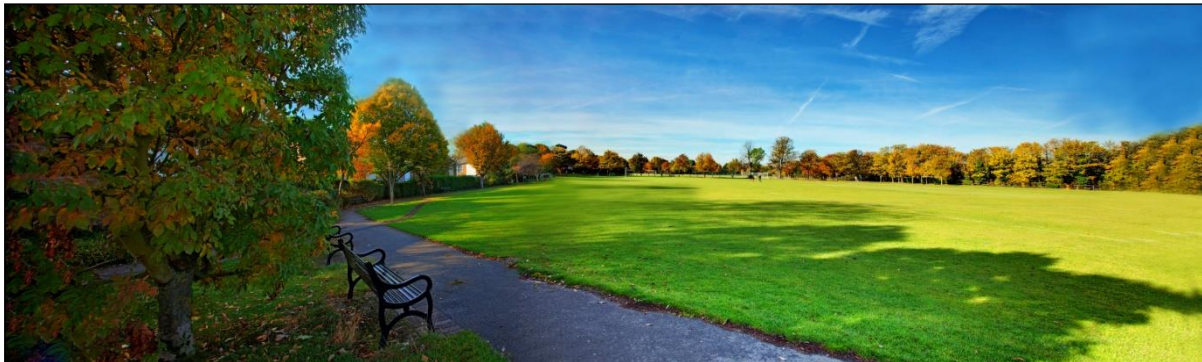




Abbey Management Plan

2018 – 2023



This document relating to Abbey Recreation Ground and Merton Park Green Walk was produced with the assistance of Willmore End Residents Association (WERA), with input from idverde and Dr David Channon (a local zoologist & ecologist on wildlife improvements).



Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this management plan for one of the finest examples of Merton's cherished green spaces.

The borough's parks have always been greatly valued, however this year more residents than ever have benefitted from having good quality, well-managed green spaces on their doorsteps. Throughout the pandemic our parks and green spaces have been a haven for residents to meet friends, exercise, relax and enjoy the natural environment.

Merton continues to strive to enhance and protect the valuable biodiversity, landscapes and heritage in its parks and open spaces. This work is being carried out in collaboration with idverde, our contractors who have considerable expertise, and our partners in the local community particularly the park friends group.

The Council, in partnership with our local stakeholders, is pleased to support and submit this application for Abbey Recreation Ground. We welcome the opportunity for the investment made in this valued park to be formally recognised by the prestigious Green Flag Awards.

Should you require any further information with regards to this application please email publicspace@merton.gov.uk

Alternatively contact Doug Napier our Greenspaces Manager on 020 8545 3657 or doug.napier@merton.gov.uk.

Councillor Natasha Irons

Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces

Merton's Vision

"To provide attractive, high quality spaces with facilities that are modern, safe, clean, sustainable and accessible to all and that encourage healthier lifestyles, strong inclusive communities and an appreciation of nature".



Image: Bluebells on the Merton Park Green Walks (planted by local residents)

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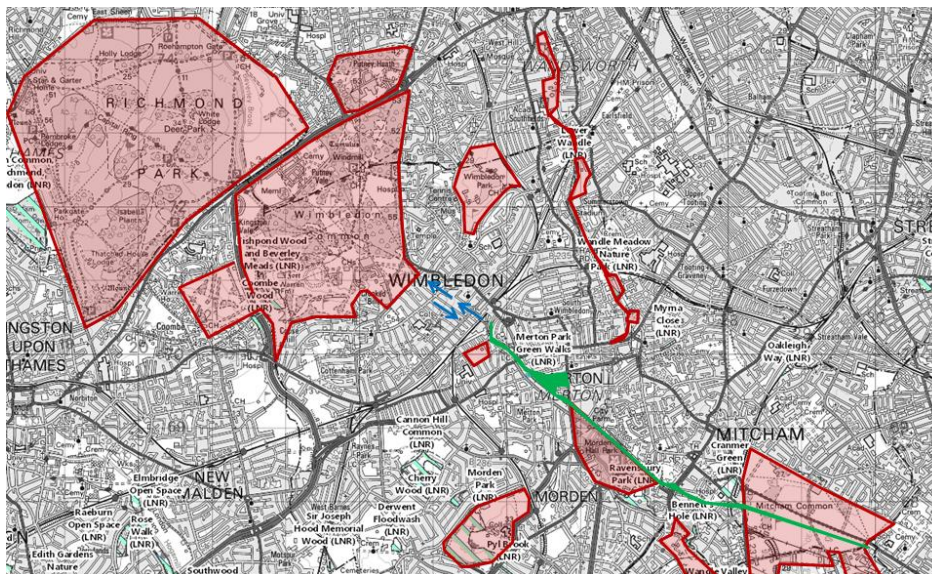
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1 Introduction

Abbey recreation ground is one of the London Borough of Merton's most significant sports grounds. It is located approximately in the centre of the borough, in the Abbey Ward. The 3.93 hectare recreation ground and nature trail (the nature trail is known as Merton Park Green Walks) provides for organised sports and games, children's play, and quiet enjoyment. Its open nature and well-maintained appearance greatly increase the local urban amenity of the residential area. It is undoubtedly one of the borough's most popular and well-loved open spaces.

The green space is an important community asset and forms part of the wider structural open space network of Greater London. LB Merton recognises that its open spaces are an important community asset. They contribute to healthier lifestyles, social cohesion and safer communities. The recreation ground and nature trail provides for a variety of active and passive leisure activities and organised sports. The space is popular and is very highly valued by local residents, the adjacent primary school and is a popular destination for both locally-based and visiting sports clubs.

The Merton Park Green Walks form a valuable link for wildlife between Mitcham Common, Morden Hall Park and the associated Wandle Valley, Wimbledon Common & Richmond Park (Marked in Red on the map below). The Green Walks, (Marked in Green) goes a long way towards bridging the gap between these two major wildlife locations and helps prevent isolated islands of wildlife and flora arising. The blue arrows show the distance of about half a mile that separates the areas if the Green Walks link is maintained and enhanced.



Since the Green Walks was originally established it has suffered a little due to lack of maintenance funds to prevent overgrowth of some species to the detriment of others.

Latterly, the Willmore End Residents Association (WERA), in consultation with Merton Council officers has raised funds to carry out improvement works to the Walks and the surrounding area. This includes wildlife hedges along the tramway boundary of the playing fields and the provision of bird, bee and bat boxes along sections A & B of the walk.

They have sought and found sponsorship for these works as well as contributing their own time and labour. Dr David Channon and Microbee

Group have offered valuable help and guidance to WERA in relation to advice, reports and placement of the various boxes, on a pro bono basis. Dr Channon is the owner of Parcel D referred to later in this document.

This document emphasises the present condition of this combined green space and its importance to the local community and others that use or live near the space. Furthermore, the aims and objectives for the sustainable future management and development of this green space are presented and structured around the eight key criteria of the Green Flag Award:

1. Creating a Welcoming Space
2. Providing a Park that is Healthy, Safe and Secure
3. A Park that is 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

Action Plan Progress Summary

Progress against the Action Plan projects in Section 6 of this management plan is summarised below. Projects are added to this list upon completion.

Description	Objective Number	Date Completed	Funding Source	Value (£000s)
Install 'Welcome to Abbey Recreation Ground' X3 archways installed & wording highlighted in gold	1A	2018/19	Capital	£15k
Repair and repaint railings and gate at primary entrance to site	1B	2018/19	Volunteer	£5k
Create new entrance bed in car park next to the changing rooms (60m2) Maintain	1C	2018/19	Volunteer	£1k
Continue to cut back self seeded and regenerating sycamores and other vegetation at the Morden Road entrance opposite Merantun Way to make it more inviting	1E	October 2019 and ongoing	Volunteer	£0.5k
Add native species whips to fill gaps in the hedges at the south and east sides of parcel C	1F	November 2019	Volunteer	£0.5k
Maintain the new wildflower feature in Abbey recreation ground	1G	Ongoing	Idverde / Volunteer	
Expose perimeter path edging in the recreation ground	5A	Ongoing	Idverde	
Improve sight lines around the toilet block. Remove existing planting and replant using lower level shrubs	5B	November 2019	Idverde / Volunteer	
Review management of sedum roof and research the benefits of additional nutrients.	11	Nutrients added April 2019	Council / Volunteer	
Remove remaining old fencing next to the tennis courts Ongoing - 70% complete	11F	March & December 2019	Council	
Overgrown area surrounding tennis courts cleared of brambles, abandoned camping equipment and sundry accumulated rubbish. Wood chips added to suppress weeds. Courts cleaned.	11	December 2019	Volunteer / Idverde	£3k

Footpath resurface along Merton Green Walks	12	2020	Council	85k

2 Strategic Context

2.1 Introduction

This Management Plan sets out the vision for the improvement and management of the green space and provides detailed objectives and action plans to direct Merton Greenspaces team 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 decisions it makes.

Economic environment

The UK is experiencing an uncertain economic future; with opinions divided about whether it is still suffering from a recession, or whether it is now in recovery; 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 further budget savings on its medium term fiscal strategy. This need for efficiency savings will inform the Council's overall targets and objectives.

COVID19

The global epidemic has effected Councils up and down the country. As an authority our main priority has to been to protect and shield the most vulnerable in our society whilst still delivering essential services. Parks have been at the forefront having experienced unprecedented visit numbers as people seek to take daily exercise in the fresh air. Some facilities have had to be temporarily closed (such as outdoor gyms or MUGA's) during lockdown periods. We continue to monitor and adhere to government guidance so that we can serve our residents.

2.2 National Political Context

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.

Previous governments had a range of initiatives in support of parks and Greenspaces, 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 Political Context

The Government Office for London has been 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 Greenspaces 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.

Local Political Context

London Borough of Merton has been under majority Labour control since May 2014. Previously it was under no overall control with Labour undertaking a minority administration. The seats held are as follows: Labour: 33; Conservative: 17; Merton Park residents (Independent): 3; Liberal Democrat: 7.

Abbey Ward, where the green space is situated, has two Labour councillors; Eleanor Stringer and Ben Butler, and one Conservative councillor, Nigel Benbow. Abbey ward has a population of 10,323.

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.

2.3 Merton's Community and Business Plans

Merton's Community Plan 2020-2026, has been developed and implemented by the Merton Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership), which sets out the overall direction and vision for the borough until 2026 plus a set of commitments and activities to achieve this vision. The Community Plan was refreshed in 2020 to take into account demographic, legislative and policy changes, and now sets out a vision, pledges to deliver the vision and details of achievements to date under the following headings:

- Merton: A place to work
- A healthy and fulfilling life
- Better opportunities for youngsters
- Keeping Merton moving
- Being safe and strong
- Contributing to your community

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:

- Children's Trust
- Health & Wellbeing Board
- Safer & Stronger Communities
- Sustainable Communities & Transport

The Community 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. 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.

We will deliver services that customers want and need and, where possible, involve our customers in service specification and design.

Delivering quality and value services in an era of significantly reduced resources will require strong and determined leadership. A single business view is essential to ensure a 'One Council' approach is followed in everything we do. Leaders at all levels will be visible and lead by example.

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 heath land re-creation and pond restoration works.

For further information go to:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/communityplan>

The Merton Business Plan 2020 - 2024, 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 has recently been developed and refined through a ‘Target Operating Model’ process which in turn has fed in a service plan.

For further information go to:

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy/finance/budgets>

2.4 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**, was supported and directed 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.

2.5 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

2.6 Merton Sports Strategy

In 2011 the Council recognised the need to obtain an in-depth sports pitch analysis to enable it to deliver services and facilities in a strategic manner giving a more balanced service provision borough-wide. This will enable the Council to provide facilities where they are most useful both to the local authority and the local community.

This was achieved by commissioning specialist consultants to survey local outdoor sports service provision and facilities and draw up some key recommendations, The Sports Pitch Strategy, albeit still in draft form at the time of writing, gives an insight into the key improvements in terms of the type and location of facilities that will best benefit local communities within Merton.

In 2019/20 a new piece of work is now finalised and can be viewed here:

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/local-plan-research>

2.7 Marketing and Environmental policies

Merton Council is committed to the principles of ‘sustainable development’ and ‘Local Agenda 21’. The Merton Environmental Action Plan stems from these commitments.

Achieving sustainable development requires making decisions that take into account relevant environmental, social and economic factors. Merton is committed to integrating these three areas across Council policy in all departments.

Merton Council recognises the need for urgent action to address environmental problems. The Merton Environmental Action Plan complements and links with other Merton strategies and plans which address sustainable development issues, such as the Economic Development Strategy, the Community Plan and the Crime and Disorder Strategy, amongst others.

The aim of Merton’s Environmental Action Plan is to:

“Encourage and facilitate the involvement of residents, businesses and

other organisation in helping to create an environmentally sustainable Merton, in accordance with the wider principles of sustainable development”.

To achieve this aim the plan needs to:

- ☐ Encourage, inspire and support willingness, across the different communities in Merton, to take action to help the environment;
- ☐ Highlight opportunities for actions that can be taken by different sectors of the community to enhance the environment;
- ☐ Provide information and celebrate achievement in supporting the environment.

