors** to South Park Gardens were interviewed on Thursday, 27th September 2012. Half of all respondents were accompanied by one or more other people, with an average group size of 1.9. It is estimated that those interviewed represented a minimum throughput to the park of **561** people, with additional users who it was not possible to stop to interview. Data from 2008 - 2012 is shown for comparison in Table 1.

The overall number of interviews is significantly less than in other years, and there are two likely reasons: first, as detailed in the Technical note at the end of the report, there were fewer interviewers in 2012, administering questionnaires over a shorter time period than in previous years, and thus it was not possible to interview all park users; second, the weather was cold and dull for most of the day, especially when compared with the survey day in 2011 when near record-breaking temperatures were reached, it is probable therefore that visitor numbers on the day of the 2012 survey were down compared with previous years.

Time of day park used

The busiest period recorded was first thing in the morning, with 29% of all respondents being interviewed between **7-9 a.m.** when there was a high throughput of users 'crossing the park'. The park was busy again over lunch and after school. See Table 1

Age of users

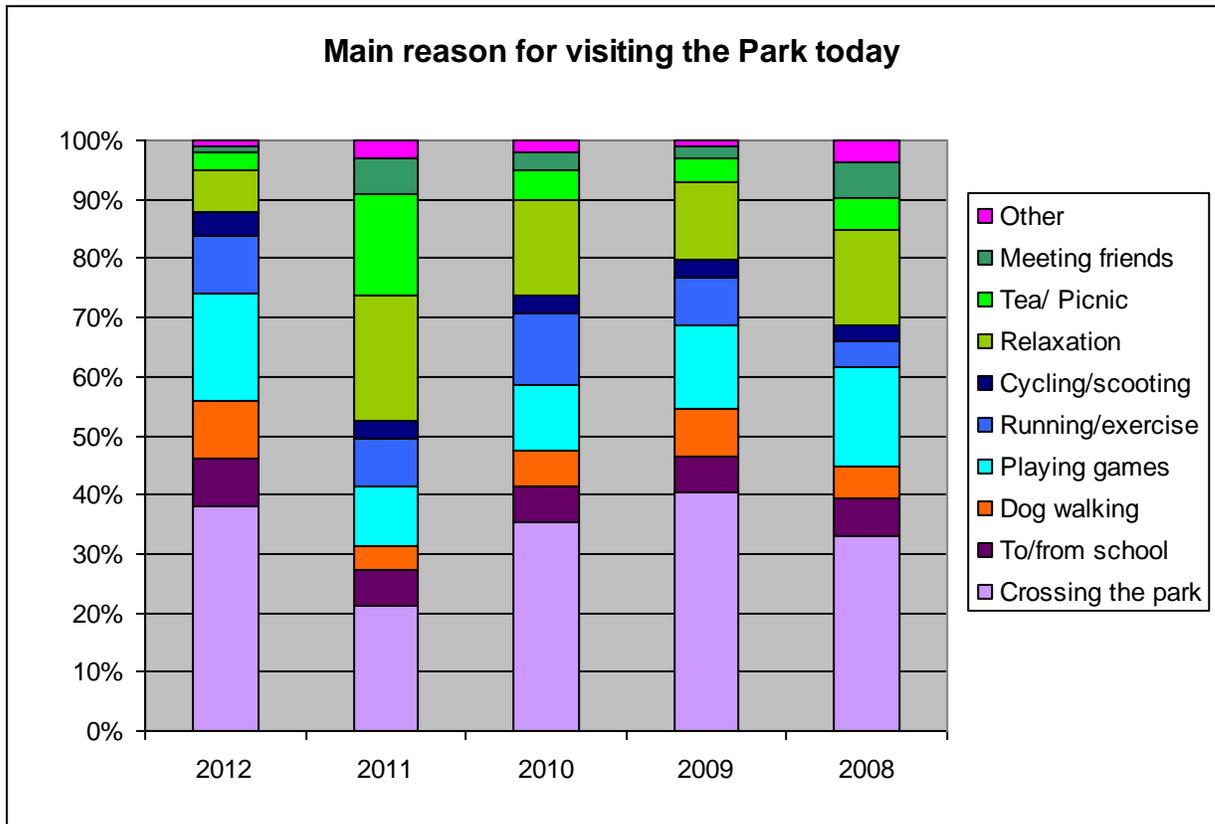
People of **all ages** used the park, though most were **under 55**. The age profile of respondents was similar to previous years, with the majority (65%) falling into the 30-54 age group. The percentage of respondents accompanied by one or more children aged 10 and under was also similar to previous years (45%), younger children in particular making up the group. See Table 1

