



# Springfields Park



## Management Plan 2011 - 2020

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## Introduction

In 2009, Cheltenham Borough Council published a 15-year strategy for parks, people and wildlife. The Vision of that Green Space Strategy is:

**'To work together to ensure a comprehensive network of attractive, valued and well-used, locally distinct green spaces, that are accessible, safe and welcoming, which meet the existing and future needs of the community, enhance bio-diversity and are managed sustainably to reduce our impact on climate change.'**

These over-arching principles apply to the management of green space overall and to the management of individual green spaces.

They feed into the **Park Management Plan for Springfields Park**, which is an important tool in:

- ***collating detailed knowledge about the park in a single document***
- ***planning for the future in conjunction with the stakeholders***
- ***setting objectives and standards which can be measured***
- ***identifying and prioritising input and resources required***
- ***ensuring the efficient and effective management of the site***

The Springfields Park Management Plan builds on the success of the previous 5 years. A large amount of development work was undertaken and with this work now largely complete, the new management plan looks to ensure maintenance of the high standards achieved and to identify any new and emerging requirements for the park.

This plan covers 10 years, with a review of strategy and policy after 5 years (in 2016) and an annual review and updating of the action plan. On-going feedback from stakeholders will feed into continuous improvements.

Details of the policy context in which the Green Space Strategy (GSS) and subsequently the Springfields Park Management Plan have been written can be found in appendix 1 or attached link:

[http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.php?categoryID=200073&documentID=612](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?categoryID=200073&documentID=612).

The objective in the formulation of both has been to support and contribute to the aims and strategies of the authority as defined locally and within the local, regional and national framework of strategies and policies.

This Park Management Plan has been written using CABI Space guidelines, as recommended by the Green Flag Awards Scheme. Cheltenham Borough Council uses Green Flag criteria in assessment of and management plans for parks as a national quality standard and a useful tool for improvement.

**This document gives an overview of Springfields Park within its local context. It details the assets and infrastructure of the Park and outlines short, medium and long-term objectives following condition surveys and user group consultation. The Action Plan details items to be undertaken and anticipated timescales and outcomes.**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Overview of Springfields Park</b>
<b>Grid Reference</b>	392145 / 223745
<b>Area</b>	7.5 hectares
<b>Tenure</b>	<p>The site is owned and managed by Cheltenham Borough Council working in conjunction with the Hesters Way Partnership and the Friends of Springbank</p> <p><a href="http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk">www.cheltenham.gov.uk</a> / Operations: 01242 250019</p>
<b>Site History</b>	<p>Springfields Park is situated in the Springbank ward in an area of Cheltenham know as Hesters Way. The area came into being shortly after World War II as part of the national drive to create more housing. The land was compulsorily purchased by the then Cheltenham Corporation.</p> <p>Springfields Park (formerly Welch Road playing field) has been developed in four phases. In the early 1950s, the council created two football pitches and a play area on what had previously been farmland. Adjacent farmland became available in around 1970 and two further pitches were added, along with a cricket square. Additional land, formerly belonging to a local scrap merchant, was acquired in the 1980s, increasing the size yet again.</p> <p>The latest phase of development took place in 2007, when the space was extensively landscaped to change its character from that of an open playing field to an informal park incorporating native plants, meadow and wetland areas.</p>
<b>Site Description</b>	<p>Springfields Park is an informal park and playing field surrounded by houses and gardens, located in the residential area of Hesters Way.</p> <p>The park has a fenced play area for toddlers and infants and extensive play facilities for older children. There is a MUGA, two grass sports pitches and a skateboard half pipe with 'teenage' seating and a pavilion. All of this is contained within a natural landscape of meadow and swales.</p>
<b>Green Space Classification</b>	<p>Springfields Park is identified in the Cheltenham Green Space Strategy as having the primary purpose classification of Playing Field, with secondary uses for play and dog walking. If repeated now, the primary classification would be that of a Park.</p>

<b>Access</b>	The park is located off the A4019 Tewkesbury Road. There are seven entrances, with the main entrance off Springbank Road by the Springbank Community Resource Centre. There is a cycle path through the site and a circular path around it. Car parking is freely available on the roads surrounding the park or at the Springbank Community Resource Centre Car Park. There are regular bus services linking with the Cheltenham Spa Railway Station and town centre.
<b>Opening Times</b>	The park is open to the public at all times.
<b>Toilets</b>	There are fully DDA compliant toilet facilities in the Community Resource Centre adjacent to the park.
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<p><b>Cheltenham Borough Council:</b> Property Services, Community Development, Operations, Parks &amp; Landscapes, Environmental Protection, Community and Play Rangers.</p> <p><b>Community:</b> Hesters Way Partnership, Friends of Springbank, Arthur Dye School, Students Not in Education Employment and Training (NEET) from Protocol Skills, Youth Offending Service, Giggles Day Nursery. Police and Police Community Support Officers.</p>
<b>Profile of Area and Local Population</b>	<p>Springfields Park lies in Springbank Ward.</p> <p>Population: 6094 (2001 census) Female 53%, male 47%</p> <p>Average age: 41</p> <p>Majority: white</p> <p>Majority: Christian</p> <p>Majority: good health</p> <p>Majority: employed</p> <p>Majority: owner / occupiers</p>
<b>Park User Profile</b> (from visual and anecdotal evidence)	Typically the visitor lives in the surrounding area, arrives on foot and will stay between half an hour to an hour to walk, exercise / relax or to enable accompanying children to make use of the play facilities. Quite often people will walk through the park to visit the community centre, medical facilities and shops.

## Aerial View of Springfields Park Location



(Aerial View taken prior to recent development of the site)

## The Development of Springfields Park (formerly Welch Road playing field)

As described above, the most recent phase in the development of Springfields Park began



in 2007 and formed part of a wider initiative to regenerate the Springbank area. The playing field, as it was then, reflected the general decline in the Springbank ward at the time. It had little to offer people by way of facilities and was considered a no-go area because of drug dealing, joy-riding and general anti-social behaviour.

A project was established to regenerate the space, along with the development of a community resource centre. The project was the first of its kind to be funded by pooling S106 developer

contributions from several housing developments nearby and combining the sums of money dedicated to sustainable transport, play and public art.

Numerous consultation events took place, combining a fun day, video booth and more. A steering group was established to oversee the development of the master plan, which was to be produced by a landscape architect. Recurring themes from the consultation were ponds, fish, seats, nature, trees, events and play.

Due to overwhelming concern about anti-social behaviour, it was decided to 'phase' the implementation of the scheme. Phase One of the plan was dedicated to managing crime. It included installation of permanent, remote CCTV cameras linked to the police HQ camera room, and establishing a local Park Watch group.

The park was re-named at this time, as the former name had become associated with the negative aspects of the park.

This major re-development of the park has seen major landscaping works, installation of high specification facilities and infrastructure for many different park user groups (including children, young people, teenagers and families) and creation of multiple new habitats for wildlife.



Innovative use of natural materials has been employed to create natural play and landscape features and the whole project has been used as an opportunity to bring ecological and bio-diversity issues into the heart of a built environment.

Subsequent phases have seen the installation of informal landscaped play facilities, funded through the government 'Playbuilder' initiative and the installation of a multi-use games area (MUGA).

Whilst not all of the previous problems associated with the space have been eradicated, sufficient work has been done through community involvement, police enforcement and physical improvement that the space has become an important and well-used community asset once again.



## PARK FACILITIES

### Infant / Toddler Play Area

The play area conforms to British Standards and is subject to weekly, monthly and annual inspection regimes (see appendix 2). There is a detailed sign incorporating a code for safe play and an emergency contact number.

The facility was installed in 2004, prior to the park regeneration project and was previously subject to heavy vandalism, despite being of robust construction. The area is in reasonable condition now and is well used and liked. Feedback indicates that whilst the equipment is relatively new, it is in need of 'freshening up' and this is planned for Spring 2011.

### Older Childrens Area



Like the toddler play area, the conventional part of this facility was constructed in 2004 and was initially targeted by vandals.

Subsequent refurbishment came about through the government 'Playbuilder' initiative in 2009, when a wider more informal area around the existing facility was incorporated into the footprint.

The extended area makes more use of the informal landscape and alternative materials, such as local boulders from the Forest of Dean, which were already an important landscape feature of the site. There is also bespoke-made play equipment constructed using oak.

Early observations and feedback indicate that the facility is well liked and popular with all ages. There are no plans to make changes.

## **MUGA**

A multi use games area (MUGA) with hard-standing is located near an area of seating for young people.

The facility is well-used, especially in the summer months and in particular by teenagers and young adults.

It is also used by younger children and families, as well as play rangers and the sports development team for school holiday activities.

The facility is in good condition and does not require any work in the short to medium term.



## **Skateboard Half Pipe**

The half pipe was installed in 2005 and is used by local youngsters doing tricks with bicycles and as a general hang out. The intended use is minimal but in reality, this is probably best provided for by other purpose-built facilities elsewhere in the Borough.

The half pipe is in good condition but beginning to show signs of corrosion. There are no plans to undertake works other than re-painting. The facility is unlikely to be replaced as and when it reaches the end of its working life.

## **Youth Shelter**

The youth shelter was developed as a public art project by the artist Jony Easterby, in conjunction with local youngsters. Jony was chosen from several artists that were shortlisted for the commission.

The project ran simultaneously with the consultation process for the park project and in collaboration with the landscape architect in terms of the setting within the park.

The shelter resembles a flying saucer and is lit up at night by a line of blue LED lights in the outer rim.

It is made from stainless steel and is very robust. It requires very little in the form of maintenance and no works are planned for it.



## **Football Pitches**

There were originally two football pitches and a rugby pitch which, prior to the park regeneration project, were unused.

Local demand suggested that there would be a requirement for one senior pitch and a mini and junior pitch, if the anti-social behaviour problems could be addressed and issues surrounding car park and pavilion security could be resolved.

The development of the community resource centre and car park with CCTV has had the desired effect and both pitches are well used again.

The junior pitch is also used for lacrosse and the senior pitch by the Saracens football club on a weekly basis.

The pitch is in reasonable condition but is subject to periodic water-logging, which has been alleviated by the creation of swales on the site.

## **Pavilion**

A changing pavilion has always existed on the site and was recently refurbished as part of the Council's twenty-year asset management plan and to coincide with the regeneration project. It has a fully DDA compliant toilet.

The facility is managed by the Council's Property and Asset Management Division and is included in their 20-year rolling maintenance programme. The facility is in good condition and is now well used.

# PARK INFRASTRUCTURE

## Hard Infrastructure

**Signage:** Signage and interpretation material is due to be installed in spring 2011 as part of the final phase of work.

The welcome signs will provide an overview of the history of the park and a map showing where the facilities of the park are located. Contact numbers for the Council's parks department and also emergency services are included, as well as the Park Code.

The interpretation signs will focus on the wildlife that can be found in the park. Wildlife survey work has already been undertaken with the local Arthur Dye Primary School, and this, along with art work, will be incorporated into the panels. A similar sign is planned this year by the Hesters Way partnership to explain the workings and benefit of the wind turbine.

Separate signs exist for the play area and ad-hoc signage is erected at the discretion of the Council's Enforcement Team relating to dog fouling and litter.

**Seats:** The park is furnished with metal benches with arm-rests on the main macadam paths. Benches can be acquired through the Green Environment Commemorative Seat programme.

Rustic-style timber benches are used on the perimeter paths and are more in-keeping with the wilder, more informal areas of the park. Overall, the benches are in reasonable condition and are inspected in accordance with the schedule and renovated as required.



**Litter Bins:** There are numerous litter bins located near to areas where children and young people are likely to gather. Standardised on an Earth Anchor Big Ben bin, this helps to create a uniform look for the park and also helps manage costs with uniform liners / spares and so on.

**Pathways:** The main diagonal path and cycle path are constructed from macadam. The circular pathway leading to the seating and wildlife areas is self binding gravel. All pathways are DDA compliant, are in good condition and are well-used by walkers, cyclists, joggers, dog walkers and more.

## Metal Work and Barriers

The park has a number of access points and frontages with the highway, which are potential access points for unauthorised vehicles. Each one is protected by robust square or round section steel barriers in order to prevent this. Whilst it does little for the

appearance of the park, the benefits far outweigh this because the occurrence of joy-riding or burnt out cars has virtually ceased since their introduction. This has been a major factor in the park becoming an enjoyable place to visit.

The barriers are inspected as part of the parks infrastructure inspection programme and maintained accordingly. Overall the barriers and gateways are in good condition, but painting is required in order improve their visual appearance.

## **Green Infrastructure**

### **Trees**

There are few mature trees of particular note in Springfields Park, owing to its former primary use as a playing field. Thousands of trees have been planted, of which some will be selected and left to mature. In 2010 five standard trees were planted at the request of the local people.

The tree management regime for the park is therefore to leave trees to take their natural shape and minimise pruning unless there is a safety issue. This is good arboriculture practice, keeping the trees looking at their best.

Any trees which die (and are assessed as suitable) will be left to decay (see below). This presents opportunities for re-planting.

Overall, tree management in Springfields Park is undertaken by an in-house team of tree professionals with the following aims:

- to comply with the overall plan for, and management of, the park
- to preserve and enhance the existing landscape
- to identify and undertake work required for health and safety reasons

### ***(Example of tree inspection in appendix 3)***

#### **Dead Wood**

Given the much recognised benefits of leaving deadwood in situ, consideration will be given to leaving either standing dead wood or leaving tree trunks in situ when felling or tree surgery is required.