For further information about the practical steps Merton Council is making to improve our environment go to:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/la21>

2.8 Significance of Abbey Rec. & Green Walks

The area is an important component of the overall Merton open space network. 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 illustrates how Abbey Rec. & Green Walks contributes to Merton's strategic objectives.

Abbey Recreation Ground & Merton Park Green Walks:

Merton's strategic objectives

1. Sustainable Communities	2. Safer, Stronger Merton	3. Healthier Communities	4. Older People	5. Children & Young People
Active friends group	Safe & accessible open space	Various sports provisions - football, tennis and cricket		Good quality & range of play equipment

	Popular venue with good natural Surveillance, including CCTV	Good footpath network – popular with joggers and “buggy fit” types	Safe & accessible footpaths throughout	Sports provisions
Local biodiversity features	Regular site inspections & well-maintained facilities	Play equipment	Good quality & frequent park benches	
Excellent public transport links combined with limited parking on-site & restrictions off-site	Good liaison & engagement with local community & safety agencies			
Landscape/green infrastructure improvement projects	Popular, safe walking route between Morden Road and Dorset and Kingston Roads			Safe car-free environment

3 Abbey Recreation Ground & Merton Park Green Walks

3.1 Site Details

Name Abbeyrecreation ground & Merton Park Green Walks

(Also known locally as Abbey recreation ground and nature trail or Green Walks)

Address Morden Road, SW19

Contacts General enquiries: 020 8545 3677 or leisure@merton.gov.uk

WERA: <http://www.wera.info>

Web: www.merton.gov.uk/leisure/parks

Grid Reference TQ 253 697

Designation Public Park & Open Space

Ownership London Borough of Merton

Size 3.93 hectares

Type Recreation ground / nature trail

Legal Interest London Borough of Merton Land Owner

Byelaws See Appendix 6.

Access Access from: Morden Road, Willmore End, Melbourne Road, Rutlish Road and Dorset Road

Opening hours: Monday to Friday: 08.00 hrs until dusk
Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holidays 09.00 hrs until dusk

Local Facilities	1 Cricket pitch
	Children's play area
	2 football pitches
	3 tennis courts/ball courts (at neighbouring site Nursery Road PF)
	Seasonal pond
	Changing rooms
	Toilet block
	Car park
Transport	Tram: Morden Road and Merton Park Train: Wimbledon Station. Underground: Northern Line - South Wimbledon Station. (3 minutes walk). Buses: 93 & 470
Parking	19 on-site parking spaces for sports players; on-street parking (subject to local restrictions).

4 Description

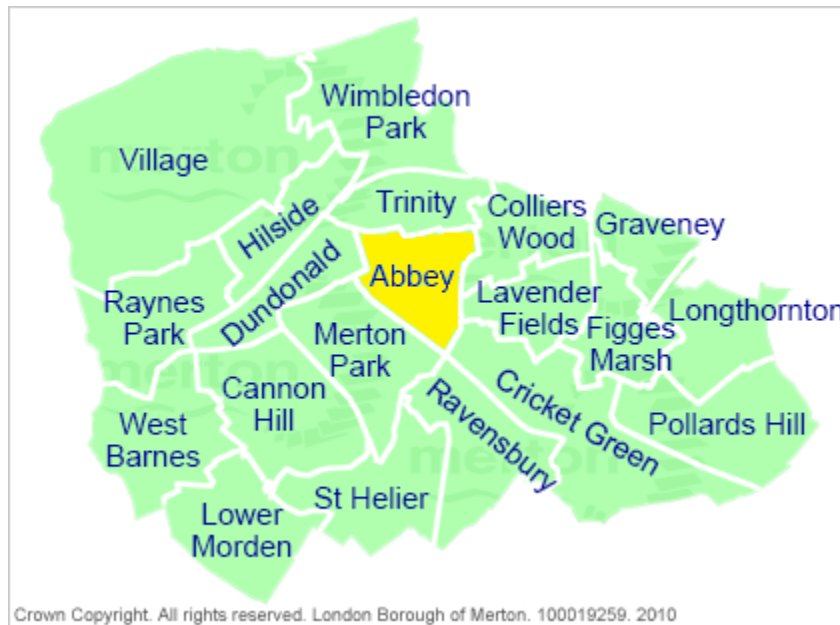
4.1 Location

Abbey recreation ground is located on Morden Road, in the Abbey Ward, approximately in the centre of the London Borough of Merton. The main vehicular entrance to the playing field area is off the Morden Road opposite Jubilee Way. There are four pedestrian entrances, one in each corner of ground. Two are off the Morden Road, one links to Willmore End and the fourth provides access to the Merton Park Green Walks.

The Recreation Ground is predominantly open green space that is used for playing fields, with a perimeter path and trees. To the north is a woodland path following part of the old railway line between Merton Park and Morden Road, improved in the 1990s as part of Merton Park Green Walks.

4.2: Access

The site has open access throughout except for the small triangular woodland area adjacent to the Croydon Tramlink line, known as Parcel D. There are access points via Morden Road through a metal kissing gate and from Abbey Recreation Ground in the eastern corner. A footpath constructed in 1994 connects this area to another entrance via a footpath between the western end of Melbourne Road and Dorset Road. There is another access point from Rutlish Road via the footpath starting adjacent to the old station building.



London Borough of Merton



Abbey Ward



Map showing the four parcels of land that comprise the Green Walks

4.3 Local significance and usage

The Merton Park Green Walks forms a valuable link for wildlife between Mitcham Common, Morden Hall Park and the associated Wandle Valley, Wimbledon Common & Richmond Park. The Green Walks reduces the gap between these two major wildlife locations and helps prevent isolated islands of wildlife and flora arising. Trees along the rest of the tramline and in back gardens helps wildlife bridge the remaining gap, a distance of about half a mile. The site is essentially a Brownfield site and the bulk of the current tree and plant cover is self-set and garden invasive rather than completely natural. This has been enhanced in recent years by both WERA and Merton with the addition of species of trees and plants to enhance the ecology and wildlife.

Since the Green Walks was originally established, it has suffered a little due to lack of maintenance funds to prevent overgrowth of some species to the detriment of others. Also, the current paths across the old station platforms and along the Green Walks, with the exception of the tarmac path that follows the line extending from the end of the Dorset Road/Sheridan Road junction through to Melbourne road, are in a poor state. The dressing surface was too fine when laid and has become fluidised during wet weather allowing it to be splashed to the side by passing foot and bike traffic. The result is that the hardcore is exposed down most of its length and the displaced top surface now forms a bund on either side of the paths thereby trapping water on the surface during wet weather and leaving a string of muddy puddles. This makes passage difficult for several months of the year. The first 40 metres of the long footpath, starting at the Morden Road entrance, was much improved when resurfaced with Coxwell gravel in 2012. The rest of that path, and the others, need to be brought up to the same standard.

There is no other area of public open green space of nature conservation interest within a fairly large area north of Morden Hall Park so the site addresses a local deficiency. This factor was significant in the site being scheduled as Borough Grade 1. The woodland areas of the eastern section of the site, together with the Orchard Project adjacent to the Tramlink line are the only significant areas of woodland in the vicinity. The site provides an opportunity for undisturbed wildlife, green space and a means of walking from Kingston Road to Morden Road away from traffic and fumes. The area is very popular with local residents and is close to four schools whose pupils could use the site for their environmental studies as well as exercise. The recreation ground is used regularly by a wide variety of football teams and clubs. In the summer it is used for cricket. There are two football pitches, a cricket pitch and modern changing rooms.

The park is also popular with dog walkers and individuals getting fit, some with personal trainers. The park is level and has a perimeter path which is used extensively by joggers.

4.4 History of the area

The name Abbey is due to most of what is now known as Merton Abbey falling within an area that, in the 12th Century, was known as Merton Priory. Merton Priory became an important centre of learning until it was destroyed during the reign of Henry VIII. Several sections of the priory wall still exist.

Abbey Recreation Ground was once within the lands of Merton Place estate owned by Lord Nelson, where he lived from 1801-1805 immediately prior to his death at the Battle of Trafalgar. In the 19th century the estate was largely built over for housing.

The railway line from Wimbledon to West Croydon, via Mitcham, opened in 1855. In 1868 came the Wimbledon, Tooting and Streatham line, and on the same day a branch from Tooting via Merton Abbey Merton was opened. A station called Lower Merton was opened on the Merton Abbey branch at the same time but this had no platform for passengers. This was rectified in 1870 and in 1887 the name of the station was changed from Lower Merton to Merton Park.

Due to low usage the last passenger train to run through Merton Park on the Tooting branch was in 1929, and after that only freight trains ran on the line. All traffic finally ceased in May 1975, the tracks between Merton Park and Tooting being taken up soon after. Half of the old line has now vanished, but two substantial lengths remain: between Myrna Close and the end of Victoria Road and to the west of Morden Road where the old track bed forms much of the site described here. Part of the footbridge, that once straddled the line now stands at Corfe Castle railway station.



Since the line closed nature has taken over and the area has been colonised by a range of plants and animals. Up until 1994 the site was relatively unused due to poor access, and had been threatened with destruction in a proposal to extend Merantun Way through to Kingston Road. This proposal was scrapped and in early 1994 a granite dust footpath along the old scalping base of the railway line and two new entrances leading into Abbey Recreation Ground and Morden Road were installed. This provided formal access through the site for walkers and prevented further damage to fences and vegetation bordering Abbey Recreation Ground. All paths and gates are accessible to wheelchairs.

With the exception of the Orchard Project (Parcel D), all of the land to the east of the footpath from Dorset Road to Melbourne Road is currently

controlled by the Leisure Services Committee of Merton Council and forms parcels A and B of the proposed Local Nature Reserve. The land shown as parcel C is currently held by Environmental Services but is to be transferred to Leisure Services Committee control. Parcel D is the Merton Orchard project and it privately owned.

4.5 Geology & Soil

Recreation Ground

A Sandy loam type soil lying on gravel/sand subsoil with the underlying geology being an interglacial terrace. Well drained level and forming part of the wider flood plain of the Wandle Valley.

Green Walks

The Merton Park Green Walks has a loam type soil lying on a gravel/sand subsoil with the underlying geology being an interglacial terrace and seems to be fairly well drained. There is some soil mounding in the eastern area, possibly a result of dumping of material when or after the old railway line was removed. On top of the original soil is the ballast that was laid to level and support the original track which is limestone ballast for the most part. Parcel C was the sidings area of the Merton Park Station and the soil here contains numerous bits of brick, mortar, concrete and steel associated with the station use. This extends right across the footpath to the entrance to parcel D where brick and glass can be seen emerging from the soil underfoot.

4.6 Habitats, Flora & Fauna

Abbey recreation ground has no statutory nature conservation designations and no comprehensive surveys of the site's fauna or flora have been undertaken recently. As a relatively small urban recreation ground with a strong sporting component, its capacity to support a diverse range of wildlife species and habitats is limited although lesser spotted woodpeckers were spotted nesting there in 2012 and may have returned since. The northern side of the ground adjoins the Merton Park Green Walks, which is rich in wildlife.

The Merton Park Green Walks is best described as four adjoining parcels of land that vary in terms of their mix of flora and fauna. The following description of each parcel, extracted from the Green Walks Management Plan of February 1998, remains largely applicable.

4.6.1: Nature Conservation and Recreation

This mainly linear nature reserve comprises a range of urban habitats from open grassland to young secondary woodland that represent a fairly typical example of ecological succession on an abandoned railway line. There is little information on the small mammal and invertebrate interest of the site and this should be further investigated. The rail side habitats provide a valuable addition to the site, and extend as a green corridor nearly to Morden Hall Park.

The various trees and wild flowers planted in recent years will provide additional sources of pollen and nectar for both solitary and social bee species and increase the biodiversity of the Green Walks. This should result in a longer period of flower succession in the spring and summer and thus more resources for butterflies, moths and bees and other insects. This in turn should provide food sources to support the birds and bats that use the Green Walks. All of this should increase the visual interest of the

area for its human users.

4.6.2: Parcel A

This parcel comprises of a strip of land 200m by 15m running parallel to the Abbey Recreation Ground along the old railway line. The vegetation consists of typical wasteland species, with sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, dominating the upper canopy. Many of these are multi-stemmed which indicate that they were cut back in the past possibly when the line was still in use. Beneath this is a developing understory with ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, birch, *Betula pendula*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, cherry plum *Prunus cerasifera*, grey willow, *Salix cinerea*, and goat willow *Salix caprea*. Also present is a mixture of large amounts of snowberry *Symphoricarpo albus* var *laevigatus*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, and ivy *Hedera helix*, to be seen everywhere on the ground and clambering up some of the trees. Particularly near to the Morden Road exit there are a number of examples of the butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii*, which again typifies such urban wasteland habitats. A chain link fence separates this parcel from the playing field along which grows a patchy garden privet hedge.

The ground layer includes many common species with false oatgrass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvensis*, great mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, nettle *Urtica dioica*, black horehound *Ballota nigra*, garlic mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, common figwort *Scrophularia nodosa*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, bindweed *Calystegia silvatica* and Mugwort *Artemisia vulgaris* all being noted in 1997.