Postcode of users

91% of visitors came from SW19, this was the highest percentage recorded over the years as coming from within the postcode. See Table 1

Reason for Visiting

The park was visited for a variety of reasons (see chart below and Table 1), and these changed throughout the day (see Table 2).



As in previous years, **'crossing the park'** was given as the main reason for being in South Park Gardens by a high proportion of visitors (38% in 2012). When those who said they were **'taking children to / from school'** (8%) are taken into account as well, then we can see that 46% were using the park as a thoroughfare, and this accounted for 75% of users between 7-9 a.m.

The combined percentage of those using the park for various forms of exercise (shaded blue on the chart) was the highest yet at 32%, with **'playing games'** given as the main reason for visiting the park by 18% **'running/exercise'** by 10% and **'cycling/scooting'**

by 4%. The percentage rises to an even greater all-time high of those using the park to be active when **dog walking** (10%) is added.

In contrast, those visiting the park for more relaxing activities: **'relaxation'** (7%), **'having lunch / tea / picnic / coffee'** (3%) or **'meeting friends'** (1%) was lower than in previous years, and it is presumed that the weather played a role in this. These reasons were quoted more by users of the park during the middle of the day.

Spontaneous comments about the Gardens' restoration

When asked if they had **any comments** they wished to make about the Gardens' restoration (See Table 3), 105 of those interviewed responded, with 70 of all interviewees making a positive comment, 28 a negative remark and 16 a neutral comment or suggestion.

The main **positive** comments were of a generalized nature – 'Brilliant /fantastic/ great/ beautiful/ lovely/ etc' (8%), other positive observations mentioned by more than two people concerned frequency of visit, the good maintenance, and the fact that the park provides a pleasant walking route.

Most of the **negative** remarks concerned the rubbish - overflowing bins, litter, etc (commented on by 10 people). Other negative remarks made by more than two respondents were the anti-social behaviour exhibited by some teenagers (smoking, drugs, drink, litter), the poor condition of the paths and the toilets.

A number of individual suggestions for **improvements / additions to the park** were made. A request for some form of play equipment was mentioned by 6 and a desire for longer hours from the coffee man was mentioned by two.

Technical Note:

292 visitors to South Park Gardens were interviewed face-to-face on Thursday 27th September 2012.

Interviewers attempted to intercept and interview as many visitors as possible between 7.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. Unlike previous years where interviewers were placed at the two main gates to the park (Trinity Road and Dudley Road), due to a shortage of available interviewers, for most of the day only one interviewer was present (at Trinity Road gate). In addition, interviewing ceased at 6.00 p.m. compared with 7.00 p.m. in previous years. These two facts will have depleted the overall number of interviews achieved compared with previous years.

The weather was mainly overcast and damp.

A copy of the questionnaire is appended.