The ecological benefits include providing a habitat for various different decay fungi and wood boring insects, which in turn attract other wildlife further up the food chain. Different decay strategists will colonise standing dead wood and prone trunks. Standing trunks are also suitable sites for nesting birds, perches for birds and so on.



Having been a playing field for so long, there is minimal mature tree stock compared to a more historical park. That said, a dead wood policy in Springfields Park is likely to be beneficial, even with limited opportunities. The new play area has provided one such opportunity whereby tree trunks have been brought in from elsewhere for their play value, but they will also provide an ecological benefit.

Future opportunities for retention of dead wood will be considered on a case by case basis in accordance with the Council's policy. Inspection and maintenance of standing and prone trunks will continue to be managed according to the Council's policy (available on request).

## Planting and Habitats

The quality of the planting was unquestionably an important factor in creating a nice park.

However it was recognised by all that an important issue when considering the style of planting was the lack of revenue funding available to maintain a traditional manicured park.

It was recognised early-on that the landscape would need to be informal in nature, with less emphasis on intensive and costly horticultural practices, but still meeting the specific needs and themes that had emerged from the consultation.

Prior to the park being re-developed, a biodiversity survey was commissioned as part of a wider borough wide survey, the results of which informed the creation of a number of different habitats across the site. As a playing field, it had been of little habitat value, so there was plenty of opportunity to create a haven for wildlife, both to increase the biodiversity of the site but also for the educational and experiential opportunities that it would bring for local people.



The park boundaries have been planted with dog-rose, gooseberry, red currants, dogwood and gorse.

Many of these species provide flowers as a nectar source and berries for food. They are easy to maintain with a large scale flail cutter where necessary and, along with the boulders, create a landscape framework for the site.

Berries, leaves and flowers provide interest at different times of the year. Fruit trees have also been planted as follows:

- **Apple**, Beauty of Bath(M25), Holbrooke (M25), Lemon Pippin (M25)
- **Plum**, Victoria (Myrob), Early Prolific
- **Damson**, Merryweather Damson (Myrob)
- **Gage**, Old Greengage (Myrob)
- **Pear**, Conference, Jargonelle, Williams

The large boulder stepping stones, which create a raised path-way across the park, provide habitats suitable for amphibians, spiders and other insects.



In both the northern and western areas of the park, two large ponds have been excavated which serve dual purposes. They provide protection to the Springbank Community Resource Centre from flooding but they also constitute a fantastic aquatic habitat.

Over the past few years, planted vegetation has become established in the ponds, with species such as rushes, yellow iris and water mint now present. Dragonflies, amphibia, pond snails, water beetles and more are now inhabiting the ponds.



Five swales have also been created within the park, providing still-water habitats for an array of creatures such as water snails, dragonfly nymphs, water beetles and frogs.

During spring 2010, two of these ditches housed large populations of tadpoles.

To provide interest in colour, texture and to increase biodiversity, large areas of ground were re-seeded with wildflowers. In the general meadow areas, a mix of short-term annuals, such as cornflower and poppy, and long term perennials has been used.

The annuals gave a 'firework display' of colour in the early years, which were slowly replaced by more varied and longer-lasting colour as the perennials have established.

Park users were however disappointed with colour in subsequent years and in the visual quality of the vegetation towards autumn. There was also some dissatisfaction with the lack of accessibility into the wild flower areas.

To remedy this, paths were cut into wild flower areas to form an interlinking network.

The vegetation is cut, bailed and removed at the earliest opportunity in September. This course of action, although not ideal from a biodiversity standpoint, seems to have met with local approval.

This, and other experiences of establishing wild flower plantings in council parks and gardens, has been incorporated into a comprehensive review (*appendix 4, A Detailed Review of the Council's Wildflower Planting in Parks and Gardens*).

In order to achieve colour in subsequent years, trials have been undertaken in selected areas by undertaking power-harrowing to existing areas of wild flower.

The breaking-up of the ground appears to stimulate the germination of annual seed already present in the ground and provides a relatively cost-effective way of generating the colour without going to the lengths of cultivating and reseeding large areas.



In the wilder, damper areas, mixtures have been used which require little or no mowing and which can tolerate being submerged or prefer an existence on the margins of the pools and swales.

Within the informal play area, a tussock mix has been used where, apart from litter collection and cutting around equipment, horticultural maintenance is zero.

In the southern area of the park, an old hedge-line has been retained, where the boundary of the old scrap yard once was. In an area adjacent to this site, two copses have been planted, as part of the BBC Breathing Places Tree O'Clock event in 2009. The trees were supplied by the Woodland Trust and planted with assistance from the local community.

The hedge line and trees are important for supporting many species, including birds. Blue tits, blackbirds, house sparrows, starlings, goldfinches, house martins and more are seen.

The measures taken have significantly increased the range and quality of habitats available and many species not previously seen now inhabit the park.

The plan is for the biodiversity survey to be regularly updated by the local Springbank Environment group and for them to log their sightings onto a database.

## **Grass**

The close mown grass in the park forms both a low growing ground cover and a multi-use surface for informal play, sports surfaces, strolling and dog walking, and as a buffer between paths and wild flower areas. It will continue to be maintained at a height and in a condition to allow all of these activities to take place.

## MANAGEMENT OF SPRINGFIELDS PARK

Cheltenham Borough Council is responsible for the development, management and maintenance of Springfields Park.

This section of the management plan is in three sections.

The first deals with **Community Engagement**, involvement and use of the park, including marketing and events that bring people into the park.

The second section deals with **Environmental Management and Maintenance** of the park, including a financial breakdown of costs.

The third section deals with **Park Development** and includes a SWOT analysis, prior to the Action Plan which details the activities and improvements planned over the next several years.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As outlined above, Cheltenham Borough Council's policy is to develop parks and facilities in conjunction with park users. As such, consultation is undertaken on a regular basis and there is a good relationship with the Hesters Way Partnership, the Springbank Forum, and local schools.

Surveys of park users are undertaken by the community rangers to assist the Council and ensure that consultation is an integral part of the future development and management of the park.

A large number of events are organised to bring people into the parks, to encourage play, to educate about the local environment and to engage the local community with their park. Community events organised by the Hesters Way Partnership and the Council's Play and Community Ranger teams are well attended and appreciated by the local community. In the last two years, these have included:



- **April 2009: Creative Seeds Environment Project**  
Arts project sponsored by Environment Agency, enabling local park users to create environmentally inspired art work to encourage their peers to think about green issues.
- **June 2009: Environment Campaign**  
The start of an on-going environmental campaign to highlight anti-social issues, e.g. fly-tipping and dog fouling. It is centred on residential areas surrounding the park and has helped to reduce frequency of fly-tipping and is monitoring dog fouling. Residents share information with local community development worker and housing officers.
- **August 2009: Young People's Activities**  
A 'Places to Go' grant gave a group from Oasis Youth Centre the opportunity to run barbeques and activities in Springfieldss Park and over 50 young people attended.
- **September 2009 and 2010: Eco Fun Day** (appendix 2)  
A family fun day to encourage local people to think about the environment and how they can help 'do their bit'. During this event, a consultation took place to gauge the local communities' perception of the park. The outcome revealed how the residents were pleased with the changes within the park. A typical comment was "It feels much safer now and the tone has lifted and it is great to have paths going all the way round".
- **December 2009: Breathing Places Tree Planting Event** (appendix 2)  
Cheltenham Borough Council's Community Rangers linked into the BBC Breathing Places event 'Tree o'clock'. The event was part of a record attempt to plant 1 million trees across Britain in 1 hour. 30 people were involved and 700 trees were planted in Springfieldss Park within the one hour time-frame.
- **October 2009 and 2010: Community Action Day** (appendix 2)  
'Make a difference' community action day where residents were encouraged to volunteer a couple of hours to help to clean up the park.
- **June 2010 Breathing Places Wild Day Out** (appendix 2)  
BBC Breathing Places 'Wild day out' event ran in partnership with the Hester's Way Community Project and Cheltenham Borough Council Community Rangers. The event involved local parents and children taking a closer look at the park to identify some of the wildlife that uses the park, and how they can encourage wildlife to their gardens.
- **November 2010: Tree Planting Event**  
The Giggles day nursery received 30 plants from the Woodland Trust and Sainsbury tree planting scheme. The trees were planted by the children of the nursery within the nursery grounds and the park.

In addition, the park has attracted town wide providers to deliver services:

- **Play Gloucestershire** organise frequent events encouraging young people to enjoy outdoor recreation in the park (may be reduced due to budget pressures)
- **Cheltenham Town Football Club** have run sessions on Saturday mornings for junior school aged children (appendix 2)
- **Cheltenham Borough Council** Health and Well-being organise health walks and a buggy fit programme

Events often provide an opportunity for feedback and consultation and are sometimes set up for this to take place.

One thing that has come through very strongly from the most recent set of consultation events is a strong desire to keep all parts of the space accessible to users and to get on top of litter problems.

## The Local Community

Friends of Springbank (FoS) was set up originally as a specific residents association and subsequently changed its name to be more inclusive of the area as a whole.

Friends of Springbank encompasses many groups, including the Springbank Environment Group, Bingo, craft clubs and more. It has a governing board including a chairman and treasurer and meets from periodically. It has raised funds for various projects (often with the help of Hesters Way Partnership) including the Springbank Community Garden. It also supports fun days in conjunction with the Community Centre.



**Springbank Community Action Day**

Thursday 29th October 11am

"Make a difference" and join the litter pick teams at Springbank Community Resource Centre at 11am. All equipment and lunch will be provided FREE for volunteers.

FREE advice from fire safety, crime reduction, housing officers and Working Links

To celebrate a successful morning join us between 2-4 pm @ Springbank Community Resource Centre for FREE:

- refreshments
- prize draw
- Face Painting
- Climbing Wall
- Art and Crafts
- Juggling John

A network of partners working in partnership to build stronger communities

Hesters Way Partnership, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Oxford, Banbury Shroffesbury, Gloucestershire Housing Association, Glousters Heritage, Fosseyway Living, Cheltenham Borough Council

For further information contact Ceia on 548294 Community Development Hesters Way Partnership

Springbank Forum developed from an amalgamation of the group set up to manage the development of the Springbank Community Resource Centre Building and a local Housing Association meeting for Springbank.

It is managed by Hesters Way Partnership and aims to address issues specific to the local area, bringing together as many stakeholders as possible/useful.

The Springbank Environment Group, set up to assess ecological developments in the park, has now been amalgamated into the Forum to reduce the number of meetings and to enable wider input from local organizations.

The Springbank Environment Group is an important partner for the Council in the management and maintenance of the park. They undertake monthly tidy-ups of the park as well as *ad hoc* ones in between if required.

## Marketing and Promotion

Marketing of the Park is an important component of its management. Many of the events and activities are organised by the Hesters Way Partnership and Springbank Forum. As such, any events and activities are widely publicised through their well-established communications network in the locality, which links into the housing associations, local police, primary care, education and child care and local resident groups, to name but a few.

Council-led activities also benefit from the same promotional routes.

The Council's Operations Division will continue to work with the Council's communications team and others to ensure that the park and the events taking place within it are well advertised and that people are informed about developments and initiatives.

Event details are provided to the public and to staff via an event / information booklet, through the local media and Operations section web pages, the intranet, flyers and posters to schools, local outlets and notice boards.

The Council will continue to maintain several web pages about the park. A review of these pages suggests that they could be updated, perhaps with the inclusion of a new plan of the park and additional photographs and some updating of the information. This has been picked up in the action plan.

### Using the Green Flag Award in Marketing

Once achieved, the Green Flag logo will be a very important tool in promoting the newly regenerated park and will be applied to publicity relating to Springfields Park, for example, posters, flyers, web pages and local media releases, being emblematic of the quality and standard of the park.

The extremely high use of the park and excellent attendance at park events and activities suggests that the marketing for the park is achieving its aims and does not need a major overhaul.

The few areas requiring attention are addressed in the Action Plan.

### Special Events

Special events are events organised by external organisations looking to use Council open space as an event venue.

They range from small events, such as a scout jamboree or sponsored walk, to fun fairs, film shoots, television broadcasts and a range of food festivals

The parks and open spaces are actively promoted as event venues to the community and to organisations. There are guidelines for events that cover all elements of event organisation, such as insurance, risk assessments, setting up, clearing up times, duration and nuisance to local residents.

With the regeneration of the park, there are more opportunities to market it as a potential venue for external events and this will be addressed with the Special Events Officer.

**Calling all FOOTY FANS !!**  
Want to help your kids learn football skills and earn an FA coaching badge? We are looking for players aged 7-10 & helpers to start the;

**Springfield Park**  
**Football Coaching Sessions**

featuring  
**Cheltenham Town FC**  
Starts 10am-12pm  
8th January 2011

We need  
Children in  
Years 3, 4, 5 and 6  
to make this happen

INTERESTED?  
Come along on 2nd  
or for details call  
Andy on 548294

**CHELtenham TOWN FC**

## Community and Play Ranger Services

The **community ranger** service is an important tool in raising the profile of the park.

The rangers have a remit to encourage community involvement and to educate.

They achieve extensive media coverage for their programme of events and activities, which helps to promote both the Ranger activities and the park they are operating within. The Rangers are identifiable by their uniform and logo'd vehicle and bicycles (as are landscape personnel).



### Ranger logo by 8 year-old Helena Bevan, Gloucester Rd school

Over the lifetime of this management plan for Springfields Park, there is going to be an increased emphasis on ecology, bio-diversity and sustainability in the park.

Therefore the focus of the community ranger team will move in this direction. There is a new ecology ranger whose remit will be to work on improving the habitats for bio-diversity, on educating the public and on supporting wildlife.