200 whips were planted along the then newly created footpath and entrance by Abbey Recreation Ground during 1994, including ash, hawthorn and wild rose *Rosa canina*.

4.6.3: Parcel B

This area comprises of a strip of land approximately 200 metres long and 30 metres wide ending at the path running from Dorset Road to Melbourne Road. The vegetation in the eastern section of the parcel has a large patch of multi-stemmed crack willow *Salix fragilis*. The understory layer is slightly less dense than parcel A and includes elder *Sambucus nigr*, and some hawthorns. The crack willows are maturing and are beginning to break up and fall over and some have recently been cut down and left in situ.

In 2013, with a Lottery Fund grant and technical assistance from Microbee, WERA constructed a small seasonal pond and surrounded it with wildflower meadow turf. The pond provides a source of water for wildlife for a few months of the year but is too small to retain water beyond the end of February most years. Birdsfoot trefoil and clover are abundant. Some thought should be given to increasing the width of the pond at some point as well as adding more wildflowers.



Image: Wildflower mini-meadow in Parcel B in 2012

The western section of this parcel is a mosaic of grassland, tall vegetation and bramble scrub with occasional small oaks *Quercus robur*, and ash trees. The grassland areas are quite diverse, probably because of the low fertility typical of such old railway land, and include rats-tail fescue *Vulpia myuros*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, false oatgrass and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. Common vetch *Vicia sativa*, ribbed melilot *Melilotus officinalis*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, wild onion *Allium vineale*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, mugwort *Artemisia vulgaris*, Canadian goldenrod *Solidago canadensis*, Michaelmas daisies *Aster* Sp., and a bridewort *Spiraea* sp. create an attractive floristic display providing late summer nectar sources for invertebrates.

The open grassland habitats are threatened by invasive species particularly the bramble patches which are cut back bi-annually. A few clumps of Japanese knotweed are also present in this parcel which are treated annually in an effort to eradicate them.

4.6.4: Parcel C: Station area

Parcel C is the most northerly section of the walk. It is important that it becomes a good jumping off and resting point for wildlife moving along the route. This should include food, water and shelter as a minimum.

The parcel C section consists of a roughly square parcel of land of some 4977 sq m. There is an tarmac path and cycle path from the Dorset Road/Sheridan Road to Melbourne Road. There is also a diagonal footpath across the plot from the tram crossing to the Rutlish Road corner and another footpath along the line of the old railway and Green Walks to reach the station and exiting in Rutlish road.

It is a mosaic of open grassland, tall herbaceous vegetation and scrub with some ash, hazel, hawthorn, alder, birch, yew and small areas of regenerating elm sucker which get re-infested with Dutch elm disease as soon as their bark becomes attractive enough for the beetle. The grassland areas are of similar composition to parcel B and are also being gradually lost to bramble and other invasives like sycamore. There is more Canadian goldenrod *Solidago canadensis* than in parcel B which makes a fine splash of yellow during the late summer but will need controlling.

Parcel C is a former railway station and yard and is now an attractive and peaceful spot. Growing on and around the old platforms are many trees and shrubs with ash and birch in particular threatening to break up the brickwork. Between the platforms is a shady area with bramble patches and tall herbs including some male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*. Apart from the track way, they are all that remain of the line that once connected to

Colliers Wood, which at was at one time used to shoot an Alfred Hitchcock film Ghost Train.

It is believed that the bramble scrub next to the Dorset/Melbourne footpath may conceal some concrete base supports for the 1893 iron footbridge that once crossed the site. The last existing part of this footbridge is now situated on the Swanage steam railway near Corfe castle in Dorset.

This footpath has moved several times in its history with the original path an extension of the Dorset road to the tramway stretch. The original line is still marked with concrete posts between the Parcel D allotment and the current path route but overgrown with bramble, holly, sycamore, hazel and goat willow. It now provides nesting opportunities for small birds such as the long tailed tit seen here last year.

Since the original Green Walk Management Plan was drawn up in 1998, the Parcel C area, including the land between it and Parcel D, has become increasing overgrown with bramble and as a result has lost its utility to some native species. Somewhere under this is a 14" water main connecting the roads either side.

This is an attractive and peaceful spot and the former platforms add some historical interest to the site.

4.6.5: Parcel D: Merton Orchard Project

This privately owned parcel consists of a small triangular area of woodland, an allotment and an orchard. It is bounded by the lines of two old footpaths that predate the railway and the former railway, now the tramway. One footpath used to extend from Branksome Road to a location in Dorset Road near the junction with Melrose road. The other ran from Sheridan Road across Dorset Road to intercept it. Later, when Melbourne Road was built, the second path was extended to link up with it. The first path fell into disuse when the railway line to Colliers Wood was built, the line of which now forms the Green Walks.

The second railway line necessitated a footbridge being built to cross both lines and was extended to join with Melbourne road as this was a straighter route. The Branksome path fell into disuse and all that remains apart from the section alongside the allotment is a fenced-in patch of brambles where the end of Branksome nearly links with the tarmac path alongside Parcel C which runs from Melbourne to Rutlish.

The net result of this is that the Orchard is now bounded by two 4M strips of what were public rights of way which now lead nowhere and are unused except by those accessing the allotment itself. These strips have over the years become totally overgrown and now support a variety of relatively mature sycamore, holly and elm trees as well as hazel, goat willow and brambles.

In the Orchard there is a well and three ponds that support frogs and newts and various insect species. Toads and Slow worms are occasionally seen there. The owner has set aside half of the land to provide understory cover along the tree-belt to enhance it and its utility to wildlife.

The owner has planted up the rest of the space with fruit trees of the "Merton" variety, developed by the John Innes research institute in Merton Park in the period from 1900 up to the 1950's. It is believed that there are now few places in the local area where any can be seen and the varieties are disappearing outside of the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale. There are now more varieties at the Merton Orchard Project site than anywhere else in the world with a total of 50 varieties including the non-Merton cross pollinators. Under the trees are native grasses and flowers, left un-mown for the most part to enhance its wildlife appeal.

The Wimbledon Beekeepers Association has a license to keep up to ten beehives in the Orchard. They use the site as a training apiary where new beekeepers can practice their craft with a little support from their fellows and under the watchful eye of a warden. It is hoped that these bees will provide local pollination, honey for the bee-keepers as well as perhaps an insect food source for passing birds.

There are open days annually in September when local visitors can visit the allotment, taste the fruit, learn about its history and about rootstocks and grafting and learn about the beekeepers too.

4.6.6: Fauna

The seeding plants often attract 'charms' of goldfinches in summer, and these delightful birds may breed on the site as they are also present in the breeding season. Other birds likely to be using the site for breeding are the migratory lesser whitethroat and blackcap and residents like the dunnock, greenfinch, blue tit, long tailed tit, song thrush and blackbird. Swifts and house martins feed over site benefiting from the site's invertebrate population and meadow brown butterflies are common on the grassland areas. The small triangle of woodland has long tailed tits, blackcaps and also whitethroats probably breeding. Large numbers of rooks can be seen flying over the length of the Green Walks in the morning and evening as they too commute to their feeding grounds. Butterflies seen on the site include holly blue, speckled wood, small tortoiseshell, orange tip, small white, peacock, meadow brown and small or Essex skippers. It is likely that most of these butterflies are breeding on the site.

Grasshoppers are more often being found in the meadow areas such as behind the garages. Apart from the Honeybees, five species of Bumble bees and a similar number of solitary bee species are regularly seen. Stag beetles are regularly found in the area.

Little is known of the small mammals present but it is likely that bank voles and wood mice are present as well as foxes, and pipistrelle bats have been observed feeding over the area at dusk.

Frogs and smooth newts breed annually in the Orchard project ponds and toads have been seen but not breeding.

4.6.7: Invasives

There are a number of non-native plant species present which have the potential to become dominant and thus reduce the diversity of the site. Of these it is only really necessary to eliminate Japanese knotweed because of its highly invasive nature and the ease with which it can be spread to other areas. The number of sycamore has been reduced over the past few years so that the woodland areas do not become dominated by it. Because of its speed of growth it needs regular thinning. The Canadian goldenrod need not be eradicated but should not be allowed to become too dominant in the grassland areas where it can be controlled by being pulled in late Summer or Autumn. Snowberry spreads mainly by suckering growth from its rhizomes and its spread should be monitored and controlled if necessary.

4.6.8 Trees

There are a number of tree species on the site with a variety of origins. Some, like the Elm which still survives through suckering are a relic of its farmland history. Others like the Oaks and Ash along the railway track are self set. There are also large numbers of Sycamore and some Willow up the track and Horse Chestnut along the tramline boundary. There are Cherry and London Plane along the Morden Road. There is an interesting stand of Damson by the garages and a good variety of under-story species including Hazel, Hawthorn and Holly. In the last ten years, WERA and Merton Council have sought to enhance both the number of species and their distribution by thinning out the Sycamore and inter-planting with other native species including Lime, Hazel and Yew to enhance the biodiversity. WERA have also been involved in under-planting native flowers and seeds

to add further enhancement. The tramway hedge line contains a variety of native tree species planted under the aegis of WERA in 2011 to enhance its wildlife benefits.

4.7 Facilities & features

Abbey recreation ground provides a range of facilities and services for formal and informal play, sport, recreation and educational opportunities for all ages. A broad layout plan of the site is reproduced as Appendix 3. This illustrates the location of its main features.

Changing rooms

The dilapidated changing rooms demolished and replaced in 2011 as a result of a fund raising initiative by WERA. Like the tennis courts at neighbouring Nursery Road PF, the changing rooms were financed by grants from the London Marathon Fund and Viridor Credits.



Image: Changing rooms in Abbey Recreation Ground



Image: sign on the changing rooms in Abbey recreation ground



Image: sedum roof on the changing rooms in Abbey recreation ground

Car park

The car park was resurfaced when the new changing rooms were constructed. There are parking spaces for up to 19 vehicles, including 2 disabled spaces.

Toilets

The public toilet block in the recreation ground was extensively refurbished in 2015 although the facilities are not currently in use, except for appropriate events and bookings. There are toilets in the modern changing rooms used by visiting football and cricket teams.



Image: Toilet block in Abbey recreation ground

Children's facilities

There is a fenced children's playground situated in one corner of the recreation ground. The play area provides a variety of play equipment for

0-14 year olds, and was substantially upgraded in The equipment is installed into wet-pour surfacing. All equipment is purchased, installed and maintained to British Safety Standards and the European Safety Standard for play equipment. The play equipment is inspected regularly by idverde staff and by an annual independent inspection undertaken by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA).

The play equipment currently includes:

- Fire Station Multiplay Unit
- Toddlers Castle Metal Slide With Ada Stairs
- Flat Seat Swings
- Cradle Swings
- Pod Swing
- Galaxy Supernova
- Spring Car
- Spring Bike
- Play Panels

Other features:

- Signs, benches, bins, gates, fencing
- Safer surfacing



Image: Children's play area in Abbey recreation ground

Sports Facilities

The public health benefits of participating in sport and physical activity are well known and form an important component of the Merton Community Plan 2009-2019. Sports facilities at Abbey recreation ground are of excellent quality and are promoted to the wider community by Merton's Leisure Development Team. The variety of organised and casual activities available to local residents and visitors encourages people to participate in healthy active lifestyles and to enjoy interacting with other members of the community.

Abbey Recreation Ground Playing Fields

Cricket pitches x1

Football pitches x2

The adjoining Nursery Road Playing Field also has a cricket pitch and 3 football pitches.

Tennis Courts

There are three tennis courts in the adjoining Nursery Road playing field. Whilst there had been tennis courts on the same site they had fallen into disrepair and disuse in the 1980s. These new courts were constructed in 2009 as a result of a fund raising initiative by WERA, financed by grants from the London Marathon Fund and Viridor Credits.



Image: Tennis courts off Merton Park Green Walks



Image: sign at the tennis courts off the Green Walks

Organised Sports A range of organised sporting activities occur at the Recreation Ground. These include:

Activity	Target/User Group	When	Organisers
Football	Football players	Weekends during football season	Various amateur leagues
Cricket	Cricketers	Summer evenings & weekends	Various amateur leagues

4.8 Management

The Leisure and Culture Greenspaces team whose head office located in the Civic Centre, Morden, coordinates the management of Abbey recreation ground and the Merton Park Green Walks. The current service structure changed in February 2017 when the ground maintenance and operations was outsourced to idverde.

The (Leisure and Culture) Greenspaces Manager is the service head and oversees the ongoing development and maintenance of the recreation ground. idverde are responsible for the routine maintenance, locking and unlocking of the park, litter picking, emptying litter bins and ensuring that the site is kept in a clean and safe condition.

The Greenspaces Development Manager directs the overall development of open spaces across the borough working with two parks development officers, a small arboricultural team and an events officer based at the Council's Civic Centre headquarters.

Further details of the staffing structure can be found in section 6.8 and Appendix 7

4.9 Stakeholders and community involvement

LB Merton works collaboratively with a wide range of partners and stakeholders in the development, improvement, maintenance and management of Abbey rec. and Green Walks including: national, regional and local environmental agencies and various funding agencies.