Visitors interviewed

(No. of visitors interviewed)	2012		2011	2010	2009	2008		
	(292)	(292)					(789)	(540)
Time visiting the park:	No.	%	%	%	%	%		
7.00 - 8.59 a.m.	85	29	13	17	18	13		
9.00 - 10.59 a.m.	32	11	13	16	11	13		
11.00 a.m. - 12.59 p.m.	64	22	20	14	14	16		
1.00 - 2.59 p.m.	42	14	21	17	17	18		
3.00 - 4.59 p.m.	62	21	27	23	22	26		
5.00 - 6.59 p.m.	7	2	5	12	17	14		
MAIN reason for visiting today:	No.	%	%	%	%	%		
crossing the park	112	38	21	35	40	37		
playing games	53	18	10	11	14	19		
dog walking	30	10	4	6	8	6		
running / exercise	28	10	8	12	8	5		
taking children to / from school	23	8	6	6	6	7		
relaxation	19	7	21	16	13	18		
cycling / scooting	12	4	3	3	3	3		
having lunch/tea/picnic/coffee	8	3	17	5	4	6		
meeting friends	3	1	6	3	2	7		
Other	2	1	1	*	1	4		
Number of people in visitor's party:	No.	%	%	%	%	%		
1	144	49	44	43	51	47		
2	78	27	35	38	34	34		
3	45	15	13	14	11	11		
4	12	4	5	3	3	6		
5 or more	13	4	2	2	2	2		
estimated total number	561		1479	988	872	933		
Average no. of people in party	1.9		1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8		
Number of children in interviewee's party:								
	Any children		Aged 0-5		Aged 6-10		Any Children	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%	%
None	160	55	178	61	746	88	61	59
Any	132	45	114	39	43	12	39	41
One	73	25	73	25	22	8	27	29
Two or more	44	15	41	14	12	4	11	12
Age of visitor interviewed:	No.	%	%	%	%	%		
11 - 18	11	3	3	5	3	6		
19 - 29	54	18	21	19	20	20		
30 - 54	190	65	63	64	61	57		
55 & over	37	13	12	11	16	15		

Postcode of visitor interviewed:	No.	%	%	%	%	%
SW19	267	91	83	86	84	84
SW20	3	1	3	*	2	3
CR	3	1	2	*	3	3
KT	2	1	2	2	1	2
SM	3	1	2	1	1	2
Other	11	4	6	9	9	7

* = <0.5

Reason for crossing the park by time and number of people in party (2012)

Table 2

	Total	Time					
		<u>7-9</u>	<u>9-11</u>	<u>11-1</u>	<u>1-3</u>	<u>3-5</u>	<u>5-7</u>
Number of visitors interviewed	292	85	32 [^]	64	42	62	7 [^]
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
crossing the park	38	<u>57</u>	<u>44</u>	38	26	21	14
taking children to / from school	8	<u>18</u>	6	5	0	0	0
dog walking	10	15	13	8	17	0	14
playing games	18	0	13	19	10	<u>52</u>	14
running / exercise	10	8	22	6	12	3	43
cycling / scooting	4	0	3	8	5	6	0
relaxation	7	0	0	<u>16</u>	<u>19</u>	2	0
having lunch / tea / picnic/ coffee	3	0	0	2	<u>12</u>	3	0
meeting friends	1	1	0	0	0	2	14
Other	1	0	0	0	0	3	0

[^] Beware – small base of respondents

“Are there any comments you wish to make about the Gardens’ restoration?”

Table 2

	No of visitors interviewed	
	(292) No.	(292) %
Any spontaneous comments	105	36
Any Positive comments	70	24
Any Negative comments	28	9
Any Neutral comments/suggestions	16	5
Spontaneous Positives	(70)	(70)
	No.	%
Brilliant/fantastic/great/beautiful/lovely/etc	51	73
Here often	8	11
Well maintained	4	6
Nice walk even though longer way	4	6
Like the planting	2	3
Good for children	2	3
Like the kiosk	2	3
Like design	2	3
Very safe	2	3
Traditional elements/no playground	1	1
Improvement on before	1	1
Like events/functions	1	1
Good for a sandwich	1	1
Spontaneous Negatives	(28)	(28)
	No.	%
Rubbish awful / overflowing / bins	10	36
Teenagers – smoking – drinking – drugs - litter	5	18
Paths - poor condition/ need repair	4	14
Toilets	3	11
Chalking on paths	2	7
Dog poo	2	7
Shouldn't allow dogs	1	4
Damage to trees	1	4
Not at well looked after since gardeners gone	1	4
Busy with bikes / too fast	1	4
Too child orientated	1	4
Slightly too clean	1	4
Too posh	1	4
Café unreliable	1	4
Coffee too expensive	1	4
Spontaneous Neutral comments/suggestions	(16)	(16)
	No.	%
Playground equipment/ swings	6	38
Café - longer hours	2	13
Lockable gates	1	6
More bins	1	6
More activities	1	6