The **Play Ranger** team organises events in school holidays in various locations and Springfields Park is included in this programme.

Typical events include sports, circus skills, face painting, arts and crafts and more.

Although the Play Ranger service may be reduced, as a result of budget cuts, the aim is to continue to provide as many events as possible.

## Easter Play Rangers; fun in the parks

During the Easter holidays the Play Rangers will be out across the Borough providing activities for children in the parks.

Locally this will be at **Spring Field Park and King George V** where they will be accompanied by the Sports Development team of Cheltenham Borough Council, the Community team from Cheltenham Borough Homes and the Youth Service.

Activities in Spring Field Park will include a range of play, sports, arts and crafts face painting and games for

youngsters to experience and enjoy.

The activities will all be **FREE** and children and young people of all ages and families are welcome to. Why not come down to **Spring Field on**

**Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th 2-4pm April** and

**King George V on Wednesday 16th & Thursday 17th April, 2-4pm** and see for yourselves.

There will also be paying activities at Christ's College;

**SportsZone Roadshow** (multi sport programme)

**Monday 14th - Friday 18th April**, 9.30 - 12.30 every day Ages 8-14. Cost £4/day or £16 / whole week

**Sport Specific** sessions in the afternoons. Ages 8-14. £5 each

**Badminton - Tuesday 15th** 1.30 - 4pm

**Athletics - Wednesday 16th** 1.30 - 4pm

**Cricket - Thursday 17th** 1.30 - 4pm

**Hockey - Friday 18th** 1.30 - 4pm

Call 775121 to book or just turn up!

### Security

The park has a number of access points and frontages with the highway which are potential access points for unauthorised vehicles. Each one is protected by robust square or round section steel barriers in order to prevent this. Whilst it does little for the appearance of the park, the benefits far outweigh this because the occurrence of joy-riding or burnt out cars has virtually ceased since their introduction and this has been a major factor in the park becoming an enjoyable place to visit.

The barriers are inspected as part of the parks infrastructure inspection programme and maintained accordingly. Overall the barriers and gateways are in good condition, but painting is required in order to improve their visual appearance.

### Policing

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) can patrol parks when there are problems identified and they work closely with community rangers and council officers.

Policing in the area is co-ordinated locally by the Hesters Way Safer Community Team who convene a quarterley meeting of the Hesters Way Neighbourhood Co-Ordination Group.

The meeting is open to members of the public and is attended by council officers, housing managers and local community groups. Where appropriate the police will set up SARA

plans or specific site based surgeries and report back accordingly. Link : [Springbank and Fiddlers Green Community](#)

**The Policing Pledge:**

“Our local pledge to you is to supply you with your local community policing team contacts, dates of your next neighbourhood policing meetings, details of your local priorities and the work being carried out towards those priorities. Our commitment for SCT staff is to spend 80% of their time visibly working in your neighbourhood, tackling your priorities. “

Springfields Park is the only park in Cheltenham to benefit from CCTV surveillance. The cameras are remotely operated and send good quality pictures back to the police control room.



Overall, the security measures implemented, in line with Council objectives to reduce anti-social behaviour and reduce the fear of crime within parks and green spaces, are beneficial in Springfields Park.

Some aspects will be reviewed during the life of this management plan and the situation will be monitored and reviewed to ensure continued success of the approach.

Council staff working in the park, for example, gardeners or Community and Play Rangers, are identifiable by their uniforms.

This helps to maintain a 'presence' in the park and identify people able to assist members of the public.

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

### Litter Enforcement

Cheltenham Borough Council operates a fixed penalty scheme for anyone found dropping litter and cigarettes in public places. This is an important part of the aim to protect and improve the cleanliness of the town.

Signs have been put up around the town to warn people about this and it is hoped that this will prevent people from dropping litter, which is unsightly and causes harm to the environment.

Under section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act, it is an offence for people to drop litter in a public place. Section 88 of the act permits local authorities to appoint authorised officers to issue fixed penalty notices for littering. This is set at £80, with a discount if paid immediately, but could rise to as much as £2,500 if the fine is not paid.

Offenders are sent a formal fixed penalty notice within five days of being cautioned. They are given 14 days to pay the fine.

### **Dog Warden Service**

The Council has a series of Dog Byelaws and dog control measures across the town. In Springfields Park, three specific byelaws are in force:

- **Poop Scoop Byelaw:** It is an offence not to remove dog faeces
- **Dog Exclusion Area:** No dogs in the children's play areas
- **Dogs on Leads by Direction:** It is an offence to not put on a lead any dog that is likely to cause annoyance or disturbance, or when directed to do so by an authorised officer of the authority

### **What can be done about dog fouling?**

You can report incidents of fouling to the dog warden who will ask for your help in identifying the dog owner. In cases where there is sufficient evidence, owners could be issued with a fixed penalty notice. Failing to pay the penalty may lead to prosecution with a maximum fine of £1000.

To report dog fouling online, use our [report it](#) form



The council's enforcement officers regularly patrol the park and monitor compliance with the byelaws. Surveys are undertaken often in a high profile way so that park users are then aware that the park is being monitored and the extent of the problem can be visibly identified. They also respond to complaints or concerns about particular dogs and patrol at appropriate times accordingly.

The Operations Division, with the Cheltenham Animal Shelter and other organisations, hold an annual event in Cheltenham aimed at raising awareness of responsible dog ownership.



The event, “**Paws in the Park**”, has proved a great success, receiving local and regional recognition in the print and broadcast media.

Dog classes are judged by local vets.

Approximately 3,000 people attended in 2010.

Micro-chipping is available on the day.

Overall, the feedback from park users and Council staff in attendance at the park indicates that the current measures are working reasonably well and that canine visitors are making good use of the park alongside the human and wildlife park users. There are some problems with fouling and chewing of swing seats but the latter is being addressed successfully with the use of new citronella-impregnated swing seats.

## **Health & Safety**

At the forefront of park management is the need for the park and the people within it to be provided with a safe environment in which to work, rest and play.

All park infrastructure is inspected and maintained on a comprehensive and planned schedule. The play areas are inspected weekly, monthly and yearly, according to various local and statutory requirements. Copies of related documents are located in the appendices. In addition to regular inspections, the Council has 'Report It' phone numbers and e-mail addresses available so that any member of the public may report an area of concern, request further information or make suggestions.

## **Health and Safety Policies for Staff, Contractors and Park Users**

Cheltenham Borough Council takes a pro-active and comprehensive risk assessment approach to the management of health and safety in Springfields Park, as in all other parks and open green spaces. It has a Health, Safety and Welfare Policy, and supplementary guidance on the control of contractors on site.

Every employee signs, once read, their personal copy of the Council's health, safety and welfare policy. Each division is responsible for maintaining and regularly reviewing its own Health and Safety Risk Register, from which risk assessments and safe systems of work are developed if it is deemed necessary.

There are known procedures for reporting all accidents and incidents and for lone working for those employees who are in attendance at the park during the day.

Operations employees have a health and safety section in their personnel file, including evidence of health and safety training and any certificates awarded. Additional training needs are identified via the annual appraisal system.

Staff are offered health checks covering lung function, hearing and blood tests for pesticides and residual chemicals. All staff can take advantage of 'MOT' tests offered through the council's occupational health service.

Contractors working on behalf of the council are required to have Public Liability Insurance for at least £5 million and must provide copies of their generic and site specific risk assessments, method statements and safe systems of work and health and safety policies.

The Operations Division responsible for the management of Springfields Park has been previously assessed and found compliant with health and safety at work regulations and procedures and approved as such by CHAS – the Contractors, Health and Safety Assessment database – [www.chas.gov.uk](http://www.chas.gov.uk).

As well as those working within the park, the safety of park users is of the utmost importance and the various measures employed to monitor the integrity and safety of the park infrastructure and facilities are described in this document.

The council is currently reviewing its child protection policy and procedure for determining which employees require CRB checks. (Appendix 5 shows a risk assessment example.)

### Buildings Management and Maintenance

The pavilion and park are included within a rolling 20 year planned maintenance database of assets and properties held by the Property and Asset Management Division.

#### SUMMARY 5 YEARS

#### 20 Year Maintenance Programme

Sum of Cost	Year					Grand Total
Building	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Springfields Park Pavilion	1000	1000	1300	1300	8,700	13,300

#### SUMMARY

#### 20 Year Maintenance Programme

Sum of Cost	Year x 5				Grand Total
Building	Year 1-5	Year 5-10	Year 10-15	Year 15-20	Grand Total
Springfields Park Pavilion	13,300	18,400	18,600	15,100	47,900

A pavilion attendant looks after the pavilion, unlocking and locking it on match days and cleaning it during the week after bookings.

### Infrastructure and other facilities

Any major faults are responded to and addressed immediately by the parks infrastructure inspection officer through:

- scheduled inspection regimes (**Appendix 6 shows Site Infrastructure Inspection Sheet**)
- the 'REPORT IT!' facility on the council web site
- telephone calls or e-mails from the public or community police support officers

### Financial Aspects of Park Maintenance

The Council does not disaggregate the parks and landscapes budgets on a per park basis. However, costs for Springfields Park are broadly divided into two main areas: management and maintenance.

This roughly reflects the division within the Council's Operations department into a Park Development Team (planning and management of capital expenditure, marketing, events, play infrastructure, trees management etc) and a Landscape Group (grounds maintenance and cleansing.)

A budget cut imposed on the department will mean a small reduction in the overall amount allocated for the management and maintenance of Springfields Park but since it coincides with the near completion of the capital works, it is likely that the Parks Development technical input will be reduced without significantly impacting on the maintenance and standards in the immediate future.

The council also works with local organisations to supplement its own maintenance resources by forming partnerships with organisations such as the Wildlife Trust, the Probation Service and BTCV. The active involvement of local residents in the form of the Springbank Environment Group has also made a significant contribution to the maintenance of Springfields Park. The table below estimates the financial contribution equivalent of volunteer input.

<b>Voluntary Contribution @£50/day</b>	<b>Volunteer Group Activity</b>	<b>Voluntary contribution @ £50/day</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
	<i>Springbank Environment Group Monthly Litter</i>	60	3000	3000	3000
	<i>Volunteer Fruit Tree Planting</i>	5	250		
	<i>BBC Breathing Places Tree O'Clock</i>	9			450
	<i>Community Action Day</i>	7	350	350	350
	<i>Tree planting Event by Day Nursery</i>	1			50
<b>Total</b>			<b>3600</b>	<b>3350</b>	<b>3800</b>

Management functions are performed by the Green Environment's own parks development team, community rangers, and landscape maintenance sections.

The parks development and landscape teams are based in one building which aids communication between team members. Regular weekly meetings between landscape management officers, community rangers and parks development officers take place in order to keep everyone up-to-date with work in progress and development projects.

The Maintenance Plan for Springfields Park (*Shown in appendix 7*), it is currently under review as modifications to the maintenance of wild flower areas, previously referred to in this document, are being implemented.

Maintenance is undertaken by specialist mobile crews who work directly for the Council's Operations Division. Therefore no staff are based permanently at the site.

The Council's operations department employs full-time staff and temporary / seasonal staff.

The sum of their combined attendance in Springfields Park over the year, and that of specialist services that may be required for the maintenance of infra-structure is estimated to be equivalent of two-thirds of a full time person.

### **Facilities Maintenance**

All play equipment is regularly inspected with weekly and monthly written reports, together with an annual independent third-party inspection and report.

A Play Area and Recreation Inspector inspects the play areas on a weekly basis and deals immediately with minor repairs to make safe any problems.

All staff visiting a site will make a routine visual inspection of the area and report or remove litter and graffiti for example.

Any damage will be reported or dealt with immediately making an area or piece of equipment 'safe' or putting it out of use to the public.

This is backed up with a programmed inspection regime and formal methods of reporting any faults or damage etc.

*[Appendix 8 on page 101 shows the work programme for 2010]*

### **Capital Investment**

The project was the first of it's kind to be funded by pooling developer contributions from several housing developments nearby and combining sums of money dedicated to sustainable transport, play and public art.

More recently it benefited from government Playbuilder funding for the provision of an informal play area.

The spending profile associated with the park regeneration project is as follows:

<b>Capital Improvement Programme</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2005/2006 £</b>	<b>2006/2007 £</b>	<b>2007/2008</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<i>Council Capital Programme / S106 Funding</i>	30,000	60,000	150,000	150,000	35,000	10,000	<b>435,000</b>
	<i>Playbuilder</i>	0	0	0	0	42,000	0	<b>42,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>30,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>77,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>477,000</b>

## **Litter and Waste Management**

The park is included as a category 2 site in terms of the Environmental Protection Act. This equates to litter / dog bin emptying and litter clearance three times per week.

There is also a response maintenance policy for fly tipping and broken glass. Paths are swept every ten days.

Litter picks are organised by the Springbank Environment Group on a monthly basis.

Green waste is recycled using the council's recycling scheme and many measures have been introduced to minimise waste and increase recycling (see below).

Employees that are most likely to come into contact with discarded hypodermic needles have received training in their safe disposal.

## **Environmental Management and Sustainability**

The Council's Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) and Climate Change Strategy (available on request) have been instrumental in progressing projects designed to improve environmental performance and meet broader sustainability objectives.

Key areas from the EMS and Climate Change Strategy that impact the management of Springfields Park include;

### **Minimise Waste:**

- No boxed grass mowing
- Wood chippings will be used on site when opportunity arises.
- Waste organic play bark used on allotments for compost / mulch
- Green waste composted at central site for re-use in parks and gardens
- Any soil excavated re-used on site or as near as possible to the site
- Wild flower arisings bailed and used for animal bedding (dependant upon contamination) or composted.
- Natural elements used in play area i.e. boulders have an indefinite life span (limiting 'scrappage' as associated with "off the shelf" equipment.)