WERA has been involved in the following activities since their formation in 2006. This involvement has included:

- ☐ Claiming S106 funds for a new footpath (£17,000)
- ☐ Clearing area & planting 300 whips around the entrance to Nursery Road playing field as a community event (£125)
- ☐ Gaining grants to build 3 new tennis courts at the neighbouring site, Nursery Road (£93,000)
- ☐ Gaining grants to demolish and clear away dilapidated changing rooms and build new ones on the same site (£250,000)
- ☐ Creating a small seasonal pond with surrounding wildflower meadow turf, and:
- ☐ Clearing sundry rubbish and builders rubble from parcel B and seeding with wildflower seed (£13,500)
- ☐ Mulching a new wooded area behind the tennis courts as a community event
- ☐ Creating a 300 metres native species hedge bordering the tramline (£3,500) and subsequent mulching as a community event
- ☐ Replacing horse chestnut trees along the tram line (£1,000)
- ☐ Mulching small trees and whips behind the new tennis courts as a community event
- ☐ Supporting volunteers planting native species wild flower bulbs (£5,500)

- Erecting site notice boards and liaising with the local community on issues and projects
- Winning a grant of £1,000 from the idverde Community Investment Fund to rebuild the seasonal pond on the Green Walks
- Successfully bidding for £13,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to complement the £25,000 of Merton's S106 funding for resurfacing the paths of the Green Walks

Microbee Group Ltd., a local Environmental Services Group has provided input and resources to support these initiatives.

The Merton Orchard Project has sought to ensure that, whilst not normally open to the public, their contribution aligns to the larger ecological goals of the Green Walk.

4.10 Activities & Events

Abbey recreation ground is one of Merton Borough's most popular and frequently used open spaces. The site supports a number of recreational events and activities year-round.

Football and cricket occur there weekends in the appropriate season and the site represents the home venue for a number of local clubs. Mid-week evening cricket also occurs occasionally during the summer months.

For the past 9 years the Ahmadiyya Muslim community has held an annual four day cricket tournament in the recreation ground and adjoining playing field.

There are regular events in the area, particularly in the winter months. The focus of these in recent years has been tree and bulb planting efforts and the creation of the previously mentioned seasonal pond.

The Playing fields and green walk support a daily loose community of dog-walkers and joggers who appear from the housing in the local area to exercise themselves and their pets. The paths are in regular use by commuters travelling on foot to work as well as cyclists. Schoolchildren also transit through on their way to and from school.

The recreation ground occasionally hosts local school and nursery school fun days and sports days in the summer term.

At a family level, a good opportunity for children to learn where food comes from arises as families are regularly seen gathering Blackberries along the Green Walks when they are in season.

4.11 Leases and Covenants

Abbey rec. and Merton Park Green Walks are owned by Merton Council and are managed by its Greenspaces team which forms part of the Sustainable Communities Division of the Environment & Regeneration Department of the local authority. The property is not registered and is not affected by a caution against first registration of any priority notice.

The neighbouring Nursery Road playing Fields belong to the Rutlish Foundation and are leased to Merton Council.

Parcel D is privately owned and is registered with Land Registry.

There are no entries in the Register of Common Land.

There are no entries in the Register of Town and Village Greens.



Image: Seasonal pond under construction with volunteers in 2012



Image: Seasonal pond when completed

5 Vision for Abbey rec. and Merton Park Green Walks

The vision for the green space conforms to the broader vision for Merton's parks as a whole:

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



Image: Children's playground at Abbey Recreation Ground

The green space is important for the local community. It encourages local people to engage in physical activity, social interactions and enjoy a relationship to the natural world all within their neighbourhood and is especially important in these respects given the combined area's strong urban context.

Abbey recreation ground is an excellent example of a high quality space that balances relaxation and recreation through innovative design and offers a mixture of facilities and activities for all ages. It also contributes to the wider London green space network and forms part of a 'green corridor' for wildlife moving between Morden Hall Park and other open spaces, such as Wimbledon Common.

The existing management and planning arrangements encourage an active interest and involvement from the local community. Our working relationships with WERA ensure participation in fundraising, management, and restoration of 'park' features. WERA has been actively

involved in fund raising for major projects (around £400,000 to date) planting of trees, whips and wildflower seeds and bulbs, landscaping (including the construction of a seasonal pond), funding tree species diversification and has been directly involved in promoting this unique place to other members of the community.

6 Aims, objectives & management actions

This section presents the aims and objectives for Abbey rec. & Merton Park Green Walks from 2018 to 2023. The format of this section of the management plan has been closely aligned to the key criteria used to assess parks and open spaces as part of the Green Flag Award, which the Council aspires to achieve, and covers the current status and assets/features of the open space and recent developments and investments. A number of management objectives have been developed based upon the management's assessment of the current condition of the park and to assist the management team and stakeholders to achieve the vision for the park.



Image: log piles on the Merton Park Green Walks

The management actions that follow the objectives describe how we will allocate funding and resources and monitor our progress toward achieving our vision.

The key Green Flag criteria are:

- Creating a Welcoming Space
- Ensuring the Park is Healthy, Safe and Secure
- Keeping the Park Clean and Well Maintained
- Sustainable Management of Resources
- Appropriate Management of Conservation and Heritage Features
- Encouraging Community Involvement
- Marketing the Facility Effectively
- Implementation of Effective Management Strategies

The vision and objectives for the Abbey rec. & Merton Park Green Walks are aligned with the Merton Partnership's Community Plan, the Council's corporate business objectives, the Greenspaces' Service Plan and the Merton Open Space Strategy.

The management actions described in the following section include likely timeframes, responsibility for implementation, cost estimates and funding sources. Most of the management plan objectives have specific actions against them. In some cases the objective relates to how we work.

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

(Note: N/A in Action Plans = Funding not currently assigned or clarified)

6.1 A welcoming place

The overall impression for someone approaching and entering the site should be positive and inviting.

Features of particular importance are:

- Good and Safe Access;
- Effective signage to and in the park; and
- Equal access for all members of the community.

Current conditions and issues

Transport options

The location is accessible to residents in the Abbey and surrounding wards of the London Borough of Merton. It is served by excellent public transport links and is best reached on foot as on-site and street parking is limited and subject to local restrictions.

There is a parking area for 19 cars, including 2 disabled spaces, next to the changing rooms in Abbey recreation ground accessible from Morden Road.

Visitors travelling by rail on South West Trains have a 10-minute walk from Wimbledon or Wimbledon Chase Stations. The nearest bus stops are approximately two minutes' walk from the main entrance on Morden Road. Morden Road tram stop is also close by, less than 5 minutes' walk along Morden Road.

Pedestrian access

There are a number of pedestrian entrances to the recreation ground and Green Walks: Morden Road (2), Willmore End (1); Melbourne Road (1); Rutlish Road (1) and Dorset Road (1).

The primary entrance with combined vehicle and pedestrian access is separated and safe.

A new pedestrian crossing close to the entrance opposite Jubilee Way on Morden Road has been muted by TFL.

Signage & information

There are information panels at the Morden Road entrance closest to South Wimbledon and another at the junction of the paths leading from Melbourne Road, Rutlish Road and Dorset Road. The signs provide a map of the site with details of flora and fauna that may be found on the Merton Park Green Walks.

The playground has separate signage informing users of the playground's age restrictions and safety precautions.

There are old notice boards at the main entrance on Morden Road that either needs to be replaced or refurbished. They should advertise the mixture of active and passive recreational pursuits that are available to visitors.

Site facilities & furniture

Tarmac footpaths link all areas and points of interest in Abbey Recreation Ground. The sporting facilities, horticultural areas and other features of importance are all accessible to visitors with pushchairs or those in wheelchairs or with other mobility impairments.

Benches, waste bins are located conveniently around the site. Capital funding has been provided from the Council's earmarked funds for implementing the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to ensure that the buildings in Abbey recreation ground are accessible and that appropriate facilities for people with disabilities are available. These provisions include ramped access to the toilets (although currently only available for bookings).

Objectives

1. Maintain boundary fencing, hedging, gates, signage and access paths

to a consistently high standard.

2. Improve signage in the surrounding neighbourhood and provide more directional and interpretive signs.
3. Meet the accessibility requirements of all users.
4. Provide everybody with a range of high quality, well-maintained and relevant facilities that are accessible, safe, and clean.

Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
Objective 1. Maintenance of boundary fencing, hedging, planting, gates, signage & access paths to a consistently high standard						
1A	Entrance signage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove all legacy Merton signs 	March 2018			S106	Yes
1B	Entrance improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gradually remove the wooden post and rail fence to Merton Park Green Walks (95m) to open up area Relocate shrubs from main Abbey rec entrance to toilet block bed in advance of TfL work (currently on hold due to COVID) 	Ongoing 2018-2023 2019-2020	dverde Unpaid Project		S106	Yes
1C	Maintain shrubs inside the main entrance and continue to fill gaps in the planting along the Morden Road boundary	Ongoing 2018-2023	Unpaid Project		S106	Yes
1D	Improve signage at the secondary access points and in the children's playground	March 2018			S106	Yes
1E	Continue to cut back self seeded and regenerating sycamores and other vegetation at the Morden Road entrance opposite Merantun Way to make it more inviting	Ongoing 2018-2023	Unpaid Project		S106	Yes

1F	Maintain native species whips at the south and east sides of parcel C	Ongoing	Unpaid Project			
1F	Maintain the wildflower feature in Abbey recreation ground	Ongoing 2019- 2023				

Objective 2. Improve signage in the surrounding neighbourhood to the park & provide more directional & interpretive signs within the park						
2A	Liaise with LBM Highways section to improve directional signage to park from main transport nodes – Update, Highways team wish to reduce street furniture and so we will look to alternatives.	2020	GS and Highways	Staff time	LBM	TBC
Objective 3. Meet the accessibility requirements of all users						
3A	Repair Abbey rec footpaths as necessary	2021	Merton	Staff time	S106	Yes
3B	Resurface the Green Walks paths with self-binding gravel	2020	Merton		S106/CIL	Yes
3C	Review need for revenue & capital investment in footpath network & secure if necessary	Annually 2018-2023	GS Develop't	Minimal – staff time, plus sum TBC	LBM Revenue & Capital	TBC
Objective 4. Provide everybody with a range of high quality, well-maintained & relevant facilities that are accessible, safe & clean						
4A	Review condition of existing seating	2020-2021	GS Development	Staff time	LBM Capital	TBC

6.2 Healthy, safe & secure

The park or green space must be a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use. Relevant issues must be addressed in management plans and implemented on the ground. New issues which arise must be addressed promptly and appropriately. Particularly important issues include:

- *Equipment and facilities must be safe to use;*
- *The park must be a secure place for all members or the community to use or traverse;*
- *Dog fouling must be adequately dealt with;*
- *Health and safety policies should be in place, in practice and reviewed; and*
- *Toilets, drinking water, first aid, public telephones and emergency equipment where relevant (e.g. lifebelts by water) should be available on or near the site and clearly signposted.*

Current condition & issues

There have been few incidents although there is an ongoing problem with trees being damaged by dogs. There is good natural surveillance around and into the park, a highly motivated local community which is very proud of their park and a CCTV system next to the changing rooms in Abbey recreation ground.

Due to its layout Abbey recreation ground mostly provides clear and safe sight lines for members of the community.

Just as importantly, the Council's history of investment in the park's upkeep and improvement ensure that the park is well-used which in itself supports safety and security efforts. The local knowledge, expertise and commitment of our partners also have an important role to play and our partners in this respect include:

- The Metropolitan Police
- LB Merton Safer Neighbourhoods Team
- LB Merton Tree Wardens
- WERA

Involvement and respect between managers, users and enforcement agencies is very important for the continued effective management and enjoyment by all.

Equipment, facilities and park infrastructure are of high quality and are inspected regularly (see Inspection and Maintenance Regime – Appendices 1 & 2) by park staff to ensure that they are safe for users. Trees are visually inspected by park staff regularly whilst on patrol and more formally by the Greenspaces professional arboricultural team. Following stormy weather all trees are routinely checked by park staff to identify any risks from damaged limbs.

All parks infrastructure and equipment (seats, litter bins, footpaths, fencing, etc.) is visually inspected on a regular basis by the staff working in the park and assessed more thoroughly for its condition on a quarterly basis. Unsafe facilities are repaired or replaced immediately, or failing that, cordoned off as appropriate to ensure user safety and discourage

vandalism. Those issues that require more significant financial investment or technical support beyond local means to remediate are reported up the line to the Park Manager or Parks Support Team Manager for action by the appropriate off-site team/section.

Management systems

Whereas formerly the Council utilised the CONFIRM system as a comprehensive tool for the management of its assets, performance and customer enquiries and complaints, this system has been progressively dropped over recent years in favour of alternative systems primarily MAYRISE. Our tree data and management history is now managed exclusively in EasyTreev, for example. A new lettings management system was procured and went live in the second half of 2012 for the purposes of ensuring online booking of sports facilities and community hall/pavilions. There are also in-house corporate systems for recording and tracking enquiries and complaints, coordinated by a small team in the Council's Corporate Governance section.