Would like to take dog off lead	1	6
Concerned as to what dog control orders may mean (no dogs in future)	1	6
Sink logs into ground	1	6
Ban smoking	1	6
Prune trees	1	6
1 o'clock club	1	6

NB – Very low base of respondents for % Negatives and Neutral comments

INTERVIEWER:

PLEASE CIRCLE THE RELEVANT NUMBER CODE TO THE RIGHT OF THE ANSWERS. IF RESPONDENT IS IN GROUP CODE ANSWER GIVEN BY RESONDENT ONLY

START AT C

A Respondent No _____ (1)

B Date: 27 September 2012 (2)
1

C Time: (3)
7.00 - 8.59 a.m.1
9.00 - 10.59 a.m. 2
11.00 a.m. - 12.59 p.m. 3
1.00 - 2.59 p.m.4
3.00 - 4.59 p.m. 5
5.00 - 6.59 p.m. 6

D Weather (4)

Sunny / fine / bright 1
Overcast / cloudy / dull 2
Damp / raining 3

1 What is your MAIN reason for visiting the park today?

(5)
playing games1
cycling / scooting 2
having lunch /tea /picnic /coffee 3
meeting friends4
running / exercise 5
dog walking 6
relaxation7
crossing the park 8
sunbathing 9
taking children to / from school10
Other _____ 20

		(9)	
A:	11 - 18	1	
B:	19 - 29	2	C: 30 - 54
3	D:55 & over	4	

2 How many people are in your party?

	(6)
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5 or more	5

3 How many children in each of the following age groups are in your party?

	<u>5 & under</u>	<u>6 to 10</u>
	(7)	(8)
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5 or more	5	5

4 Please could you tell which of these age groups you fall into: A, B, C or D?

5 Please could you tell me your postcode?

	(10)	SW19 1
SW20	2	
CR	3	
KT	4	
SM	5	
Other _____	6	

6 Are there any comments you wish to make about the Gardens' restoration?

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US TODAY

**Merton Leisure Facilities & Technical Group
Contact Information**

Contact	Name	Telephone Number	Email address
Head of Leisure and Greenspaces Manager	Doug Napier	020 8545 3657	doug.napier@merton.gov.uk
Parks Support	David Byles	07808 906288	david.byles@merton.gov.uk
Park Manager	Danny Lovelock	07808 906284	danny.lovelock@merton.gov.uk
Tree Officer	David Lofthouse	020 8545 3659	david.lofthouse@merton.gov.uk
General Enquiries		020 8545 3677	leisure@merton.gov.uk
Community Park Warden	Jil Hall	07742 633760	jil.hall@merton.gov.uk

Marketing, PR and promotions strategy 2009/2013 Reviewed and re-adopted January 2014

This strategy has been devised to ensure that all the events and activities recommended within the Action Plan are advertised and promoted to a wide audience within the local community.

The target audience is all members of the public living within the community in the vicinity of the gardens and visitors to the area. This must include individuals and community groups currently excluded through lack of information.

Existing events currently organised through Friends of South Park Gardens will be included in this strategy as all events will be dependent on volunteers organised through the Friends group.

The Community Park Warden and the Friends of South Park Gardens will deliver this strategy.

Targets

- To identify key audiences and to keep them informed, through a variety of appropriate outputs of the Gardens and the range of activities and events available there.
- To promote the Gardens as widely as possible to increase their usage.
- To obtain feedback through regular contact to collect information on levels of satisfaction.
- To coordinate communications (where relevant) with the Council's communications department.