### **Reduce Energy Use:**

- Mower operations reduced by at least one third over the course of a year, as a result of wild flower, and zero maintenance areas.
- Condensing boiler fitted in pavilion with secondary coil incorporated to accommodate future use of solar heating.
- Lighting in pavilion fluorescent for low energy consumption
- Electricity sourced from a green tariff supplier.
- A wind turbine is accommodated in the park to generate energy towards the Springbank Community Resource usage.

### **Water Management:**

- Mains water consumed in the pavilion metered enabling use to be monitored
- Percussion operated taps and showers fitted to save water
- Water level in swales and ponds maintained naturally by mix of groundwater, field drains and rainfall. Levels left to fluctuate naturally (little fluctuation)
- Swales and bunds prevent localised flooding to neighbouring properties and prevent flash flooding to localised surface water sewers
- Naturalistic nature of planting requires no irrigation long term. New standard trees can be watered by extracting water in a bucket from nearby pond

### **Promoting Environmental Awareness:**

- Local participation in project planning and implementation has encouraged a greater environmental curiosity and awareness among the park users
- The programme of ranger-led activities helps to increase awareness of environmental issues, especially among younger people.
- Use of interpretation boards and notices has helped to educate park users about their local environment and how it can be preserved
- The environmentally-friendly aspects of the new Pavilion are highlighted to help promote environmental awareness

### **Pesticides and Chemicals**

The Council has a policy of minimising chemical use. Within Southfields Park, this translates to increased use of mulch, where appropriate, and minimal targeted use of glyphosate for weed control.

If it is deemed necessary, hard-surfaces areas may be spot-treated for weeds in April and July. Pesticides are no longer applied in Springfields Park.

Further information on Council policy and safe systems of work in relation to chemical use can be found in appendix 8.

### **Use of Peat**

In addition to the other policies relating to environmental management and climate change, the Council has adopted a policy on Use of Peat in order to minimise the use of this finite resource and the resulting potential impact on climate change.

Wherever and whenever possible, low or no peat materials are used.

## **PARKS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Conservation of the Park and its Built Environment**

The future of the Springfields Park is assured through the implementation of the management plan, the continued good relationship with, and involvement of, the local community and user groups and the focus on the park that is achieved through the process of applying for and retaining the Green Flag Award for the park.

The policies and measures described in this management plan assure the conservation of the park infrastructure, facilities, the green infrastructure and the habitats within the park.

As already described, the conservation of the pavilion is assured through a 20-year rolling maintenance programme.

### **Future Development of Springfields Park**

The Parks Development Team uses customer feedback, consultation, policy frameworks, development plans and more to plan for the future of the park.

This information is translated into an Action Plan, which lists required outcomes and time-frames for park developments and improvements.

The process of applying for, obtaining and retaining a Green Flag for Springfields Park is seen as important in the park's development, and in recognising the hard work of local people.



A large amount of work was undertaken to upgrade the park and install high quality facilities through capital investment.

This has been referred to in more detail earlier in the document. The focus of future development work will be to underpin all of this by establishing effective maintenance regimes, maintaining the high level of organised activities and events, good

feedback mechanisms and above all encouraging local management of the park.

The local community has been very involved in the process and all indications are that the improvements and measures implemented have been well received. The park is very widely used and appreciated by park users and there are no indications that further major development of the park is required at the present time. Anti-social behaviour is still an issue in the area that poses a threat and needs to be closely monitored using the systems and equipment already in place.

Some areas separately identified for more minor works include: the installation of welcome notice boards, some modifications in management regimes, as required for climate change and sustainability policies and other items already discussed in this document which have been incorporated into the Action Plan.

## SWOT

In order to help assist in the decision-making process for the Action Plan for the life of this strategy, a SWOT analysis was undertaken to help identify areas that would need attention or would need to be monitored in forthcoming years.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contender for Green Flag Award</li> <li>• Management Plan in use</li> <li>• Committed local volunteer group</li> <li>• Park well used and supported</li> <li>• Wide range of ages catered for</li> <li>• High standard of play equipment</li> <li>• Active and quiet areas</li> <li>• Involvement of Hesters Way Partnership running events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not widely known about compared to other Cheltenham parks</li> <li>• Can look messy compared to other conventional parks and popular perception of what constitutes a 'park'</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External grants</li> <li>• Involvement of local community to manage park</li> <li>• Habitat improvement</li> <li>• Raise profile regionally and nationally as exemplar project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cuts in Council budgets</li> <li>• Possible cuts in external grants</li> <li>• Reduction in resources</li> <li>• Increase in anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Decreasing parks team</li> </ul>

**Action Plan**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Facilities</b>	Continue to monitor and consult on facilities to ensure appropriate equipment installed and maintained to appropriate standards	On-going	Parks Development Team (PDT)	
<b>Infrastructure</b>	To install welcome signs and interpretation panels.	May 2011	PDT	
<b>Green Infrastructure</b>	To continue with biodiversity surveys and to monitor flora and fauna Plant up any gaps in shrub / tree areas as identified in on-going condition surveys Continue with policy for inspection and replacement of trees in the park and identification of any suitable dead wood	On-going On-going On-going	Park Rangers Springbank Environment Group PDT Trees Team	
<b>PARKS MANAGEMENT</b>	Continue to manage the park in partnership with users and Hesters Way Partnership.			
<b>Management Regimes</b>	To develop a new 10-year management plan To complete the Green Flag application	January 2011 January 2011	PDT PDT	

<b>Marketing and Events</b>	Continue with successful events and activities programme.	2011-2013	Park Rangers Hesters Way Partnership Play Rangers	
<b>Consultation</b>	Continue to consult with park users	June 2011	Rangers	
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE</b>	Continue to operate and maintain park in line with national and local policies and in consultation with users and look to ensure standards are maintained in increasingly challenging financial environment.	On-going		
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	Continue with comprehensive regime of inspections and works, reviewing and amending as per schedules and in response to relevant events, legislative changes and operational requirements	On-going	PDT	
<b>Security</b>	Continue to work with the police and PCSO's in the park to identify emerging problems and address promptly.		PDT / Rangers / Police	
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>	Continue to amend Maintenance Schedule as and when change or issues require it and in accordance with measures identified by the Ecology Ranger addressing climate change, sustainability and diversity matters.	On-going	PDT / Landscape Team / Rangers	

<b>Litter and Waste Management</b>	Continue to liaise with council enforcement officers to encourage fixed penalty notices for do fouling and littering in the park.	On-going	Council enforcement officers	
<b>Finance</b>	Work with Hesters Way Partnership to identify sources of funding and future requirements as and when areas are identified for investment.	On-going	PDT / Hesters Way Partnership	
<b>Assessment and Review</b>	Use park surveys and user feedback, in addition to other review mechanisms identified in Park Management Plan to ensure continual successful management and maintenance of Springfields Park.	On-going	PDT	

## Review, Quality and Audit Systems

- **Green Flag Award** provides a method for self-assessment and determines the Action Plan which is monitored on an on-going basis and reviewed annually
- On-going **feedback and consultation** from park users feed into decisions and actions for the park
- **Complaints, comments and compliments:** Listening to customers views to constantly review and improve services
- **Operations Service Plan:** With priority and desirable service tasks linked into the Community and Business Plan
- Working with and listening to **Friends** and **Park Watch** groups
- **Customer satisfaction surveys**
- **Electronic Service Plan (ESP)** This software allows CBC to integrate the collection, monitoring and reporting of management information. All of the aims, projects, performance measures and job titles are entered, including how they all link together and how they link to the corporate priorities.
- A **TAES** (towards an excellent service) review took place in 2009, facilitated by Community First Partnership. This model has been developed specifically for green spaces by IDeA, ISPAL and CABE Space

## Appendix 1

### Policy Context for Parks and Gardens in Cheltenham

In preparation for the writing of the Council's Green Space Strategy and subsequent park management plans, a large piece of work was undertaken to understand the policy context in which the preparation of these documents was to be undertaken.

Various Council departments took part and a comprehensive review of policy and strategy took place. The completed work is available on request or can be viewed at:

[http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/Green\\_space\\_strategy\\_appendix\\_.pdf](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/Green_space_strategy_appendix_.pdf)

Below is a list of the documents that were reviewed as part of this process.

#### **NATIONAL POLICY**

**Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) (2005)**  
**Planning Policy Guidance 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (July 2002)**  
**National Audit Office (2006) Enhancing Urban Green Spaces**  
**Green Space Strategies, A Good Practice Guide, CABE Space (2004)**  
**Accessible Natural Green Space In Towns And Cities. A Review Of Appropriate Size And Distance Criteria, English Nature (1995)**  
**The Six Acre Standard, National Playing Fields Association (2001)**  
**Rethinking Open Space, Kit Campbell, (2001)**  
**Good Practice Guide, Providing For Sport And Recreation Through New Housing Development, Sport England (2001)**  
**A Guide to Producing Park and Green Space Management Plans, CABE Space (2004)**  
**Is The Grass Greener...? Learning From International Innovations In Urban Green Space Management, CABE Space (2004)**  
**Parks and Squares: Who Cares? CABE Space (2004)**  
**Raising the Standard, The Green Flag Award Guidance Manual, L. Greenhalgh, & A. Parsons (2004)**  
**Living Places - Caring for Quality, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004)**  
**Recognising Innovation and Imagination in Open Space Management, Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (2005)**  
**Public Parks Assessment, GreenSpace (2003)**  
**Policy Note : Preventing Anti-Social Behaviour in Public Spaces, CABE Space (2004)**  
**Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Open Spaces, Department of Transport Local Government and the Regions (2002)**  
**Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, (2002)**  
**Parkforce, CABE Space 2005**  
**The Park Keeper, English Heritage 2005**  
**Creating Successful Neighbourhoods, Lessons And Actions For Housing Market Renewal, CABE (2004)**  
**Does Money Grow on Trees? CABE Space (2005)**

**Your Parks, The Benefits of Parks and Greenspace**, GreenSpace, (2004)  
**Manual for Streets** – DfT (2007)  
**Design for Play – A guide to Creating successful play spaces** – Sport England, DCMS & Dept for Children Schools and Families (2008)  
**Its Our Space** – Caba Space (2007) CABA website – [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)  
**Start with the Park** – CABA (2005)  
**How to Create Quality Parks and Open Spaces** – ODPM (undated)  
**By Design** – DTLR & CABA (2000)  
**Better Places to Live By Design** – DTLR (2001)  
**Building for Life** – CABA (2008 edition)  
**Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans SPD CBC** (2007 – 2009)  
**Development on Garden Land and Infill Sites in Cheltenham SPD CBC** (2009)  
**Urban Design Compendium Vol. 1 & 2** – HCA (2007 edition)  
**Every Child's Future Matters** – Sustainable Development Commission (2007)  
**Spaceshaper – A user's guide** – CABA space (2007)

## **REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT**

**Regional Spatial Strategy** (2006-2026)  
**Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy** (in progress)  
**Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan** (2008-2013)  
**Gloucestershire County Health & Well Being Strategy**  
**Asset Management Plan**  
**Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan** (2000 – 2010)  
**Gloucestershire Conference Sustainable Community Strategy** (2007 - 2017)  
**Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement** (2007/08)  
**Local Transport Plan (LTP2)**

## **LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT**

**Our Future, Our Choice, Cheltenham's Sustainable Community Strategy** (2008-2011)  
**Our Business Plan** (2007-2010)  
**Allotment Strategy** (2005-2015)  
**Civic Pride** (2006 – 2026)  
**Climate Change Strategy** (2005)  
**Community Safety Strategy** (in production)  
**Comparative Site Assessment** (in progress)  
**Conservation Area Appraisals** (2007/08 - 2012/13)  
**Cultural Strategy** (2002-2006)  
**Neighbourhood Management**  
**Play & Free time Strategy**  
**Playing Pitch Strategy**  
**Sustainability Appraisal**

# Appendix 2: Example Monthly Play Area Inspection

## CHEL TENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MONTHLY INSPECTION REPORT

Site Name: HESTERS WAY PARK Y/N  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of inspection: 15-12-10  
 Time of inspection: 9.35  
 Weather Conditions: COOL SHOWERY DULL  
 Site Check:  
 1. Access in good condition Y  
 2. Surfacing except safety surfacing i.e. tarmac, grass etc Y  
 3. Signs in good condition Y  
 4. Did you have to clear any large quantities of litter no  
 5. Are litter bins overflowing no  
 6. Are all fences in good condition Y  
 7. Are all gates in good condition Y  
 8. Are all seats in good condition Y

Answer Yes or No (If no give details overleaf)	Item of Equip's Name	Item of Equip's Name	Item of Equip's Name	Item of Equip's Name	Item of Equip's Name	Item of Equip's Name	Item of Equip's Name	Item of Equip's Name	Item of Equip's Name	Item of Equip's Name	Item of Equip's Name
Are support members / ground fixings secure ?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Are all parts free from corrosion ?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Are all seals standing parts OK	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is means of access clear	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Are all safety features present	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Are sliding surfaces (slides and poles) smooth	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Is the safety surfacing secure and hazard free	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Other features											