Health & Safety Training

Idverde has its own internal H&S and risk assessments which is made available to their respective staff.

Within the idverde there is a programme of staff induction and training that includes:

- Chainsaw use
- Pesticides use
- First aid
- Safe operation of machinery
- Water safety
- Customer care
- Manual handling
- Dispute resolution

Encouraging responsible dog walking

Dog walking is a popular activity in Abbey rec & Merton Park Green Walks and the Council wishes to encourage responsible dog ownership across the Borough.

Bagged dog waste may be deposited into any of the park bins. Information regarding the Council's dog policies is displayed on the main signs and on the Merton website:

- <https://www.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/litter-fly-tipping-and-street-cleaning/litter-bins>

The Council has recently finished consulting on new Public Space Protection Orders (which replace the current dog control orders). A Public Space Protection Order is a new measure, created by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, which replaced some existing legislation and introduced wider discretionary powers to deal with any particular nuisance or problem that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life.

The children's play area in Abbey recreation ground is a designated dog free area.

Safety information

Information for emergency contact is available on the Merton website.

Public Toilets

Male, female and disabled toilets are located in a toilet block next to the changing rooms (open for pre-booked events only).

Objectives

5. All park facilities and features to be maintained, providing a safe, secure and inclusive space.
6. Work with residents, park users, police and other stakeholders to increase informal surveillance of the park and enforce park byelaws.
7. Address all safety issues promptly and effectively through timely monitoring and reporting.
8. Enforce safe working practices to protect all park staff and visitors.
9. Implement the corporate Health & Safety Policy.

Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
Objective 5. All park facilities & features to be maintained providing a safe, secure & inclusive space						
5A	Expose perimeter path edging in the recreation ground	Ongoing 2018-2023	Unpaid project			
5B	Improve sight lines around the toilet block. Remove existing planting and replant using lower level shrubs	Ongoing maintenance 2018-2023	Unpaid project			
Objective 6. Work with residents, police & other stakeholders to increase informal surveillance of the park & enforce park byelaws						
6A	Consult with Friends on any issues & implement Watch Diaries if necessary	Ongoing, 2018-2023	GS Managers; Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
6B	Liaise with Friends, SNTs & police on any criminal activity, ASB incidents or patterns of misuse on site	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
Objective 7. Address all safety issues addressed promptly & effectively through timely monitoring & reporting						
7A	Continue to use management systems to monitor & report on and record relevant issues	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Manager, Corporate	N/A	LBM Revenue	Yes

Objective 8. Encourage responsible dog ownership through education and active enforcement by park staff and other authorised individuals						
8A	Enforcement of the traffic light system and adopted Public Space Protection Orders	Ongoing, 2018-23	Parks Staff; LBM Animal Warden	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
8B	Consult with Environmental Services on feasibility of on- the-spot fines for dog control violations	2020	GS Manager; LBM	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
Objective 9. Enforce safe working practices to protect all park staff & visitors						
9A	Apply & enforce health and safety & CHAS policies (see Appendix 5); review and update relevant operational risk assessments and practices annually	Ongoing, 2018-23; Annually	All	Minimal - staff time	LBM & idverde Revenue	Yes
Objective 10. Implement the Health & Safety Policy						
10A	Record & review all health & safety incidents & near misses; provide feedback to corporate health & safety team; provide necessary training/re-training	Ongoing, 2018-23	All	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
10B	Provide relevant staff health & safety training	Ongoing, 2018-23	All	TBC	idverde	yes

6.3 Clean & well maintained

For aesthetic as well as health and safety reasons issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be addressed, in particular:

- Litter and other waste management issues must be adequately dealt with;
- Grounds, buildings, equipment and other features must be well maintained; and
- A policy on litter, vandalism and maintenance should be in place, in practice and regularly reviewed.

Current condition & issues

Abbey recreation ground is now classified as one of the Borough's 25 "Key Parks" Overall, and since the operational change over to idverde the staff inputs in the park remain in the vicinity of 2FTEs, albeit comprising more mobile worker inputs than in the past. The current Greenspaces team and idverde structure is included in Appendix 7.

Providing quality parks and open spaces remains a high priority for the Council despite the difficult financial climate. The number of Green Flag Awards secured is one of the Environment & Regenerations Department's current Key Performance Indicators. User feedback since the service restructure was fully embedded has been good and the revised operational approach has coincided with a reassuring increase in the user satisfaction levels as revealed in the annual Residents' Survey: satisfaction with parks rises by 3% to 79%.

Litter & dog waste

The area is used extensively by a variety of groups and individuals and litter is a significant management issue and challenge. Litter bins are emptied 3 times per week by the idverde staff as a minimum (twice midweek and once per weekend), more often when idverde staff are deployed in the park to support specific events and lettings and in periods of good weather during the summer. Members of idverde staff also undertake litter picking across the site.

The London Borough of Merton now operates an "any bin will do" policy where dog waste can be added to a normal rubbish bin. Information regarding the Council's dog policies is available on the Merton website.

Green waste management

Sustainable waste management is a high priority for the London Borough of Merton and its partner's idverde. All green waste material that cannot be utilised on site is taken to the sub-regional waste processing centre in Beddington.

Maintenance

Abbey rec. & Merton Park Green Walks are maintained to a high standard. After routine inspections have ensured that the park is safe, secure and tidy, the playing field members of staff begin a wide range of maintenance and horticultural operations. These activities are described in more detail on the Maintenance Schedule outlined in Appendix 2. Greenspaces and idverde members of staff work regularly in the borough-wide grounds to undertake specific maintenance and refurbishment tasks.

Objectives

11. Ensure high standards of maintenance for play area, lawns, sports pitches, trees & shrubs, user facilities & recreation ground facilities
12. Provide adequate facilities for the disposal of visitor's rubbish and dog waste
13. Discourage vandalism and graffiti through education, innovative design of facilities, building community alliances and prompt remedial action
14. Monitor the maintenance programme to ensure improvements can be celebrated and weaknesses addressed.

Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
Objective 11. Ensure high standards of maintenance for play area, tennis courts, lawns, sports pitches, trees & shrubs, user facilities & recreation ground facilities						
	Park Furniture Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey current stock of Bins and Benches and itemise those to stay and those to go. Agree Merton Parks furniture palette for Bin and Bench and standardise for Abbey Rec Look into feasibility of establishing Composting Bays to Merton Green Walks (Sustainable Merton) 	2018	LBM	£5k	S106	Yes
	Park Building Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Survey for New Pavilion and Toilet Block Review management of sedum roof and add nutrients annually – To be administered by idverde 	Ongoing, 2018-23	LBM & idverde	Staff time	Internal	No
	Merton Park Green Walks Management & Maintenance Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree 10 year Volunteer Management Plan for Merton Green Walks that will run in line with Abbey Rec Management Plan 	2018	LBM & idverde	Staff time	Internal	No
11A	Implement established site, infrastructure & equipment inspection procedures	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	Revenue	Yes
11B	Ensure all play equipment meets the European Environmental Standard	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Develop't	Minimal - staff time	Revenue	Yes
11C	Maintain regular cleaning schedule for the changing rooms	Ongoing, 2018-23	Parks Staff		Revenue	Yes
11D	Refurbish changing rooms as required.	Annually by March 2018 - 2023	GS Develop't	As required	Capital	Yes
11E	Review policy on maintenance of sports pitches	Annually by March 2018 - 2023				
London Borough of Merton		Abbey Management Plan 2017 - 2022				

11F			GS Development	Minimal Staff Time	Revenue	Yes
Objective 12. Provide adequate facilities for the disposal of rubbish & dog waste						
12A	Review condition of all bins & replace as required	Annually by March, 2018-23	GS Develop't	<1	Revenue	Yes

Objective 13. Discourage vandalism & graffiti through education, innovative design of facilities, building community alliances & prompt remedial action						
13A	Liaise with Metropolitan Police, Safe Neighbourhood Team & LBM Graffiti Team.	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
Objective 14. Monitor the maintenance programme to ensure improvements can be celebrated & weaknesses addressed						
14A	Liaise with Friends on implementation of agreed improvements & maintenance	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Managers; GS Develop't; Friends	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
14B	Review all formal monitoring & inspection returns	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes

6.4 Sustainability

Methods used in maintaining the green space and its facilities should be environmentally sound, relying on best practice according to current knowledge. Management should be aware of the range of techniques available to them, and demonstrate that informed choices have been made and are regularly reviewed. Specifically:

An environmental policy or charter and management strategy should be in place, in practice, and regularly reviewed;

- Pesticide use should be minimised and justified;*
- Horticultural peat use should be eliminated;*
- Waste plant material generated in the park should be recycled;*
- High horticultural and arboricultural standards should be demonstrated;*

Current condition & issues

Many of Merton's environmental policies with regard to protecting local biodiversity, amenity, air, soil and water quality are contained within Merton's Local Development Framework. Over and above this, Merton's corporate vision and objectives underline the importance of environmental sustainability in the achievement of the Council's wider objectives.

Environmental plans & policies

Merton Council's current environmental policies on sustainable resources, energy efficiency and waste management are in various stages of development or revision.

In order to protect the health of visitors, staff and the biodiversity of the park, the Greenspaces team in partnership with idverde has adopted a general policy to reduce the use of pesticides in the maintenance of all of the parks and open spaces within its portfolio to a minimum. The use of pesticides has been eliminated from all areas of Abbey rec. and the Green Walks. Weed growth within the playing field areas is suppressed with hand weeding, hoeing and mulching.

Peat-based composts are not used in Abbey recreation ground and the Greenspaces team no longer procures peat-based horticultural materials as a matter of policy.

Vehicle use in the park and on the playing field is kept to a minimum. The service utilises some electric vehicles within its fleet as these provide a cleaner and quieter alternative to diesel. All park machinery is used correctly and is maintained to a very high standard. Any hazardous chemicals are safely stored in a lock up on site.


Replacement park furniture and fixtures are made from sustainable and recycled resources where available. 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.

WERA's tree, whip, bulb and wildflower planting initiatives over recent years have been designed to complement the efforts of the owner of parcel D in creating a bee-friendly environment for the preservation Merton variety fruit trees and expansion of the apiary.

Objectives

15. Ensure environmental policies are in place, implemented and reviewed annually.
16. Minimise on-site pesticide use.
17. Recycle all green waste.
18. Review the use of energy, water and other materials on site.

Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
Objective 15. Ensure environmental policies are in place, implemented and reviewed annually						
15A	Comply with all Council environmental policies & priorities.	Ongoing, 2018-23	All	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
15C	Make use of Biodiversity Matters Staff Toolbox Talk 					

Objective 16. Pesticide Reduction Policy						
16A	Collate the current pesticide use on site and include measures to reduce use year on year.	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Managers; Parks Staff	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
Objective 17. Recycle green waste						
17A	Review procedures for storage & disposal of green waste generated on site & increase volumes being re-used on site. Consider opportunities to refresh arrangements/facilities.	Annually, 2018-23; 2018/19	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
Objective 18. Review the use of energy, water & other materials on site						
18A	Undertake formal review of all utilities usage on site	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes

6.5 Conservation & heritage

Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of:

- *Natural features, wildlife and flora*
- *Landscape features; and buildings and structural features.*

These features should serve their function well without placing undue pressure on the surrounding environment.

Current condition & issues

The recreation ground contains few assets of significant conservation and heritage interest owing to its relatively young age in historical terms.

Both its management and usage has, since the middle years of the 20th century at least, focused upon a variety of sporting activities that have impacted to a significant degree on both the landscape and biodiversity of the site. The development and improvement of the landscape (principally, tree planting and bulb planting) have been key projects in recent times.

The Merton Park Green Walks was previously part of the Tooting, Merton and Wimbledon railway line. Merton Park station was originally built in anticipation of the development of John Innes' Merton Park Estate. Part of the old Merton Park platform still exists, and it is believed that the bramble scrub next to the Dorset/Melbourne footpath may conceal some concrete base supports for the 1893 iron footbridge that once crossed the site. The last existing part of this footbridge is now situated on a steam railway near Corfe castle in Dorset

Merton's Community Plan 2009-19 includes a relevant action: E10, Manage parks and Greenspaces to protect and enhance local biodiversity by integrating biodiversity management methods into parks management regimes. Significant strides were made in this respect from the spring/summer period of 2011 across the service with, for example, additional areas of parks grassland converted to meadows in appropriate locations and the introduction of dead wood and loggeries and wildflower beds into areas such as Merton Park Green Walks. Merton Borough achieved second overall in the biodiversity category of the London in Bloom Awards in 2013 and such developments undoubtedly contributed to that success.

Objectives

19. Protect and enhance the biodiversity and other heritage assets of the park
20. Conserve the character, design and layout of the park and its relationship to surrounding environment
21. Educate the public on the habitats, species and other heritage features of the area.

Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
Objective 19. Protect & enhance the biodiversity & other heritage assets of the Recreation Ground						
19A	Increase the density of wildflowers on the mini-meadow areas in Parcel B of the Merton Park Green Walks to encourage insects. Manage with appropriate mowing regime.	Ongoing	Idverde & WERA	Staff time	Internal	TBC
19B	Continue policy of creating log piles on site.	Ongoing	LBM & Idverde	Staff time	Internal	TBC
19C	Check condition and use of bird and bat boxes in mature trees along the Green Walks and replace as necessary.	Ongoing	LBM & Idverde	Staff time	Internal	TBC
19D	Review the schedule of maintenance for the footpath and the management of bramble stands within the Merton Park Green Walks.	Ongoing 2018-23	LBM	Staff time	Internal	TBC
19E	Uncover old Merton Park station platform.	2020	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
19F	Reconstruct the seasonal pond on the Merton Park Green Walks	2020	Unpaid project	1	Idverde grant	Yes

Objective 20. Conserve the character, design, layout & relationship to the surrounding environment of the playing field						
20	Review current sports pitch usage and allow for sympathetic future development	2018-2023	LBM & Idverde	Staff time	TBC	TBC

Objective 21. Educate the public on the habitat, species & other heritage features of the Recreation Ground & Green Walks						
21A	Utilise practical volunteering projects on site as educational opportunities: nature conservation, trees, woodland, etc.	Ongoing, 2018-23	Tree Wardens; (B)TCV	Minimal - staff & volunteer time	Revenue	Yes
21B	Produce on-site information/interpretation materials to support all visible nature conservation initiatives on site.	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Develop't	Minimal - staff time	Revenue	Yes

6.6 Community involvement

Park management authorities should actively pursue the involvement of members of the community, with representation of as many park user groups as possible. Management should be able to demonstrate:

- *Knowledge of the user community and levels and pattern of use;*
- *Evidence of community involvement in park management and/or development and results achieved; and*
- *That there are appropriate levels of provision or recreational facilities for all sectors of the community.*

Current condition & issues

Abbey recreation ground and the Merton Park Green Walks 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.



Image: children's playground in Abbey recreation ground

In addition to Merton Council and idverde there are 3 main stakeholder groups at Abbey Rec. & Green Walks.

- WERA
- idverde
- Sports teams (principally football and cricket clubs)

Merton Council will, with the assistance of the WERA and idverde engage

proactively with adjoining landowners and residents and users of the park and recreation ground.

WERA in conjunction with The London Borough of Merton have, either on their own or with support from volunteers and local company Microbee:

- Raised funds (£93k) for free-to-use tennis courts in Nursery Road playing field. These are accessed via the Merton Park Green Walks and are in constant use
- Raised funds (£250k) towards the cost of replacing the old changing rooms in Abbey recreation ground
- Raised 3 lottery awards used to enhance the Green Walk, including the purchase and planting of several thousand native bulbs and corms to plant along the Green Walk
- Raised £1,050 from local business Segro which was used to create a seasonal pond
- Planted a hedge of native shrubs along the entire length of the Tramway boundary
- Created a wood of 200 trees in the triangle behind the tennis courts
- Cleared brambles and planted wildflower meadows
- Installed nest boxes for birds, bats, bees and hedgehogs (with thanks to Microbee)
- Created log piles to encourage beetles and other invertebrates
- Planted local 'Merton' varieties of cherries to complement the work in the Merton Orchard Project and apiary alongside the Green Walk
- Secured £13,000 of S106 money for path resurfacing
- Raised £1,000 from the idverde Community Investment Fund to reconstruct the seasonal pond on Merton Park Green Walks
- Increased the number of whips & trees planted to 3,389 as of December 2019

Looking ahead, WERA will be:

- Consulting with the LB Merton on its Open Space Strategy and future improvement priorities
- Developing funding applications with LB Merton for improvements
- Assisting with maintenance including painting railings and updating notice boards
- Organising workdays including tree & bulb planting

Working with other partners

There are also other stakeholders and volunteers in the local area who are involved in the use, management and promotion of the site. Merton Council is seeking to develop or further develop its partnering with groups including:

- National, regional & local parks, environmental and heritage agencies
- Development organisations & agencies
- Funding agencies
- Friends groups
- Councillors
- Recreational & sports organisations
- Private sports facility providers
- Health organisations
- Educational establishments, including schools
- Local businesses
- Community & voluntary groups, particularly those representing children and young people, older people, people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups;
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Police and community safety agencies

Merton Council works closely with the police to discourage anti-social behaviour and protect the users and facilities of the area. Improving the coordination, communication and cooperation between different stakeholders in the park is vital to the success of this management plan. The Greenspaces team recognises the importance of tapping into existing community networks to achieve this.

Facilities for young people

Sports facilities existed for young people wishing to develop their skills and keep fit. In addition there is a teen shelter and separate playground for use, which ensures good play value and development opportunities. Looking forward there is an aspiration for the addition of an outdoor gym; such facilities have proved popular at other sites around the borough.

User & non-user needs

Data on users and non-users of the Council's services is collected annually via its Residents' Survey, the most recent statistics being published in 2017. Currently, the Greenspaces service satisfaction level scores are:

Residents' satisfaction (users and non-users) with parks, open spaces & playgrounds - 75%. Park users reporting the service as very good/good - 79%.

The detailed information gleaned from this exercise is used to inform future planning and investment across the parks portfolio as a whole.

Objectives

22. Work closely with existing stakeholders and partners to address local residents' needs, aspirations and concerns and encourage a sense of ownership
23. Identify potential users and encourage them to participate in the development and management of the area

24. Consult the wider Merton community about future plans, proposals and current projects in the area
25. Provide support to WERA to ensure successful grant applications for improvements
26. Foster closer relationships with local schools and other institutions
27. Encourage a complementary working relationship between the Council and community volunteers

Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
Objective 22. Work closely with existing stakeholders & partners to address local residents' needs, aspirations & concerns & encourage a sense of ownership						
22A	Undertake service quality survey of members of regular football & cricket clubs	Idverde annually		Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
22B	Organisation of Friends Forum events & workshops	Biannually, 2018 -23	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
Objective 23. Identify users needs & encourage them to participate in the development & management of the park						
23A	Implement questionnaire survey of park users' needs & views	Idverde annually	GS Support Team	Minimal - staff time	Revenue	No
23B	Undertake staff training on customer care & public relations	Completed 2017	Corporate L&D	0.5	Revenue	Yes
Objective 24. Consult the wider Merton community about future plans, proposals & current projects in the park						
24A	Consult with Friends & other key stakeholders on major development projects in their early planning stages; provide/post relevant information on the Council & WERA websites.	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Managers; GS Develop't	Minimal - staff time	Revenue	Yes
Objective 25. Provide support to WERA to ensure successful grant applications for improvements						
25A	Liaison with parks friends groups to raise awareness of current capital & revenue funding opportunities, both within & outside of the Council	Ongoing, 2018-2023	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	Revenue	Yes
25B	Support individual groups with advice & any information required to complete grant applications	Ongoing, 2018-2023	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	Revenue	Yes

Objective 26. Foster closer relationships with local schools & other institutions						
26A	Direct promotion of the site, its facilities & potential uses to schools in the neighbouring area.	From April 2018	GS Support Team; Corporate Marketing team	<1	Revenue	No

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
Objective 27. Encourage a complementary working relationship between the Council & community volunteers						
27A	Agree practical projects and/or inputs for the Community Payback Team to deliver on site.	Ongoing, 2018 - 23	GS Managers; LBM Comm. Waste p'ships team	Minimal - staff time	Revenue & Capital	Yes

6.7 Marketing

Is there:

- *Is a marketing strategy in place, is it in practice and regularly reviewed?*
- *Good provision of information to users e.g. about management strategies, activities, features, ways to get involved?*
- *Effective promotion of the park as a community resource.*

Current condition & issues

Marketing Strategy

The marketing and promotion of Abbey recreation ground & Merton Park Green Walks as a local facility and destination is coordinated through the Merton Open Spaces Marketing Strategy (2007). The objectives of this strategy are:

1. To increase usage of parks and open spaces by providing timely and accurate information about, their features, facilities and management;
2. To advertise events effectively in Merton's parks and open spaces and attract other activities appropriate to individual spaces and the surrounding community;
3. To promote positive news about Merton's parks and open spaces to a wide audience;
4. To ensure all parks staff and volunteers receive adequate marketing training;
5. To regularly review customer satisfaction with the condition of the facilities, features and management within the parks.

The Marketing Strategy is implemented across the borough's parks and leisure facilities, through the various Council initiatives, including signage outside of the park, leaflets for potential parks users and pavilion hirers and information on the Council website - the latter being an increasingly important information and promotional vehicle. Word of mouth and the PR skills and abilities of the site staff also important in this regard. The Council's 25 parks friends groups produce a number of newsletters to publicise their specific park and a number have developed their own website (see Appendix 4 which also illustrates other current marketing materials).

The Council's corporate communications team instigated a "Love Your Parks" promotional campaign in the summer of 2013 to raise awareness of the borough's open spaces and their benefits and facilities in the local press. This is something that has subsequently been rolled out each year. Parks and leisure issues feature in almost every edition of the Council magazine "My Merton" that is

distributed to every household in the borough three times per annum.

Marketing of Abbey Rec. & Green Walks

Marketing currently concentrates on effective signage leading potential users to the area and on the promotion of specific events and sports facilities; and on improving and developing the relevant pages of the Council's website.

Huge improvements have been made to the design and functionality of the Council's website over the last 4 years. The Greenspaces team is committed to taking full advantage of this medium to promote facilities and events in parks and open spaces in the Borough. The electronic booking of sports pitch bookings via the Council website was implemented in 2006 and was substantially updated and improved in 2012. In 2017 this business process has been adopted by idverde. This has thereby resulted in the streamlining of the information, booking and charging process. Active monitoring of website activity provides managers and users with useful feedback to help improve the information posted on the website. During the latter part of 2011, for example, information on the key maintenance inputs in Merton's parks was included on the Council's website for the very first time in order to improve community understanding and in response to local requests and enquiries. The Greenspaces team's website increasingly offers links to its partners' and other relevant websites information and is often able to secure the same in return.

The service will continue to support and encourage the local community to use the park and its pavilion as a venue for appropriate community events.

Objectives

28. Develop and implement a Borough-wide parks marketing strategy and specific campaigns
29. Raise awareness of the park, its facilities and services via a variety of media both on and off site.

Marketing actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
Objective 28. Develop & implement a Borough-wide parks marketing strategy						
28A	Produce & implement a revised parks marketing and promotional strategy specifically in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the park and its planned new community facilities.	Partially completed 2016-2017 further work in 2018-23	GS Manager/ Corporate Marketing Team	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	No
Objective 29. Raise awareness of the park & its facilities & services via a variety of media both on & off site						

29A	Promote successes (e.g. Green Flag Award) & community events in local media & Council publications such as "My Merton"	Annually, 2018-23	In house	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes
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29D	Continue to develop the Friends website & relevant pages of Council website	Ongoing, 2018-23	Friends; GS Support Team	Unknown/ Minimal - staff time	Revenue	Unknown /Yes
29E	Create Facebook account for Merton's parks to improve awareness & information on relevant and up- to-date issues	May 2017	GS Develop't; Corporate Comms team	Minimal - staff time	LBM Revenue	Yes

6.8 Management

A Green Flag site must have a management plan. It must set out the balance between all the priorities, policies and partners that apply to a particular green space. It should establish a timescale for putting the objectives into practice. It should also identify the contribution the site is making towards an area's wider strategic aims. It must be actively implemented and regularly reviewed.

Current status & issues

Abbey recreation ground & Merton Park Green Walks are owned and managed by the London Borough of Merton and is accessible to the general public year-round. This management plan for the area 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 Award and is key to the implementation of our open space strategy. 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. This revised version is the 2017 annual edition of a 5 year management plan that covers the period 2017 - 2022.

Parks Management

Merton's Greenspaces service delivery has changed considerably since February 2017. Where once all services were delivered in house now the grounds maintenance and operations are now delivered by a private contractor: idverde. A small team remains within The London Borough of Merton Greenspaces Team delivering Capital investment, Site development, Events and Arboricultural management. 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 110 separate open spaces. The Greenspaces Manager and the rest of the team oversee the idverde contract. The main duties of idverde include litter picking; sports pitch preparations, pavilion cleaning and parks locking, amongst other tasks.

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 upkeep 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 Abbey/Merton Park Green Walks 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 the area is concerned as the capacity for larger events (fun fairs, circuses, faith group festivals and the like), is more limited there. Two officers in the team have considerable practical experience of ecological issues and the Warden of Mitcham Common, also employed within the team, is an additional biodiversity knowledge resource that is employed across the service.

The park formally opens at 8am and closes (the gates are securely locked by idverde staff) at or about dusk, unless there are lettings in the park. 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) and the work commitments required to prepare the various pitches on site (football, cricket) which, together, ensure that the sporting elements of the grounds upkeep is a year-round operation in itself. At weekends, the popularity of the site for lettings and sport also ensures that there is a regular idverde staff presence. Idverde also attends the park in support of the various evening lettings that the pavilion attracts. 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.