Audiences

Existing users of the Gardens

Potential new users of the Gardens

Community Groups which are existing or potential users of the Gardens

Local businesses

Churches

Old peoples' homes

Schools, play groups etc

The local media

Outputs

- 3 newsletters in years 1, 4 & 5 (2008, 2011, 2012)
- 4 newsletters a year in years 2 – 3.
- Website
- Facebook page
- Emails to members of the Friends and other contacts (meet up groups)
- Event posters and banners
- Event fliers to be delivered door to door
- Notices on park notice boards
- Annual user survey
- Promotion through editorial in local media
- Press releases to:
 1. Wimbledon Guardian
 2. Wimbledon post
 3. Surrey Comet
 4. Time & Leisure
 5. SW magazine
 6. Parents News
 7. Child of Wimbledon
 8. Wimbledon and Raynes Park Directory
 9. My Merton

Budget

The estimated budget is £4,800 in total - £1,600 per year to cover 4 newsletters, fliers and posters in the first three years. Wherever possible, sponsorship money will be obtained from local businesses to cover costs.

Banners

Banners will be ordered for any of the annual events, where deemed appropriate; at an average cost of £25 per banner. These events could include:

- Easter Egg Hunt – March/April
- Annual Picnic in the Park – June
- Music Festival - July

- Teddy Bears' Picnic – July
- Fireworks & Bonfire Party – November

Newsletters

Newsletters are designed by the borough's design department and printed through the printing facility. Each newsletter currently costs approx. £700 to produce and (max) £160 to deliver through the Friends. The overall budget for the year's PR is £1600.

Using the Friends Group to deliver has reduced the delivery costs. The fee charged has been donated back into the project. 3,000 leaflets are generally distributed throughout the southern part of Trinity ward (bounded by Queens Road, the Broadway and Haydons road)

Some of the event fliers will be sponsored or can be covered by the arts & events budget.

Website

A website has been set up for the Gardens and this should be regularly updated with information about events and activities allowing users to download appropriate information.

Facebook page

The Gardens should have a Facebook page which will help with contacting FB users.

Annual User Survey

As part of the HLF project a regular annual user survey will be undertaken to collect relevant information about the Gardens including user numbers and levels of satisfaction.

Emails

Regular emails will be sent to members of the Friends, via their database to update members on forthcoming events and with requests for volunteers.

The media

The media will be used to disseminate information about the Gardens and also to promote the gardens and specific events. Press releases will be co-ordinated through the Council's Communications department and the Community Park Warden.

Review of Strategy

This strategy will be reviewed in 2012 when the relevant funding from the HLF will be coming to an end (March 2013). Decisions will have to be taken regarding future marketing and promotion of the Gardens.

Current Council Byelaws

The London Borough of Merton's generic byelaws for its parks and open spaces, approved and implemented in 1992, apply at Dundonald Recreation Ground. These are reproduced in their entirety below.

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

BYELAWS FOR PUBLIC WALKS, PLEASURE GROUNDS AND OPEN SPACES

September 1992

Byelaws made by the Council of the London Borough of Merton under section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875. Sections 12 and 15 of the Open Spaces Act 1906 and Section 15 of the Open Spaces Act 1906 with regard to public walks, pleasure grounds or open spaces.

INTERPRETATION

1. In these byelaws:

'the council' means the Council of the London Borough of Merton.

'the pleasure ground' means the pleasure grounds listed in the attached schedule 1.

2. An act necessary to the proper execution of his duty in the pleasure ground by an officer of the Council, or any act which is necessary to the proper execution of any contract with the Council shall not be an offence under these Byelaws.

OPENING AND CLOSING TIMES

3. On any day on which a pleasure ground is open to the public, provided the pleasure ground is fenced and has lockable gates, no person shall enter it before the time or enter or remain in it after the time appointed

WALLS, BARRIERS, ETC

4. No person shall in the pleasure ground without reasonable excuse:
 - (i) Climb any wall or fence in or enclosing the pleasure ground, or any tree, or any barrier, railing post or other erection.
 - (ii) Remove or displace any barrier, railing, post, or seat or any part of any erection or ornament, or any implement provided for the use in the laying out or maintenance of the pleasure ground.