# Appendix 3: Example Tree Inspection

WELCH ROAD OPEN SPACE

10/6/10

Trees in street: 47

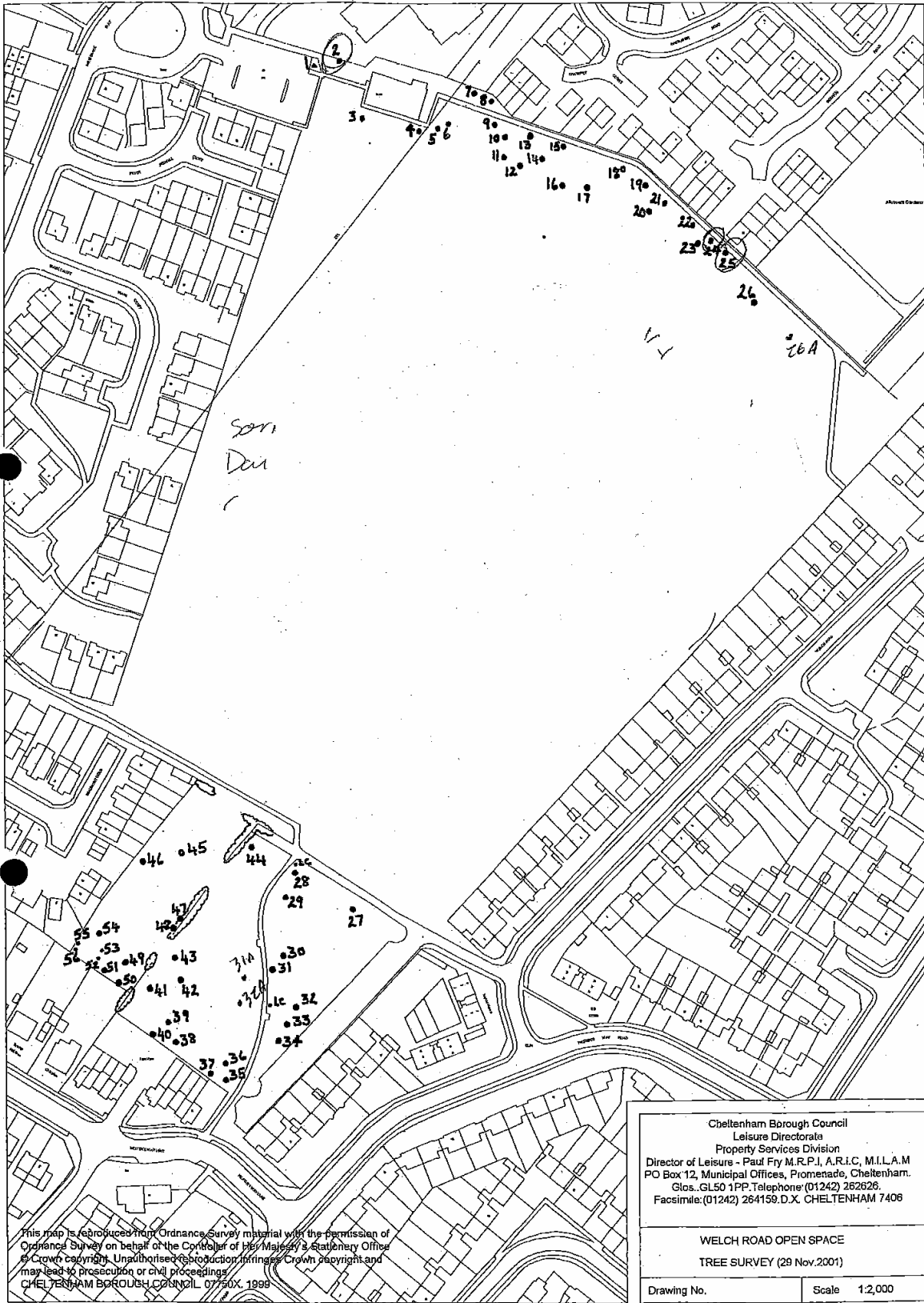
29/06/05

No.	S	Location	Species	Ht	Sp	C	S	M	Pit	Insp Date	Remarks	Spec P	C	prune	Work programme	Pri	Action	
1		Plan-4	ACE CAM	4	2	2	G	II		29/06/05	LDR PFM	VAN	N		NNN			
2		Plan-6	ACE PLA	7	5	2	G	II		29/06/05	BKW	VAN	N		NNN			
3		Plan-7	CRA MO	4	4	2	H	III		29/06/05			N		NNN			
4		Plan-8	POP ALB	13	8	3	H	III		29/06/05	WSS		N		NNN-CLH		1	
											WSS-beware poss.future 'heave' if tree rem'd! Assumed house designed to withstand subsidence!							
5		Plan-9	TIL SPP	7	5	2	G	III		29/06/05	BKW	VAN	N		CLA		1	
7		Plan-11	CAR BET	5	4	2	G	II		29/06/05	BKW	STD	N		STB		1	
8		Plan-13	ACE PLA	9	9	2	G	III		29/06/05	STD		N		CLA		2	
9		Plan-14	FRA EXC	10	9	2	G	III		29/06/05	WFB		N		CLA	FOP	STB	2
10		Plan-15	FRA EXC	8	7	2	G	III		29/06/05		BKW DIE	N				REMOVED	1
11		Plan-16	FRA EXC	8	9	3	G	III		29/06/05	BKW	DIE	VAN	N		DWD		
12		Plan-17	QUE CER	11	7	2	G	III		29/06/05		DED - ringbarked	N		STB	CLA REM - 3ft stump		1
13		Plan-18	QUE ROB	16	10	2	G	VI		29/06/05	STD	FGI	BKW	N	CLA	CLH	RBG	2
											FGI-ganoderma spp on 1 sides					DWD on garden side only		2
14		Plan-19	PLA HIS	7	3	2	G	II		29/06/05	LOV	VAN	BKW	N	NNN			
											LDR							
15		Plan-20	ACE PLA	10	8	2	G	III		29/06/05	FCR	BKW	N		NNN			
16		Plan-21	ACE PLA	6	4	2	G	II		29/06/05	WFB	BKW	N		FOP		2	
17		Plan-22	TIL SPP	8	5	2	G	II		29/06/05	WFB		N		CLA		2	
18		Plan-23	TIL SPP	6	6	2	G	II		29/06/05			N		CLA			
19		Plan-26	PLA HIS	8	3	2	G	II		29/06/05	LOV		N		NNN			
20		Plan-27	ACE NEG	7	7	2	G	III		29/06/05	BKW		N		NNN		Woodchip base	
21		Plan-28	TIL TO	6	4	2	G	II		29/06/05	WFB	BKW	N		NNN			
23		Plan-31	ROB PSE	7	6	2	G	IV		29/06/05	STD	DIE	N		NNN			
24		Plan-32	ROB PSE	7	7	3	G	IV		29/06/05	STD	BKW	DIE	N	DWD		4x	
			ACE PSE	14	8	2	G	IV							DWD-MAJOR			
25		Plan-33	SOR AUC	7	5	3	G	III		29/06/05	BKW	VAN	N		NNN			
											VAN-almost ring barked							
26		Plan-35	ATL ALT	9	7	2	G	III		29/06/05			N		NNN			
27		Plan-36	SOR AUC	6	6	2	G	III		29/06/05		DED	N		NNN			
28		Plan-37	SOR AUC	7	6	2	G	III		29/06/05		VAN BKW	N		CLA	XNG	2	
29		Plan-38	ACE PGP	9	8	2	G	III		29/06/05			N		CLA	3 FOP - rem 2		
30		Plan-39	ACE PGP	9	8	2	G	III		29/06/05	WFB	BKW	N		NNN		10 suckers at fence poison	
31		Plan-40	ACE PGP	7	7	2	G	III		29/06/05	BKW		N		NNN			
33		Plan-42	ACE PGP	11	8	2	G	III		29/06/05			N		CLA		sever ivy off adjs hawthorn in hedge line	
34		Plan-43	ACE PGP	11	8	2	G	III		29/06/05			N		CLA	STB		
35		Plan-44	ACE PGP	8	5	2	G	III		29/06/05	WFB	BKW	N		FOP		2	
36		Plan-45	ACE SAC	9	6	3	G	III		29/06/05	WFB	BKW	VAN	N		REM		3
											VAN-nearly ring barked							
37		Plan-46	ACE SAC	10	7	2	G	III		29/06/05	BKW		N		CLA		2	
38		Plan-47	SAL FRA	5	6	3	H	VI		29/06/05	POL	BKW	SSD	N	POL		2	
											POL-2001							
39		Plan-48	SAL FRA	6	8	3	H	VI		29/06/05	POL	SSD	FOR	N			POL FOP - rem nearby	2
											POL-2001						dog chewed branch at 1.7m	1
40		Plan-49	ACE NEG	6	4	2	G	II		29/06/05			STD	N			REM	
											DED							
41		Plan-50	PRU AVI	8	7	2	H	III		29/06/05	TWI	SSD	N		CLA	ivy REM		1
42		Plan-51	SAL CAP	8	11	2	H	IV		29/06/05	MUL	CVB	STD	N	IVY			
43		Plan-52	MAL SPP	5	4	2	H	III		29/06/05			N		NNN			
44		Plan-53	MAL SPP	3	3	2	H	III		29/06/05	SUP	STD	N		NNN			
45		Plan-54	ALN INC	8	5	2	G	III		29/06/05	WFB	BKW	N		FOP - REM + poison			
46		Plan-55	MAL SPP	5	3	2	H	III		29/06/05	WSS	not visible	N		REM		3 adjacent willow (approx 5m)	2
47		Plan-56	MAL SPP	5	3	2	H	III		29/06/05	WSS		N		REM		2	

\* Leave all wood chips on site - especially at base of young trees & + woodchip all new standard trees

C. Chauvax 10/6/10

File BZ C132  
EBS 1907



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 CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL 07/50X, 1999

Cheltenham Borough Council Leisure Directorate Property Services Division Director of Leisure - Paul Fry M.R.P.J, A.R.I.C, M.I.L.A.M PO Box 12, Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham. Glos., GL50 1PP Telephone: (01242) 262626. Facsimile: (01242) 264159. D.X. CHELTENHAM 7406	
WELCH ROAD OPEN SPACE TREE SURVEY (29 Nov. 2001)	
Drawing No.	Scale 1:2,000

01452 731131

## Appendix 4: Review of Wildflower Planting

### A REVIEW OF WILDFLOWER PLANTING IN CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S PARKS AND GARDENS

Over the past few years Cheltenham Borough Council's parks development team has been experimenting with planting wildflowers in some of Cheltenham's parks and gardens.

There are a number of reasons for experimenting with wildflower planting, including:

- Enhancing biodiversity
- Creating a sense of place with local distinctiveness
- Reducing maintenance costs

Parks and Gardens where wildflowers have been planted:

- Hatherley Park
- Springfields Park
- Naunton Park
- Jenner Gardens
- Windyridge Lane
- Beeches Play Area
- Winston Churchill Gardens
- Hesters Way Park

The reasons for experimenting with planting wildflowers will be explored first and then the experience of this type of planting in each of the parks will be described.



Jenner Gardens

## ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY

### Policy and Legislative Background

#### **Biodiversity Action Plans**

At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio the British Government was signatory to the International Convention on Biodiversity. In response to this it was required to draw up a national strategy to conserve our threatened native species and habitats. This is the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan*. At the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit the government committed to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.

*The essence of the UKBAP is <sup>(1)</sup>:*

1. *To conserve and where practical enhance: the population and natural ranges of native species; natural and semi-natural wildlife habitats; ecosystems that are characteristic of local areas.*
2. *To increase public awareness of, and involvement in, conserving biodiversity.*
3. *To contribute to the conservation of biodiversity on a European and global scale.*

In order to implement this at a local level, each county was asked to prepare a Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The Gloucestershire Biodiversity Partnership has produced the *Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Gloucestershire*. Its aim is to reverse the decline in habitats and species and to produce a county richer in wildlife. Cheltenham Borough Council is part of this partnership and in support the BAP has undertaken a biodiversity audit of the borough and also designated a number of Local Nature Reserves.

#### **Legislation**

In the years following the Earth Summit, the importance of conserving and enhancing biodiversity was further underpinned by both European and UK legislation. An example of this is the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006*. Section 40 of this Act sets out a Duty for all local authorities and other public authorities in England and Wales to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when exercising their functions. The duty to conserve biodiversity includes restoring and enhancing species populations and habitats, as well as protecting them.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### **Planning**

The planning system is seen as being key to delivering the Government's objectives for habitats, species and ecosystems. *Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*<sup>(3)</sup> sets out the government's planning policies on the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation. In addition, the UK BAP and regional and local BAPs can be material considerations in the preparation of regional spatial strategies, local development documents and the making of planning decisions.

#### **National Indicators**

Increasing biodiversity is one of the indicators against which the performance of local government is judged by central government. This indicator – *NI197 Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites* - is reported at unitary/upper tier level as local sites are generally operated at this level.

## ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY

### Green Infrastructure (GI)

Local authorities are major landowners. As such they have a direct impact on biodiversity through the ways in which they manage their land. Management of municipal green spaces should aim to fulfil the requirements of the Biodiversity Duty.<sup>(2)</sup>

Planting wildflowers in public parks and gardens is an attempt to reverse the decline in biodiversity caused by the loss of such habitat from agricultural land. However, it must be born in mind that, in many cases, the areas concerned are quite small – beds and borders. In planting wildflowers in these areas, we are experimenting with a style of municipal planting which, it is hoped, will be more beneficial to bird and insect life, than either grass or traditional bedding schemes. In this situation habitats are not conserved or re-created but approximated to. In order for these wildflower areas to have value at a landscape scale they must form part of a wider green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure is a term used to describe the networks of green spaces, rivers and lakes within and between our villages, towns and cities<sup>(4)</sup>. It includes both designed spaces (such as parks) and natural areas. It takes into consideration all landscape scales – from national and regional through town and city to local neighbourhood.