Objectives

- 30. Review and update park management plan annually
- 31. Continue to bid for corporate revenue, capital and other funding for priority improvements
- 32. Ensure sufficient budget is allocated to maintain the park to the standards of this management plan

Management actions

#	Description	When	Who	Budget (£000s)	Source	Secured
Objective 30. Review and update a comprehensive management plan for the park						
30A	Produce, consult on & review a SMART park management plan for Abbey recreation ground & Green Walks that sets out the management actions & development priorities	Annually in December/January, 2018-2023	GS Managers; Friends; Various partners	Staff time approx. 40 hours	Revenue	Yes
Objective 31. Ensure sufficient budget is allocated to maintain the park to the standards of this management plan						
31A	Monitor and report on Greenspaces revenue & capital budgets & specifically the Abbey recreation ground & Merton Park Green Walks revenue cost centre.	2018-23	GS Managers; GS Support Team; Corporate Finance	Staff time approx. 100 hours	Revenue	Yes
Objective 32. Continue to bid for corporate revenue, capital & other funding for priority improvements						
32A	Ongoing liaison with LBM S106 Manager to identify existing funds & future opportunities & make bids from S106 schemes	Ongoing, 2018-2023	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	Revenue	Yes
32B	Continue to keep abreast of developments & opportunities within external funding agencies	Ongoing, 2018-23	GS Managers	Minimal - staff time	Revenue	Yes

7 Monitoring & plan review

This management plan was created January 2018 and has acted as a working document for the management of area for a 5 year period. It will be reviewed annually in the period December 2018-January 2023 and revised and updated as appropriate. A formal five yearly review will take place in 2023.

The day-to-day management of the site and the progress of individual development projects will be monitored regularly by LBM staff, idverde, stakeholders and WERA. Any significant feedback from these sources will be incorporated into the next revision of the management plan.

8 References

Key references are outlined throughout the document within relevant sections with web-links provided where appropriate and possible.

9 Appendices

1. Inspection schedule
2. Maintenance regime
3. Plan of the park
4. Current marketing materials
5. Health and safety policy
6. Park byelaws
7. Management structure
8. Friends activities
9. Climate Change Action Plan
10. Contact details

Appendix 1: Site Inspection Schedule

#	Activity	Frequency	Responsibility
1	Daily Grounds Condition Assessment		
	Visual inspection of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seats • Waste bins • Fencing • General condition & presentation of park 	Daily	Idverde Staff
2	Daily Built Feature Assessment		
	Inspect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavilions • Graffiti, vandalism, wear & tear (report to Parks Technical Team) • Submit Malicious Damage Reports to police 	Daily	Idverde Staff
3	Inspect Sign Boards		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove graffiti • Report vandalism to parks staff 	Weekly	Idverde staff Friends Group
4	Quarterly Condition Assessment		
	Thoroughly check the condition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpaths • Waste bins • Benches • Litter • Shrub bed • Playground • Fencing & gates • Evidence of fires • Graffiti 	Quarterly. Minimum of once during winter months	Idverde & LBM Friends Group
5	Professional Tree Assessment	Annually minimum	Arboriculture Manager
6	Utilities & Appliance Testing & Certification		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical & appliance testing • Gas appliances • <i>Legionella</i> testing • Asbestos review 	Annually	Corporate Facilities Team
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Appendix 2: Maintenance Regime

#	Activity	Frequency	Responsibility
1	Play Area		
	Inspection Report problems & make safe equipment Sweep & litter pick Repairs to equipment & safety surfacing Cut grass	Daily/Monthly As required As required As required 10x per year	Idverde staff
2	Tennis Courts		
	Visual inspection Sweep & litter ick Erect nets	Daily Weekly As required	Idverde Staff “ “
3	Pavilion, Toilets & Staff Accommodation		
	Clean toilets, changing room & hall Provide chairs for functions/events	D a i l y	Idverde Staff “
4	Amenity Grass		
	Litter pick Mowing/cuttin g	As necessary 10x per year	Idverde Staff
5	Tarmac Paths		
	Sweep & litter pick Complete quarterly inspections & reports	As required Quarterly	Idverde Staff “
6	Car Park		
	Sweep & litter pick	As required	Idverde staff

	Picnic Areas		
	Litter pick	As required	Idverde staff
	Cut grass	10x per year	
8	Shrub Bed		
	Prune shrubs, mulch	Annually	Idverde staff
	Weeding	As required	Friends
9	Litter pick	As required	
	Cultivate border	Annually	
9	Football Pitches		
	Install football sockets & posts	As required	Idverde staff
	Initial marking of pitches	As required	
	Over- marking of pitches	As required	
	Reinstate pitches (after matches)	As required	
	Top dress worn areas	As required	
	Hang/remove nets	As required	
	Pierce goalmouths & compacted areas		
	Repair goalmouths/worn areas	End of season	
	Remove, clean, paint & store goal posts	End of season	
	Support bookings/liaison with teams	Throughout season	
10	Gates		
	Lock & Unlock	Daily	Idverde staff
11	Interpretive Panels & Information Boards		
	Remove graffiti	As required	Idverde staff & Friends
	Update information		
	Mixed Hedge		

12	Clip hedge face	Annually	ldverde staff
13	Litter Bins		
	Empty litter bins Empty recycling	Daily Weekly 3x per week	ldverde staff

Appendix 3: Plan of Recreation Ground & Merton Park Green Walks and Adjoining Nursery Road Playing Field



Plan: showing Abbey Recreation Ground, the four 'parcels' of the Merton Park Green Walks, and the adjoining Nursery Road Playing Field



Image: One of the information boards at either end of the Green Walks

Appendix 4 : Marketing Strategy

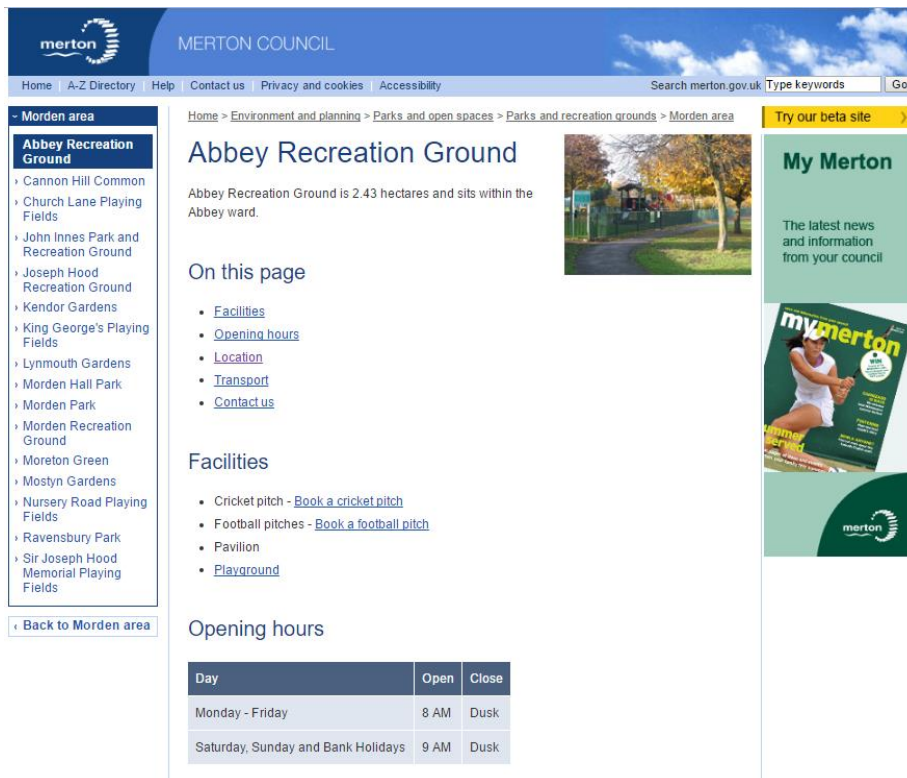


Image: Screenshot of Abbey Recreation Ground page on Merton Council website

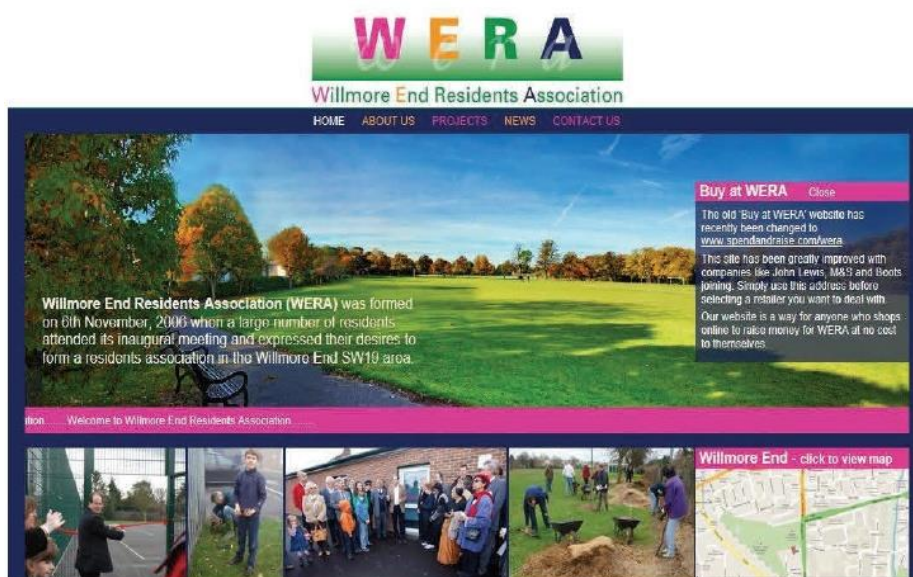


Image: Screenshot of WERA website

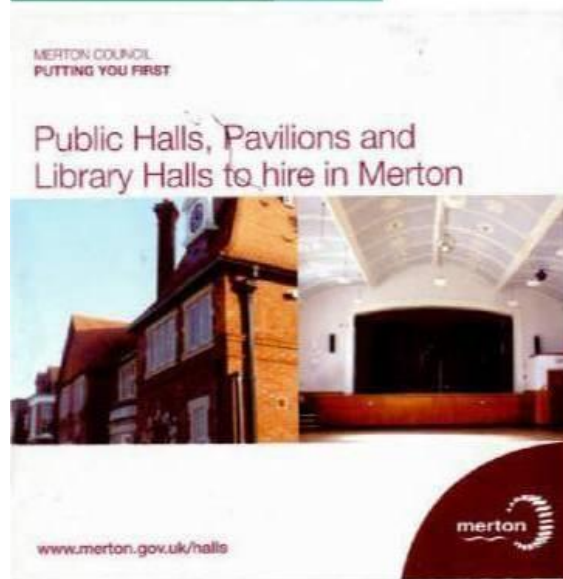
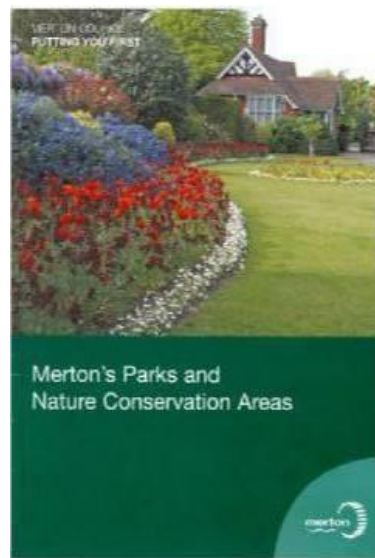


Image: Sample marketing leaflets

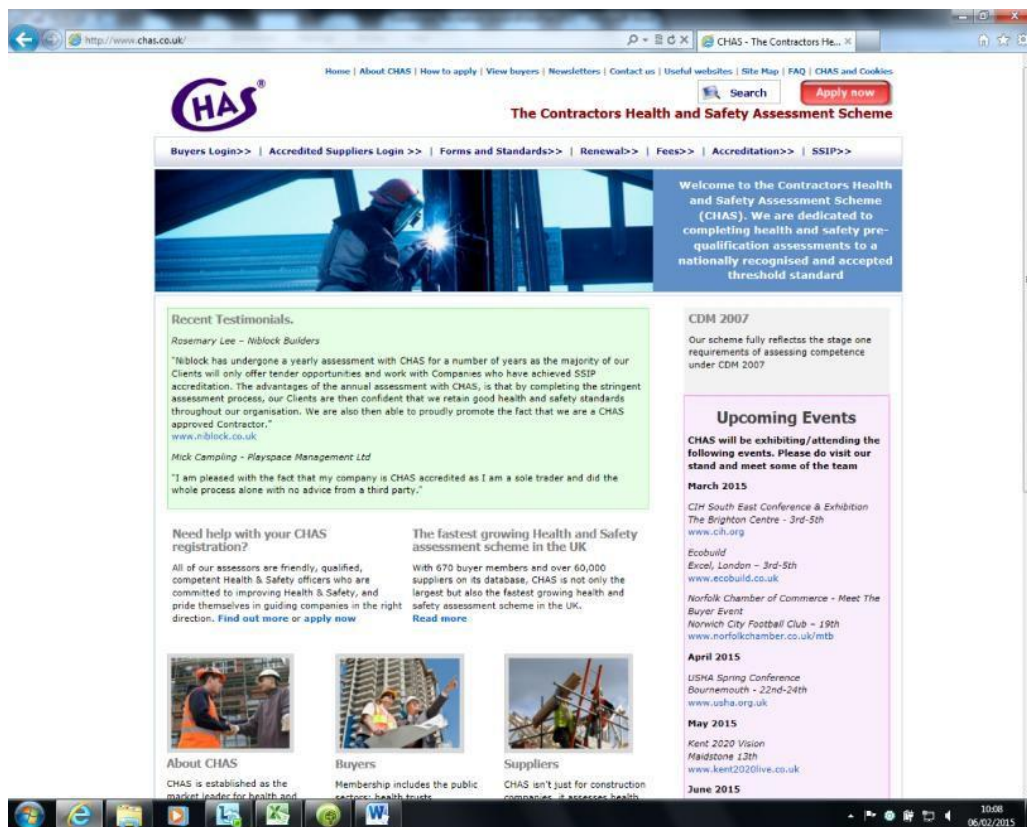
Appendix 5: Health & Safety

LB Merton's health and safety policies are available on the Council's website and are displayed at the service's main operational depot at Hillcross Avenue/Morden Park.
See Internet: www.merton.gov.uk/

The statement of the Director responsible for Health & Safety is posted on the Merton staff intranet at:

<http://intranet/docstatementfromdirectorresponsibleforhs.doc>

The Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS) is available to view at www.merton.gov.uk/chas on the Merton Internet site.