CATTLE, SHEEP, GOATS, ETC

5. No person shall except in pursuance of a lawful agreement with the Council, or otherwise in the exercise of any lawful right or privilege, bring or cause to be brought into the pleasure ground any cattle, sheep, goats, or pigs or any beast of draught or burden.

VEHICLES

6. (i) No person shall, without reasonable excuse, ride or drive a cycle, motor cycle, motor vehicle, or any other mechanically propelled vehicle in the pleasure ground, or bring or cause to be brought into the pleasure ground a motor cycle, motor vehicle, trailer or any other mechanically propelled vehicle (other than a

cycle), except in any part of the pleasure ground where there is a right of way for that class of vehicle

(ii) If the council has set apart a space in the pleasure ground for use by vehicles of any class, the byelaw shall not prevent the riding or driving of those vehicles in the space so set apart, or on a route, indicated by signs placed in conspicuous positions, between it and the entrance to the pleasure ground.

(iii) This byelaw shall not extend to invalid carriages.

(iv) In this byelaw:

“cycle” means a bicycle, a tricycle, or cycle have four or more wheels, not being in any case a motorcycle or motor vehicle.

“invalid carriage” means a vehicle, whether mechanically propelled or not, the unladen weight of which does not exceed 150 kilograms, the width of which does not exceed 0.85 metres, and which has been constructed or adapted for use

“motor cycle” means a mechanically propelled vehicle, not being an invalid carriage, with less than four wheels and the weight of which unladen does not exceed 410 kilograms;

“motor vehicle” means a mechanically propelled vehicle, not being an invalid carriage, intended or adapted for use on roads;

“trailer” means a vehicle drawn by a motor vehicle and includes a caravan.

7. No person who brings a vehicle into the pleasure ground shall wheel or station it over or upon:-

(i) any flower bed, shrub, or plant, or any ground in course of preparation as a flower bed, or for the growth of any shrub or plant:

(ii) any part of the pleasure ground where the Council by a notice board fixed or set up in some conspicuous position in the pleasure ground prohibit it being wheeled or stationed.

KEEPING OFF THE GRASS

8. No person shall in the pleasure ground walk, run, stand, sit or lie upon

(i) Any grass, turf or other place where adequate notice to keep off such grass, turf or other place is exhibited;

Provided that such notice shall not apply to more than one fifth of the area of the pleasure ground;

(ii) Any flower bed, shrub or plant, or any ground in course of preparation as a flower bed, or for the growth of any tree, shrub or plant.

PLANTS

9. No person shall in the pleasure grounds remove any soil or plant

ORNAMENTAL LAKES, PONDS, STREAMS ANY OTHER WATERS

10. No person shall in the pleasure ground:-

(i) Bathe, wade or wash in any ornamental lake, pond, stream or other water or areas set aside for toy boats;

Provided that this Byelaw shall not be deemed to prohibit wading in any water which, by a notice set up in a conspicuous position near thereto, shall be set apart by the council for use as a paddling pool or a water activity area.

(ii) Without reasonable excuse foul or pollute any such water

FISHING

11. No person shall without lawful excuse or authority in the pleasure ground kill, molest or intentionally disturb any animal or fish or engage in hunting, shooting or fishing or the setting of traps or nets or the laying of snares.

This byelaw shall not prohibit any fishing, which may be authorised by the Council at Cannon Hill Common.

FIRES

12. No person shall light a fire in the pleasure ground or place or throw or let fall a lighted match or any other thing so as to be likely to cause a fire.

Provided that this byelaw shall not apply to any events held in pursuance of an agreement with the council.

GAMES

13. Where the council set apart any such part of the pleasure ground as may be fixed by the Council, and described in the notice board affixed or set up in some conspicuous position in the pleasure grounds, for the purpose of any game specified in the notice board, which, by reason of the rules or manner of playing, or the prevention of damage, danger, or discomfort to any person in the pleasure ground may necessitate at any time during the continuance of the game, the exclusive use by the player or players of any space in such parts of the pleasure grounds – a person shall not in any space elsewhere in the pleasure ground play or take part in any game so specified in such a manner as to exclude persons not playing or taking part in the game from the use of such a space.