The conventional understanding of infrastructure applies to our built and engineered environment – roads and utilities services, schools, hospitals – without which our society could not function.

Through the development of the concept of Green Infrastructure, landscape practitioners are seeking to highlight the importance of green assets such as parks, woods and water courses in delivering a healthy and sustainable society. An important aspect of Green Infrastructure is its delivery of environmental services such as:

- rainwater attenuation through sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS)
- reducing the urban heat island effect
- improving air quality.

It deserves to be given the same priority and investment as 'grey' infrastructure.

Fundamental to the GI approach to landscape planning and management is the concept of connected, multifunctional spaces<sup>(4)</sup>.

- **Multifunctional spaces**

In the past, green spaces were generally thought of as having a single function e.g. parks were designed for recreation with neat, ornamental planting schemes; nature reserves were dedicated to preserving particular species; sports pitches were for team games. In a GI approach such spaces would be managed to be multifunctional. So a park would not only be a recreational asset but could offer an opportunity to enhance the biodiversity of the local area through varying its planting and management. Wildflower edges to playing pitches can provide visual amenity and wildlife food and habitat, turning a turf field into a multifunctional space. SUDS offer opportunities to create wildlife habitat as well as providing drainage.

- **Connected spaces**

Connecting green spaces together in a network can have a more beneficial effect than the sum of individual, isolated spaces. For example, wildflower areas created in parks will, of necessity, be of limited size. However, from the point of view of enhancing biodiversity, size can be crucial factor, as many species have minimum area thresholds. Parks and nature reserves should not become wildlife enclaves but should be connected together, increasing the area through which wildlife can move, and so contributing to species resilience over a wider area. For people too, connected spaces provide greater opportunities to integrate exercise and recreation into daily life through walking and cycling.

However, to achieve the benefits offered by connected, multifunctional spaces – economic and social benefits as well as environmental – the GI approach must be embedded in land use planning. Currently, this is not generally the case, with ‘grey’ infrastructure being prioritised at the expense of the natural environment.

In *‘Start With The Park’*<sup>(5)</sup>, CABE Space points out that much Green Infrastructure is already in existence – parks, domestic gardens, marshes, woodlands, tree-lined streets, cemeteries, squares, sports fields, allotments, green corridors, play areas and farms. Management of these areas needs to be considered with a view to creating connected, multifunctional spaces.

CBC Operations is already addressing this issue through experimenting with different styles of planting, aiming to contribute to the creation of a green infrastructure within Cheltenham by making use of all the assets it manages – parks, gardens, open spaces, cemeteries, trees, lakes, sports pitches, grass verges.

Wildflowers in parks and gardens should be viewed within this context – management for both biodiversity and amenity contributing to a wider green infrastructure.



Hatherley Park –  
domestic gardens and trees and wildflowers in the park, all contribute to green infrastructure

## ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY

### Wildflowers in Municipal Parks and Gardens

Cheltenham Borough Council's Green Space Strategy<sup>(6)</sup> notes opportunities for encouraging biodiversity through managed 'wild' areas in its amenity green spaces, cemeteries and churchyards and outdoor sports facilities. It also acknowledges the potential for creating linked corridors of green space between the town's parks and gardens.

Traditional wildflower hay meadows are a result of a system of land management which persisted over a long period of time. Some ancient meadows are over 1,000 years old. This system of land management, combining cutting grass for hay and also seasonal grazing by livestock, favoured the proliferation of wild flower species which thrived on nutrient-poor soil. Removing the grass for hay each year resulted in soil fertility being kept relatively low. The natural cycle of dead and decaying plant material fertilising the soil was interrupted by the land management system, allowing plants which would be out-competed by grasses on nutrient rich soils to thrive. Perennial wildflowers traditionally associated with hay meadows are, therefore, plants that have evolved to thrive on nutrient poor soils.

The advent of intensive agriculture in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century spelt doom for traditional meadows, with fertilisers improving soil fertility and so favouring grasses, and herbicides targeting wildflowers considered as 'weeds'. During the last 60 years 98% of our wildflower hay meadows have been destroyed due to intensive agriculture and building development.<sup>(7)</sup>

Creating wildflower meadows in parks and gardens requires a system of management that approximates to traditional agricultural management of hay meadows but within the constraints of an urban setting. In particular the maintenance of these areas must be scheduled to ensure that a sustainable cycle is achieved.

There are a variety of wildflower seed mixes available, some of which contain non-native species. Selection of a seed mix requires balancing the need for colour and visual amenity for people with the best opportunities for enhancing biodiversity.

#### **Best Practice Advice**

The following is a quote from CABI Space – '*Making contracts work for wildlife: how to encourage biodiversity in urban parks*'<sup>(8)</sup>

*To integrate greater wildlife value into green spaces not traditionally seen as suitable for wildlife, there must be greater emphasis on appropriate management and maintenance, both for wildlife and for public acceptability and enjoyment. In well-used places, in more formal areas and within town and city centres, it may be necessary to introduce clear signs of care and intentional maintenance such as crisp edges and clear sightlines. This is particularly so at entrances, along paths and routes and in main gathering areas. Making wildlife areas much more colourful and interesting is a sure way of increasing wider public acceptance, as is introducing attractive plants with known wildlife benefit into more formal settings. In town centre spaces or more intimate public or community gardens, appropriate non-native plants can be used to benefit wildlife, to extend and enhance the season of display and to provide nectar sources when many native plants have finished flowering. Context is very important in matching the most appropriate maintenance specifications to a particular site.*

## **CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE WITH LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS**

Cheltenham is known as 'the garden town of England' on account of its fine parks, gardens, open spaces and tree lined streets. These provide an excellent basis on which to create a local green network which can link into a county-wide green infrastructure.

Parks development and management must address the vital role green spaces play in contributing to Cheltenham's distinct identity. The town's parks and gardens are an important part of its heritage. They also contribute to the economic activity of the town by attracting visitors.

Wildflowers can have both an aesthetic and ecological role to play in contributing to local distinctiveness.

### **Aesthetic Role**

Swathes of wildflowers can become 'signature' planting for towns and neighbourhoods. This approach is exemplified by the Borough of Telford & Wrekin. (See *CABE Space: Making contracts work for wildlife: how to encourage biodiversity in urban park*<sup>(8)</sup>).

The Borough of Telford & Wrekin, West Midlands has been using annual wildflowers to create colourful displays on roundabouts and along traffic corridors since 2001. The meadows were used to replace grass and over-mature shrub plantings. This style of naturalistic planting has created a distinctive landscape that has proved popular with the public. Such has been the success of the wildflowers that the borough's tourism service has commissioned postcards of the roundabouts, to promote the image of the town.

However, it should be noted that annual wildflower meadows are not necessarily the lowest cost option. Telford and Wrekin's aim was to provide *colour at a price similar to maintaining a shrub border*. The advantages of the annual wildflower meadows are their greater visual appeal and role in supporting biodiversity when compared to mown grass.

There is a danger, if wildflower planting becomes the norm in public parks and highways, that - while it would be colourful and attractive - it would not necessarily be locally distinctive. There is scope here to work with seed suppliers, to produce a seed mix which is characteristic of a particular town or locality, but which still has a long, colourful, flowering season.

### **Ecological Role**

Telford and Wrekin's roundabout meadows are created using a mix of native and non-native annual wildflowers.

There has been some debate amongst horticulture and ecology professionals as to the respective merits of native versus non-native plants in promoting biodiversity. Some would advocate the use of native plants only. However, others support the use of non-native species too, especially to extend the flowering period and provide nectar sources at a time when native species are not in flower.

The charity Plantlife<sup>(9)</sup> is dedicated to the conservation of our native wild plants. It highlights the resource imbalance between funding for conservation of wildflowers when compared to other wildlife.

Wildflowers are the 'poor relations' of conservation funding. There could be opportunities, within municipal parks and gardens, to introduce native wildflowers and so contribute towards their conservation.

Ideally, if seeking to support local ecological distinctiveness, planting and management should support the aims of the Gloucestershire BAP<sup>(10)</sup>. The Gloucestershire Biodiversity Partnership has agreed the following selection criteria to determine the Priority Species List for Gloucestershire.

- Species on the UKBAP Priority Species List which are found in Gloucestershire
- Species whose local decline meets national BAP criteria for marked decline
- Red Listed birds
- Nationally Scarce plants
- Culturally valued species – species which are particularly associated with or characteristic of Gloucestershire

A full list of the nationally scarce plants which are included in the Gloucestershire BAP can be found in Appendix 2 or alternatively visit the Partnership's website:

<http://gloucestershirebap.org.uk/actionplan/priority-species.php>

*Note: There could be an opportunity here for CBC Operations.*

Indicator NI197 Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites, requires the council to show that it is actively managing local sites under its control in a way that will increase biodiversity.

If CBC's nursery could be utilised to grow on and bulk up the priority species, prior to planting out, it would be providing a valuable service towards meeting the requirements of NI197, and the council fulfilling its biodiversity duty.

In order to derive the greatest benefit for wildlife, wildflower meadows should be left to stand over winter so that the seed heads can provide food for birds. However, this can result in an untidy appearance leading to complaints from the public.

*In order to build public support for this style of planting, it is essential to communicate to the public the ecological purpose of wildflower meadows.*

Communication could be through:

- Information panels on site
- Friends groups
- The council's website
- Educational programmes in schools centred on the local park
- Meetings, talks, newspaper articles etc.



Information panel in Jenner Gardens

## REDUCTION IN MAINTENANCE COSTS

Wildflowers are not necessarily the lowest cost option for management of parks. They are lower cost than traditional bedding schemes, but almost always higher cost than grass. What they offer is:

- A low cost option of flower colour over a long flowering season. This is particularly so if annual mixes are used.
- The additional benefit of enhancing biodiversity by providing food and habitat for wildlife.

The first step in reducing maintenance costs is to be clear about the outcomes required and then specify the minimum maintenance operations necessary to achieve these outcomes.

### Contracts and specifications

Specify:

- outcomes required
- operations required to achieve them

### Outcomes Required

- Create wildflower areas which provide visual amenity year on year at the same time as increasing biodiversity. Experience of wildflowers in Cheltenham's parks and gardens would suggest that this is best achieved by either *annual wildflower meadows or mixed annual and perennial wildflower meadows*.
- A more sustainable style of planting requiring reduced inputs. Examples of inputs are: water for irrigation, fertiliser. Reducing inputs not only lowers the cost of maintenance but also has environmental benefits.

### Operations Required

Creation of mixed annual and perennial wildflower areas requires the broad steps listed below. Each of the steps can be further divided into specific horticultural cultivations, which can be costed.

- *1<sup>st</sup> Year*  
Creation of Perennial Wildflower Meadow
  - (1) Ground preparation
  - (2) Sowing seed
  - (3) Mowing – year 1
- *2<sup>nd</sup> and Subsequent Years*  
Maintenance of Perennial Wildflowers and Addition of Annual Wildflowers
  - (1) Mow in March
  - (2) Spot apply glyphosate to remove any residual weeds in mid-April
  - (3) Rake or harrow to create seed-bed where annual seeds are to be sown.
  - (4) Sow annual seed in early May at a rate of 2-3 grammes per square metre
  - (5) Hand-weed or rogue problem weeds once or twice if required. On less visible sites: don't hand-weed and use only one application of herbicide.
  - (6) Cut coarse grass in June/July to depress soil fertility. Remove arisings.
  - (7) Mow again in late August/early September. Remove arisings.

In wilder areas, meadows can be left to stand over winter for the benefit of seed-eating birds.

## **Monitoring arrangements**

Within CBC's Operations Division, it would be advisable for monitoring of wildflowers to be undertaken by both the parks development team and landscape services team. This way the wildflowers can be assessed from both the design and maintenance aspects. It is important that both teams work together to create sustainable planting regimes for the town.

Monitoring should assess:

- Aesthetic appearance at different times of the year.
- Biodiversity enhancement .
- Public perception of wild flowers at different times of the year.

The key costs which need to be monitored are:

- Cost of annual seeds.
- Cost of operations - this can be estimated by monitoring the time taken to carry out specific horticultural cultivations and applying the standard minute costs.
- Cost of disposing of the arisings. A sustainable method of dealing with the arisings should be sought.



Wildflower border in Hatherley Park in summer



Wildflower border in Hatherley Park in winter

## EXPERIENCE OF WILDFLOWERS IN CHELTENHAM'S PARKS AND GARDENS

CBC's Operations team has experimented with planting wildflowers in: Hatherley Park; Springfields Park; Naunton Park; Jenner Gardens; Windyridge Lane; Beeches Play Area; Winston Churchill Gardens; Hesters Way Park.

In some areas seed mixes of perennial, native wildflowers have been used; in others annual mixes which include exotic wildflowers. The different sites have yielded varying degrees of success, both in terms of cultivation outcome and public response.

Each site will be reviewed individually.

### **Hatherley Park**

#### **Background**

In 2003 Hatherley Park was the first park in Cheltenham to have a wildflower area introduced into its planting scheme.

- The original wildflower area was at the base of a group of newly planted birch trees. This composition was intended to provide colour and focus along one of the main paths of the park.
- When the central area of the park was refurbished in 2005, the old concrete cascades were removed and a new path and pond installed. One of the aims of this new design was to enhance the biodiversity of the park. The pond was planted with wildlife friendly aquatic plants and swathes of wildflowers were established on either side of the new path.
- The following year, in response to comments from Green Flag judging, a border of perennial wildflowers was added along the south-west perimeter.