Appendix 6: Park Byelaws

The London Borough of Merton's generic byelaws for its parks and open spaces, approved and implemented in 1992, apply at Abbey 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

Three Kings Piece	Tuesdays & Thursdays Sundays	18.00	–	21.30
	Except on the days when the ground is occupied for the purpose of the "Mitcham Fair".	13.00 - 16.00		

DOG PROHIBITED AREAS

20.

- (i) No person (other than a registered blind person) in charge of a dog shall, without reasonable excuse, permit a dog to enter or remain in any of the areas listed in Schedule 2 and hereafter referred to as the "dog prohibited area";
- (ii) Notice of the effect of this byelaw shall be given by signs displayed in conspicuous positions at the entrances to the dog prohibited area;
- (iii) An officer of the Council or any Constable may require a person in charge of a dog which has entered a dog prohibited area to remove the dog therefrom;
- (iv) For the purpose of this Byelaw the keeper of the dog shall be deemed in charge thereof, unless the Court is satisfied that at the time when the dog entered or remained in the dog prohibited area it had been placed in or taken into the charge of some other person; and
- (v) In paragraph (iv) above "the keeper" shall include the owner of the dog or any person who habitually has it in his possession

OBSTRUCTION

21. No person shall in the pleasure ground:

- (a) Intentionally obstruct any officer or the Council in the proper execution of his duties;
- (b) Intentionally obstruct any person carrying out an act which is necessary to the proper execution of any contract with the Council; or
- (c) Intentionally obstruct any other person in the proper use of the pleasure ground, or behave so as to give reasonable grounds for annoyance to other persons in the pleasure ground

PENALTY FOR OFFENCES

22. Every person who shall offend against any of these byelaws shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding Level 2 on the Standard Scale. **REMOVAL OF**

OFFENDERS

23. Any person offending against any of these byelaws may be removed from the pleasure ground by any other officer of the Council or any Constable. **REVOCATION OF BYELAWS**

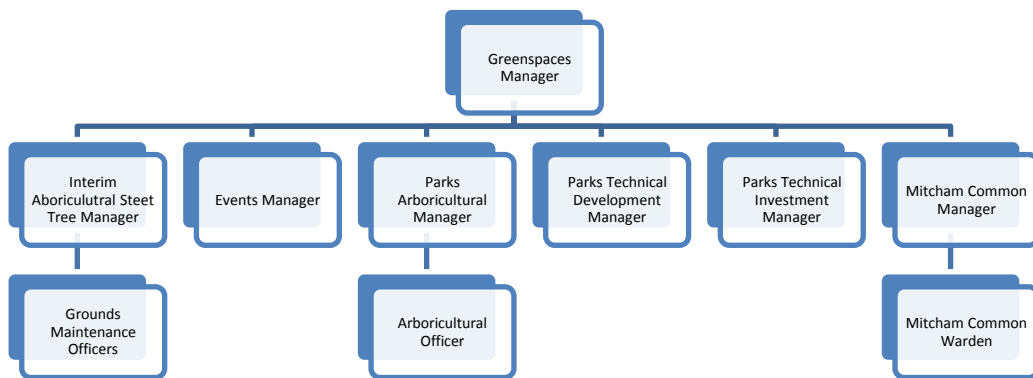
24. The byelaws with respect to pleasure grounds made by the council in the Twenty

fourth day of April 1968, and confirmed by the Secretary of State on the Twenty seventh day of June 1968 and subsequently amended on the Twenty fourth day

of July 1975 and the Eighteenth day of February 1983 are hereby revoked.

Appendix 7 Management structure

LBM Greenspaces Structure



Idverde Staff Structure



Appendix 8 Friends Activities

One of WERA's long-term objectives was to obtain Green Flag status for Abbey recreation ground and the Merton Park Green Walks. Now that the necessary funding is in place WERA is looking forward to working with the Greenspaces team and idverde to carry out the work necessary to both achieve and maintain Green Flag status.

Appendix 9 Climate Change Action Plan

Adaption	<i>Actions</i>
<p>Tree planting:</p> <p>Provide a tree planting budget for new tree planting in Parks New woodland areas in Parks and Open Spaces Encourage Green corridors</p> <p>Advice to Highways on street tree planting that may be more suitable to changing climate – changing species is premature at the present time, a greater variety is very likely a good move.</p> <p>Advice to Education to minimise removal of trees when creating new classrooms. BS 5837 should be followed when contractors are working in schools to minimise costs of maintenance or removal of trees in the future.</p> <p>Where tree removal is necessary, and replacement desirable, planting should be based on tree canopy area rather than like for like number replacement as a new sapling is NOT a replacement for a mature tree lost.</p> <p>Plant new trees in locations where there are higher visitor numbers. Popularise the conceptions, tree cover, tree canopy, shade tree.</p>	<p>Capital bid for Tree planting in 2009/10 Woodland/ hedge planting</p> <p>Schemes have taken place in Winter 2008 at Colliers Wood, Morden Park and Wandle Park in conjunction with local residents and tree wardens. Merton Group of London Wildlife Trust have enhanced a hedgerow at Beverley Meads Local Nature Reserve</p> <p>New guidance given to Education and Highways to minimise removal of trees and protect existing ones. Legislative protection of school trees is advised.</p> <p>Tree Strategy to be produced by 2010.</p> <p>Tree planting in streets may reflect changing climate with more planting of a greater variety of species from a wider range of climatic zones.</p> <p>More shade tree planting in play areas and paddling pools where high usage by Children and parents during the summer.</p> <p>For example, New trees were planted at Dundonald play area in 2008.</p>

<p>Shrub Planting:</p> <p>Planting should reflect the changing conditions.</p> <p>Replace bedding plants with sustainable planting in consultation with local residents</p> <p>Discourage use of more bedding plants and herbaceous plants which require more</p> <p>Maintenance and requires more water.</p> <p>Discourage the use of peat in bedding plants and plants bought in from Contractors</p> <p>Look at vertical planting walls.</p>	<p>Sustainable planting at Cannizaro Park to replace some bedding near main entrance and Cannizaro Hotel.</p> <p>Sustainable planting proposed at Ravensbury Park, Colliers Wood, Rowan Road Recreation Ground, Kendor Gardens in 2009/10.</p>
<p>Grounds Maintenance</p> <p>Relax mowing regimes to reduce number of cuts.</p> <p>Use of electric vehicles in Parks</p> <p>Green waste bays and composting on site</p> <p>Bark chip area so that mulch can be re-used in Parks but not to suppress ground flora in established wooded areas and dense shrubberies.</p> <p>Reduce production of woodchip by retaining deadwood piles/ habitat in Parks</p> <p>Reduction in use of pesticides and herbicides</p> <p>Irrigation systems to preserve water and protect existing planting schemes</p> <p>Encourage watering in the morning</p> <p>Encourage staff to ensure lights; heating is turned off/down when the buildings are not in use.</p> <p>Investigate alternatives to peat in any future bedding contracts.</p> <p>De-compaction methods after heavy use in Parks</p> <p>Prevent vehicle use and mowing around important trees. Purchase of mulcher/composter to avoid taking vegetation off site. Ensuring drainage ditches kept clear</p> <p>Sun safety advice and appropriate clothing given to Grounds Maintenance staff.</p>	<p>The Grounds maintenance contract is now in house so grass is cut when needed rather than when contract states. In some areas cuts have reduced from 17 times a year to 10. This will reduce compaction and reduce machine journeys.</p> <p>Many Local Nature reserves have meadows, which are only cut once a year.</p> <p>There are 6 electric vehicles in Parks.</p> <p>Team meetings held regularly to ensure unnecessary energy use. Turf management regime in partnership with Grassroots Trading Company introduced on bowling greens including John Innes Park to reduce chemical use. Reviewed annually with consultation</p> <p>with Grassroots Co. specialist. All bedding plants are now grown in peat free substrate</p>

	<p>De-compaction machinery used to reduce compaction and water logging after heavy use in Parks. i.e. Fireworks Displays and Tennis parking at Wimbledon Park.</p> <p>No heavy vehicles or mowing around established trees.</p> <p>New Composter purchased in 2008.</p>
<p><i>Hard Surfaces</i></p> <p>Reduce amount of hard surfacing in Parks</p>	<p>Where possible use free draining materials/grass Crete which reduces water problems elsewhere.</p>

<p>Internal Partnership Working</p> <p>Work with Planners and Corporate Facilities team to ensure that new buildings are constructed in an energy efficient way. These may include</p> <p>Green roofs Solar Panels Wind turbines</p> <p>Retention of all mature trees by appropriate development design Encouraging use of local contractors</p> <p>Waste management- separate skips for recyclable materials to avoid material being taken to landfill</p> <p>Re-using of existing buildings and materials</p> <p>Use of new, sustainable materials; masonite timber framed walls, warmcel insulation, English Oak, Natural ventilation, Larger windows to reduce lighting in buildings, Control systems, Energy efficient lighting, PVC free cables, Dual flush toilets, Miliken Earth square carpet, water based paints, rainwater harvesting.</p> <p>Work with Planners and Corporate Facilities to ensure that where possible existing buildings have energy efficient ways of operating. These may include replacing boilers with condensing boilers, introducing on off switches on taps, lights, heating to reduce electricity, water and costs and use.</p> <p>Work with Planners to ensure that S106 funding is made available for enhancing our Parks and Open Spaces.</p> <p>Work with Planners to protect our Greenspaces and increase areas of Green space with sufficient revenue funding to maintain in the future.</p> <p>Work with Waste Services to re-cycle waste</p>	<p>New building proposed for Cannon Hill Common, Capital bid in 2009 to replace existing old pavilion at Abbey Recreation Ground. Pavilion completed in Autumn 2011. This build has a Green Roof.</p> <p>Corporate Facilities maintain park buildings and have a programme of works to reduce energy use in buildings. These may include condensing boilers, on/off switches, upgrade heating, lighting, and reduced water requirement for toilets.</p> <p>Over £300,000 S106 improvements in Parks in 200/8/9</p> <p>Recycling bins installed in Parks.</p>
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<p>External Partners</p> <p>Work with Local Friends Groups and other partners to bid for funding to enhance open spaces and priority wildlife habitats.</p> <p>Protect existing Green space with assistance from Partners. Gather and store biological data that will help guide land management and development control decisions.</p>	<p>L.B.M works closely with E.A, National Trust, Merton Group of LWT, London Biodiversity Partnership and Friends Groups including 24 Friends Groups including Tree Wardens Friends of Sir Joseph Hood, Friends of John Inns Park and Make Colliers Wood Happy to bid for funding and help improve Parks in Merton.</p> <p>A recent project included a lake restoration project at Cannon Hill Common where funding was achieved through a Heritage Lottery Bid and contribution from Cannon Hill Common Friends and the Environment Agency</p> <p>LBM has entered into a service level agreement with Greenspace Information for Greater London.</p>
<p>Adaption through staff skills</p> <p>Timing of Operations</p> <p>Choices of plants</p> <p>Managing the soil organic matter, content and fertility</p> <p>Managing irrigation</p> <p>Managing pests and diseases</p> <p>Training/Conferences to learn new skills and exchange information</p>	<p>Reduction in use of herbicides and Pesticides in Parks.</p> <p>Training proposed for staff in 2009 include conservation skills.</p> <p>All staff have filled in a training requirement sheet in November 2008</p>

Appendix 10 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	idverde	020 8540 1606	Zsolt.Takacs@idverde.co.uk
Tree Officer	David Lofthouse	020 8545 3659	david.lofthouse@merton.gov.uk
General Enquiries		020 8545 3677	leisure@merton.gov.uk