14. A person resorting to the pleasure ground and playing or taking part in any game for which the exclusive use of any space in the pleasure ground has been set apart shall:-

- (i) not play on the space any game other than the game for which it is set apart;
- (ii) in preparing for playing and in playing, use reasonable care to prevent undue interference with the proper use of the pleasure ground by other persons;
- (iii) when a space is already occupied by other players not begin to play thereon without their permission;
- (iv) where the exclusive use of the space has been granted by the Council for the playing of a match, not play on that space later than a quarter of an hour before the time fixed for the beginning of the match unless taking part therein;
- (v) except where the exclusive use of the space has been granted by the Council for the playing of a match in which he/she is taking part, not use the space for a longer time than two hours continuously, if any other player or players make known their wish to use the space

15. No person shall in any part of the pleasure ground which may have been set apart by the Council for any game play or take part in any game when the state of the ground or other cause makes it unfit for use and a notice is set up in some conspicuous position prohibiting play in that part of the pleasure ground.

CHILDREN'S PLAY EQUIPMENT

16. No person who has attained the age of 14 shall use any apparatus in the pleasure ground which, by notice fixed on or near thereto, has been set apart for the exclusive use of persons under the age of 14

GOLF

17. No person shall in the pleasure ground, drive, chip or pitch a hard golf ball except on land set aside by the Council for use as a golf course, golf driving range, golf practice area, pitch and putt course or putting course.

PROHIBITION OF GAMES

18. No person shall play or take part in any game of cricket or football or any other organised ball game nor use a hard ball in any of the grounds known as Cannizaro Park, John Innes Park, Holland Gardens, Nelson Gardens and South Park Gardens

Provided that this byelaw shall not prohibit the playing of tennis, netball, bowls and putting in the parts of the grounds known as Holland Gardens and John Innes Park, which have been set aside for these purposes.

MODEL AIRCRAFT

19. (a) For the purpose of this Byelaw "model aircraft" means an aircraft which either weighs not more than 5kg without its fuel or is for the time being exempted (as a model aircraft) from the provisions of the Air Navigation Order, and "power-driven" means driven by the combustion of petrol vapour or other combustible vapour or other combustible substances.
- (b) No person shall –
- (i) In the part of the pleasure ground so set apart release any power-driven model aircraft for flight or control the flight of such an aircraft; or
- (ii) Cause any such aircraft to take off or land in the path of the pleasure ground so set apart unless it is attached to a control line and is kept under effective control in the grounds and on the days and during the hours specified in the following table:

Name of Ground	Days	Hours
Cannon Hill Common	Mondays – Saturdays	10.00 - 21.00
	Sundays	10.00 - 13.00
Figges Marsh	Mondays, Wednesday and Friday	18.00 - 21.30
Morden Park	Monday – Saturday	10.00 - 21.00
	Sundays	10.00 - 13.00

Appendix 9.

Inspection Schedule

#	Activity	Frequency	Responsibility
1	Main Areas		
	Inspection Sweep & litter pick	Daily/Monthly 2 x weekly in winter	Parks Staff; Technicians Parks Staff; Technicians
2	Toilets & Staff Accommodation		
	Lock & unlock outside (public) toilets	Daily	Rangers
	Inspect all areas	Daily	"
	Clean toilets, Provide equipment for functions/events	Daily As required	" Friends Group
3	Amenity Grass		
	Litter pick Mowing/cutting	As necessary 10x per year	Parks Staff Parks Tractor Team
4	Paths		
	Sweep & litter pick Complete	As required Quarterly	Parks Staff "
5	Shrub Beds and borders		
	Prune shrubs & mulch Weeding	Annually As required	Parks Staff "
6	Gates		
	Unlock Lock	Daily	Rota of volunteers LBM staff
7	Litter & Dog Bins		
	Empty litter bins Empty dog bins		Parks Staff Environmental Services "
8	Interpretive Panels & Information Boards		
	Remove graffiti Update information	As required As required	Parks Staff; Friends Group "

Plan of Gardeners' Compound Area