*Hatherley Park has won a Green Flag Award on five successive occasions.*



Hatherley Park – wildflowers along the path to the pond

### Seed Mix

Perennial seed mixes from a number of seed suppliers have been used including Naturescape and Pictorial Meadows.

### Purpose of Wildflower Planting

To enhance the biodiversity of the park.

### Successes and Failures

Initial experiments with wildflowers proved successful, providing colourful displays throughout the summer. However, as time has gone by, it has proved difficult to maintain flower display in all three areas. The experiments in Hatherley Park highlight a problem of using perennial mixes in municipal parks.

Depending on the choice of seed mix, the first year of perennial wildflower planting should provide excellent flower colour. This is usually due to annual wildflower seeds being included in the composition of the seed mix, specifically to provide flower display while the perennial plants are getting established. In subsequent years the perennial flowers should provide seasonal colour, texture and form.

In order for this to be successful, however, the area needs to be maintained in a way which approximates to traditional agricultural hay-meadow management i.e. cutting twice a year, removing the arisings, scarifying the ground. If this is not done then more vigorous grasses and weeds will out-compete the wildflowers and the planting scheme will deteriorate. In addition it may be necessary to hand rogue weeds to prevent them gaining a foothold within the wildflower mix.

The difficulty of maintaining the wildflower areas has led to two of the areas in Hatherley Park being mown out.

- The area under the birch trees required hand maintenance, which proved to be too resource intensive to provide, and the weeds took over.
- The areas on either side of the new path to the pond became infested with Mare's Tails which proved too difficult to eradicate. This is particularly disappointing, since the pond itself has proved very successful in improving biodiversity in the park. An aquatic survey, carried out by an independent consultant, found great crested newts in the pond, as well as other newts and toads.

The perimeter border still exists but flower display is much reduced with stronger elements of the seed mix taking over and resulting in less plant variety.

### Lessons Learned

- Rigorous ground preparation, including eradicating perennial weeds, is essential to ensure a successful outcome.
- It is difficult to maintain flower display, over a period of years, from seed mixes of perennial plants. It should be borne in mind that perennial wildflowers, as found in traditional hay meadows, provided a subtle mosaic of colour in an agricultural landscape. It is difficult to translate this into a border in a park – a setting which requires bolder colour in order to achieve a visual effect.
- Enhancing biodiversity should not result in sacrificing visual amenity (see the CABE Space advice above). Wildflower areas planted to enhance biodiversity should also provide attractive, colourful flower displays for park users.

## **Springfields Park**

### **Background**

Springfields Park is Cheltenham's newest park. It has been created on the site of the former Welch Road Playing Field, which was a large, desolate green field surrounded by residential areas. About five years ago a new pedestrian path was installed, a toddler play area was provided in the SW corner of the site and a junior play area was installed approximately half way along the path. Apart from these improvements, the rest of the site remained as mown grass with little seasonal variation and low biodiversity value.

This open space suffered from a great deal of anti-social behaviour – burned out cars, bike racing, drug-dealing.

During the past three years, as part of a regeneration programme for the area, a new community centre has been built, incorporating a medical centre and pharmacy. The regeneration programme included transforming the open space into a new ecological park. The aim was to create an outdoor amenity for the local area, enhancing local distinctiveness and providing opportunities for increasing biodiversity.

### **Seed Mix**

Emorsgate native seed mix. Seeds are of British provenance.

### **Purpose of Wildflower Planting**

- To enhance biodiversity by providing food and habitat for wildlife.
- To provide seasonal variation in colour.



Springfieldss Park – wildflowers along a path – 2<sup>nd</sup> year after planting

### Successes and Failures

During first year of planting, the perennial wildflowers provided good flower colour. However, in subsequent years, flower colour has declined and the planting has grown to look 'untidy', drawing adverse comments from the public.

Management of the park has required more resources – for watering, herbicide spraying and cutting - than the original grass field which had only required mowing. Litter picking is also more time-consuming.

There is also the problem of how to deal with the arisings. As mentioned above for Hatherley Park, perennial wildflower meadows need to be maintained in a way which approximates to traditional agricultural hay-meadow management i.e. cutting twice a year, removing the arisings, scarifying the ground. The difficulty with Springfields Park is that the area of wildflowers is so extensive that it leads to a substantial amount of arisings being generated. This cannot be used for cattle feed or bedding because no guarantee can be given that it is free of litter. The only option is to bale it, take it off site and compost it. It is, however, the extensive nature of the wildflower planting that makes it so advantageous for biodiversity and this would be compromised if the area of wildflowers was reduced in size.

### Lessons Learned

- Where a design shows extensive areas of wildflowers with paths mown through them, it is *essential* that these paths are mown at the beginning of each growing season and regularly maintained in order to ensure adequate access around the park.
- Path edges must be mown 1 metre on either side of the path to ensure a well-maintained appearance.
- Regular litter-picking must be undertaken.
- Allow a budget for sowing seeds of annual wildflowers to boost the colour impact of the perennial mix, so providing greater visual amenity for park-users.
- A sustainable method of dealing with the arisings must be developed.



Springfieldss Park. 2<sup>nd</sup> year after planting.  
Expanse of perennial wildflowers around a water-filled 'scrape'.

## **Naunton Park**

### **Background**

Naunton Park is a long-established, residential park. It is composed of two areas: a formal rose garden and a playing field. In 2004 the rose garden was transformed with a Peoples Places lottery grant. The old, tired rose beds were replaced by a mixed planting scheme based around small shrubs and herbaceous perennials.

*Naunton Park has won a Green Flag Award on four successive occasions.*

Experiments with wildflowers have been taking place since 2006, when a small area of wildflowers was planted next to the play area.

In 2009, in response to comments from Green Flag judging, an extensive wildflower border was created along two sides of the playing field.

### **Seed Mix**

2006, small area next to play area: Native British Wildflower - Cornfield Cereals; Cornfield Flowers; Long Season Meadow mix. Also added poppy seed and linseed.

2009, extensive border: Emorsgate native seed mix. Seeds are of British provenance.

### **Purpose of Wildflower Planting**

- To increase biodiversity.
- To provide educational opportunities for children to see traditional wildflowers and the wildlife they support.



Wildflowers in Naunton Park Play Area

### Successes and Failures

The small area of wildflowers was successful. In 2007, this was recognised with a 'Blooming Wild' award from Britain in Bloom.

The perimeter border was not a success. It became very weedy, possibly because a seed bed of agricultural weeds had been disturbed during ground preparation, and in response to adverse comments from the public, the wildflowers were mown out later in the summer.

### Lessons Learned

Key problems with the perimeter border were:

- The extent of the wildflower border.  
Best practice advice is to 'start small' with wildflower planting, and build up experience of maintaining such areas. Areas can then be gradually extended, allowing plenty of time for ground preparation. Unfortunately this was not the procedure followed in this case due to the response time needed to meet the Green Flag judging date.
- The seed mix selected.  
The Emorsgate EM2 mixture is 80% meadow grasses, 20% wildflowers. As has already been mentioned, for amenity areas it is essential to provide more 'flower power' than this seed mix can give. The EM2 mix could be used in small areas, but it would need to be accompanied by swathes of annual wildflowers to provide the visual amenity expected in a public park.
- There have been good lessons learned from this experiment, in particular the need to use different seed mixes in an area in order to best address both the needs of biodiversity and amenity.
- It would have been better to have left areas of the perimeter unmown in order to see what wild flowers were already present, rather than creating a new, very large border with an inappropriate seed mix and a cultivation method which disturbed agricultural weeds.
- Alternatively, smaller swathes of wild flowers could have been created, perhaps experimenting with seed from different suppliers to determine which seed mix proved most appropriate for the site. Once the best seed mix had been decided, and a maintenance regime developed, the border could have been gradually extended along the perimeter of the playing field.

## Jenner Gardens

### Background

Jenner Gardens is the graveyard of Cheltenham Chapel. For a long period it had been left derelict and became plagued with anti-social behaviour. In 2004 the Friends of Jenner Gardens was formed with the aim of transforming the derelict graveyard into a public garden in honour of Edward Jenner, the pioneer of vaccination. A new landscape scheme was designed by CBC's parks development team. Funds were obtained from a number of sources by the Friends. Landscape works began in 2008 and were completed in 2009.

The planting scheme consists of shrubs – including roses and a lavender hedge - climbing plants, groundcover and wildflowers. The wildflowers cover the central area of the graveyard, which it would be difficult to plant and maintain in a more traditional manner.

*Jenner Gardens was awarded a Cheltenham Civic Award 2009, a Neighbourhood Award by Heart of England in Bloom and an Outstanding Achievement Award by Cheltenham in Bloom.*

### Seed Mix

Pictorial Meadows - annual wildflowers - 'Marmalade' mix.

### Purpose of Wildflower Planting

- To increase biodiversity
- To provide a colourful display of flowers over a long season

### Successes and Failures

This seed mix has proved very successful in this location. As the name suggests, the flower colour consists mostly of oranges, yellows and reds, providing excellent visual impact. Favourable comments have been received from the public.

The Friends of Jenner Gardens monitor the wildlife in the garden, both informally and with surveys. The planting scheme appears to be attracting birds and insects into this town centre garden.

The wildflowers were allowed to stand until November. At this point they became too untidy for a small, town centre space and were cut down. As far as providing food and habitat for wildlife is concerned, it would be best to leave them standing until after Christmas but this cannot always be reconciled with providing a public amenity space.

### Lessons Learned

- Selection of colour scheme and seed mix is very important.
- Annual wildflowers provide low cost, high visual impact flower colour over a long period.
- Annual wildflowers, including non-native species, have a role to play in supporting biodiversity.



Jenner Gardens – lavender, roses and 'Marmalade' seed mix wildflowers

## **Windyridge Lane**

### **Background**

Three round planting beds in the verges at the junction of Windyridge Lane and Swindon Road are usually planted with bedding plants. Wildflower seed has been sown in the beds in the last couple of years to reduce costs.

### **Seed Mix**

2008: Pictorial Meadows Pastel Annual Mixture

2009: Pictorial Meadows Short Mix

### **Purpose of Wildflower Planting**

- To provide a long-lasting colourful display.
- To reduce costs.

### **Successes and Failures**

In both cases the seeds provided long lasting colour in the street-scene.

### **Lessons Learned**

- Annual wildflowers are a good choice for long-lasting colour.
- In 2008 the seed mix resulted in flowers considered to be too tall, given that the beds are at a busy road junction. A shorter growing mix was planted the following year.

## **Beeches Play Area**

### **Background**

Beeches Playing Field in Charlton Kings has three football pitches, a play area, skate ramps and a basketball hoop. There is a pavilion for changing on site.

### **Seed Mix**

Native British Wildflowers: Cornfield Cereals; Cornfield Flowers; Tall Herbs; Long Season Meadow mix.

### **Purpose of Wildflower Planting**

To soften and 'zone' the general play area. A quiet zone was created surrounded by wildflowers and trees.

### **Successes and Failures**

Flowering in the first season was successful, but declined in subsequent years.

### **Lessons Learned**

As has been experienced with other sites, relying on perennial wildflowers to provide flower colour in the second and subsequent years after sowing is not successful. Sowing annual wildflower seed should be budgeted for.

## **Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens**

### **Background**

Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens is situated in the Lower High Street.

There were problems with local children climbing the east boundary wall of the park, and annoying residents in the neighbouring properties. There was also an issue with children using the wall as a 'goal' when playing football – the ball would often be kicked over into the garden on the other side. The noise of the children playing also annoyed the neighbours.

Planting a border along the wall would prevent it from being used as a 'goal', and also deter children from climbing it.

The boundary wall is the original wall to a cemetery, the New Burial Ground, which had occupied the site since the early 1800s. In 1966 the cemetery was converted to a park. Given the age of the wall, it requires re-pointing and regular inspection. It was essential, therefore, that the planting scheme allowed for easy access for maintenance. This ruled out a shrub or mixed border. A perennial border, or bedding would both have allowed access, but the cost implications of either of these were prohibitive. So it was decided to create a wildflower border, 2-3m in width, along the whole length of the wall.

### **Seed Mix**

2006

Landlife: Cottage Garden, Wildflower meadow with grass, Pictorial Meadows mix

2008

Native British Wildflowers: Cornfield Cereals; Cornfield Flowers; Tall Herbs; Long Season Meadow mix. Also added poppy seed and linseed.

The bulk of the seed mix was annual seeds.

### **Purpose of Wildflower Planting**

- Provide buffer planting between the park and the boundary wall in order to deter children from climbing the wall and using it as a 'goal'.
- To soften the boundary of the park.
- Increase biodiversity in the park.
- *Educational reasons:* children would have the opportunity to see cereal crops and their associated traditional wildflowers. The meadow mix was used to give a soft transition between the short grass and the cornfield cereals, so mimicking traditional cereal field headlands.
- *Cost:* wildflowers offered a low-cost option of planting such a long border

### **Successes and Failures**

This seed mix worked well for the first year, with flowering declining over the next two years.

The seed mix was chosen for a long flowering season and also for its mix of grasses – this would allow it to be mowed out if unsuccessful. Unfortunately, these grasses tend to dominate after the first year, reducing flower display.

### **Lessons Learned**

As in a number of other parks, grasses dominate after the first year. A sowing of annual seeds should be budgeted for to maintain flower display.

## Hesters Way Park

### Background

Hesters Way Park was opened in 1957. The design of the park is informal, including a number of curving 'island' beds. For many years these were planted with herbaceous plants. However, in 2008, due to the age and deterioration of the plants, wildflowers were sown instead.

### Seed Mix

Pictorial Meadows Golden Summer Perennial mix

Pictorial Meadows Pastel Annual mix

### Purpose of Wildflower Planting

- To reduce cost.
- To provide long-lasting summer colour.
- To increase biodiversity.

### Successes and Failures

The wildflowers looked lovely in the first year. However, in the second year, there was no re-sowing of annual wildflowers. The resulting flower display from the perennial mix was disappointing and the beds looked untidy. This resulted in adverse comments from the public.

### Lessons Learned

- A number of the park users in Hesters Way Park remember the days when the council had the budget to plant bedding plants in most of Cheltenham's parks. Any other style of planting is seen to fall short of the 'gold standard' of bedding displays. They are yet to be convinced that resource constraints mean that this style of planting is no longer affordable.
- If Cheltenham's parks are to be managed in a more sustainable way, but still providing colour and seasonal interest, it is *essential* to convince the public of the merits of new styles of planting. This can only be achieved through communication. This, perhaps, is what has been lacking in this park.



Wildflowers in Hesters Way Park

## SUMMARY

Cheltenham Borough Council's parks development and landscape services teams have been experimenting with planting wildflower meadows in the town's parks and gardens for a number of years. Valuable experience has been gained into the selection of seed mixes, ground preparation and maintenance regimes. Based on this experience, recommendations can be made for the creation and maintenance of wildflower meadows in the future.

### Recommendations

- Ensure adequate ground preparation. (See Appendices below)
- Start by cultivating small areas which are clear of trees and shrubs. This will allow maintenance regimes to be developed which can then be applied to larger areas.
- Use perennial mixes to provide the 'backbone' of a planting scheme, but budget for sowing annual wildflower seeds each year to provide colour impact.
- Communicate with the public about the purpose of the wildflower planting and its maintenance regime.
- Do not allow Green Flag to determine the nature and extent of wildflower planting. Instead, decide what is best for the park – in terms of enhancing biodiversity, park users' requirements, flower display, maintenance resources and costs – and state the case for these decisions in the Green Flag management plan.
- Where a design shows extensive areas of wildflowers with paths mown through them, it is *essential* that these paths are mown at the beginning of each growing season and regularly maintained in order to ensure adequate access around the park.
- Path edges must be mown 1 metre on either side of the path to ensure a well-maintained appearance.
- Regular litter-picking must be undertaken. Schedule a litter-picking session prior to mowing if the cuttings are to be composted.
- Monitor planting and keep records in order to develop a sustainable, affordable planting regime which has public support. Monitor:
  - Seed mixes
  - Maintenance regimes
  - Aesthetic appearance in different seasons – make a photo-record.
  - Biodiversity improvements
  - Public reaction
  - Costs
  - Record successes *and* failures.

Wildflower meadows have a role to play in supporting biodiversity within a wider green infrastructure. They can contribute to a sense of local distinctiveness, and offer an opportunity for conserving threatened native plant species. They are not a 'no-cost' option, but do provide a means of creating long-lasting, seasonal flower colour that also helps to fulfil the council's duties and responsibilities with respect to conserving and enhancing the county's biodiversity.

## Appendix 1

### CREATING WILDFLOWER MEADOWS

There are different approaches to the creation of wildflower meadows depending on whether the meadow is to be composed of:

- Annual flowers
- Perennial flowers
- A mix of annual and perennial flowers.

Each of these approaches has advantages and disadvantages in terms of biodiversity, management technique and visual appeal.

#### Annual Wildflower Meadows

Annual wildflowers meadows provide long-lasting, colourful flower displays.

#### Creating Annual Wildflower Meadows

The following advice on the creation of wildflower meadows is based on a case study of Telford and Wrekin's experience in *'Making contracts work for wildlife: how to encourage biodiversity in urban parks'* CABE Space<sup>(8)</sup>

- Apply glyphosate herbicide in late February.
- Flail mow in mid-March.
- Spot apply glyphosate to remove any residual weeds in mid-April.
- Power harrow to create seed-bed.
- Sow seed in early May at a rate of 3 grammes per square metre.
- Rake or harrow.
- Hand-weed or rogue problem weeds once or twice if required.
- On less visible sites: don't hand-weed and use only one application of herbicide.
- Leave meadows to stand over winter for the benefit of seed-eating birds.

**Note:** As winter approaches, and especially after heavy rain and the first frosts, wildflower areas can look very untidy, as if no-one is bothering to maintain them. This can lead to complaints from the general public. In an urban environment, the management of these areas can be a balancing act between leaving the area uncut for as long as possible to provide food for wildlife, and maintaining a cared-for appearance (See CABE Space Best Practice advice).



## **Perennial Wildflower Meadows**

Perennial wildflower meadows do not have the stunning display of colourful flowers that is achieved with annual wildflowers. The flower display is more subdued, especially after the first year. The purpose of planting a perennial meadow is not so much visual display but the creation of a sustainable plant community that will enhance biodiversity.

### **Creating Perennial Wildflower Meadows**

There are a number of ways of establishing perennial wildflower meadows <sup>(7)</sup>:

- *Changing existing management*

An existing field or parkland is left unmanaged for a few months to see what wildflowers may already be present. The area must then be cut every year in late August/early September and the 'hay' removed. The aim is to reduce soil fertility so that wildflowers can compete with grasses. Introducing Yellow Rattle will also help to control grasses, since it is semi-parasitic on their roots. A disadvantage of this method is that it can take many years to yield results.

- *Sowing wildflower seed*

This is the more appropriate option for urban parks and gardens and is outlined below.

#### **1 Ground Preparation**

*Time:* July

*Method*

- Remove turf and 5cm of topsoil.
- Rake ground to create fine tilth.
- Leave for 3-4 weeks to monitor weed growth. Remove weeds.

#### **2 Sowing Seed**

*Time:* early autumn

*Method*

- Sow 0.5g of wildflower seed mixed with 1.0-1.5g of grass mix per square metre on a day with no wind.
- A grass mix of bents and fescues works best. Rye-grass and other vigorous types are to be avoided.
- Immediately after sowing, rake the surface lightly and firm with a roller.
- Adding Yellow Rattle can help limit the growth of grasses, so reducing their competition with the wildflowers.

#### **3 Mowing**

**Year 1**

*1st Cut*

When the seeds have germinated and the grasses have reached a height of about 10cm. This will check weeds such as thistle and groundsel.

*Subsequent Cuts*

Every 6-8 weeks. Always remove cuttings.

#### **Subsequent Years – Twice a Year Mowing Pattern**

*Time:*

(1) early spring - late March to early April

(2) end of summer - late August to September

**Note:** The above are guidelines only. Areas of coarse grass can be cut in June/July to depress soil fertility; areas of wildflowers can be left until the seeds have set – or even until Christmas to provide food for wildlife.

*Method:*

- Mow in spring to remove old growth and knock back vigorous weeds.
- Leave untouched through spring and summer to allow wildflowers to reach their full height.
- Mow again in late summer, after the flowers have set seed.
- Leave the 'hay' out for a while to allow the birds to feed on the seed.
- Rake to remove arisings and dead plant material, otherwise they will add unwanted nutrients to the soil. A thatch of dead plant material covering the ground will also prevent Yellow Rattle from germinating, since the seed needs to make contact with the soil in order to germinate.
- Lightly scarify the meadow with a chain harrow (or rake on smaller sites). This mimics the 'poaching' of the soil by livestock which would have grazed on traditionally managed hay meadows after they were cut.
- Scatter Yellow Rattle seed over the meadow and rake in.

**Mixed Annual and Perennial Wildflower Meadows**

This may offer the best compromise between planting for wildlife and planting for visual amenity.

A seed mix of perennial wildflowers can be sown to provide year-round food and habitat for wildlife. Annual wildflowers can then be sown within and around this area to give flower colour for visual amenity, as well as contributing to the food supply for birds and insects.

Mixing annual and perennial wildflowers offers the greatest opportunity for enhancing biodiversity.

- Annual wildflowers support populations of pollinating insects and seed-eating birds.
- Herbaceous flowering grassland communities provide habitat for small mammals and, in turn, also attract their predators.

**Notes:**

- Management of adjacent land can affect the composition of wildflower meadows. The use of fertilisers can result in too much nitrogen and phosphorous being present in the soil for many wildflowers, with the result that species such as nettle, hogweed and cow parsley predominate.
- Yellow Rattle seed is only viable for a few months. Sow seed on bare ground between autumn and early spring (March).
- Leave raked piles of cuttings for several days to allow invertebrates to escape.



## Appendix 2

### GLOUCESTERSHIRE BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

#### PRIORITY SPECIES OF PLANTS

##### **Vascular Plants**

Tower Mustard	<i>Arabis glabra</i>
Prickley Sedge	<i>Carex muricata</i> spp. <i>muricata</i>
True Fox Sedge	<i>Carex vulpina</i>
Cornflower	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>
Red-tipped Cudweed	<i>Filago lutescens</i>
Early Gentian	<i>Gentianella anglica</i>
Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>
Grass-wrack pondweed	<i>Potamogeton compressus</i>
Shepherd's Needle	<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>
Cotswold Pennycress	<i>Thlaspi perfoliatum</i>
Spreading Hedge Parsley	<i>Torilis arvensis</i>
Broad-Fruited Corn Salad	<i>Valerianella rimosa</i>

##### **Non Vascular Plants**

Lesser Bearded Stonewort	<i>Chara curta</i>
Starry Stonewort	<i>Nitellopsis obtusa</i>
Tassel Stonewort	<i>Tolypella intricata</i>
Great Tassel Stonewort	<i>Tolypella prolifera</i>
Killarney Fern	<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>
Round-leaved Feather-moss	<i>Rhynchostegium rotundifolium</i>
Sterile beardless-moss	<i>Weissia sterilis</i>
Spruce's bristle-moss	<i>Orthotrichum sprucei</i>
English rock-bristle	<i>Seligeria calycina (paucifolia)</i>
Beaked Beardless-moss	<i>Weissia rostellata</i>
Spreading-leaved beardless-moss	<i>Weissia squarrosa</i>

##### **Fungi and Lichens**

Devil's Bolete	<i>Boletus satanas</i>
Pink Meadow Cap	<i>Hygrocybe calyptriformis</i>
a lichen	<i>Bacidia incompta</i>

## **References**

- (1) *Biodiversity by Design* TCPA
- (2) *Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty*
- (3) *Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*
- (4) *Green infrastructure: connected and multifunctional landscapes* Landscape Institute Position Statement
- (5) *'Start With The Park'*, CABI Space
- (6) Cheltenham Borough Council *Parks, People and Wildlife – An Outline Green Space Strategy for Cheltenham 2009-2024*
- (7) *Making Wildflower Meadows* Pam Lewis
- (8) *CABI Space - Making contracts work for wildlife: how to encourage biodiversity in urban parks*
- (9) *Plantlife – The Ghost Orchid Declaration – Saving the UK's Wild Flowers Today.*
- (10) *The Gloucestershire BAP*

## **General References**

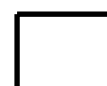
CABI *Grey to Green* How We Shift Funding and Skills to Green Our Cities  
Plantlife: *Create Your Own Wildflower Meadow*  
CABI Space *Urban Parks – Do you know what you're getting for your money?*

## Appendix 5: Example Risk Assessment

Green Environment, Parks Development Team  
Risk Assessment, Ball Court installation at  
Springfields Park

Ref. No. \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Activity/Equipment/Substance/Environment: :</b> Installation of an SMP ball court	
<b>Location:</b> Springfields Park	
<b>Persons at Risk: :</b> Workers and bystanders	
<b>What are the hazards?</b> Collision, trips and falls	
<p><b>Existing Control Measures</b></p> <p><b>Vehicles</b> Keep speeds to &lt;5mph within the playing field Use warning lights when vehicles are moving Give way to pedestrians and cyclists Keep car park and area outside site fence free of debris</p> <p><b>Work area</b> Secure immediate work area to prevent unauthorised access and erect signs Maintain secure storage of all materials on site All work to be to current BS/EN standard Contractor must scan area before breaking ground. Utilities drawings are included. <b>Be aware of overhead power lines, they are to the NW and outside the work area. No vehicle or plant movements with raised tipper beds or buckets in their vicinity.</b> <b>There is a pumped sewer crossing the site close to the south east of the work area.</b> <b>The parks lighting system is not shown on the drawings and the cable runs are not known. It is thought that they follow the path system but contractor to scan before breaking ground to confirm</b></p> <p><b>Personnel</b> Contractor to work within the guidelines of CBC Health and Safety Policy Only supervisors or workers trained in the safe application of the installation techniques to be working on site PPE appropriate to the task being carried out to be worn</p> <p><b>Contractor</b> Contractor to carry out risk assessments for techniques employed during installation</p> <p><b>Note.</b> This is on a walk to school route and this area of the park can become very busy at school leaving times, contractor may need to suspend vehicle movements at this time. It is also a teenage gathering area after school and at the weekends. Access gates to be kept locked, key to be supplied at pre works briefing together with a permit to work.</p>	<p><b>Risk Rating</b></p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">4</div>
<b>Are risks adequately controlled? If not, why not?</b> Yes	
<b>Additional Controls or Action Required</b>	<b>New Risk Rating</b>



<b>By whom?</b>	
<b>Legal compliance (if appropriate)</b>	<b>Yes No</b>
<b>Signed (Assessor)</b>	<b>Date 15/6/09</b>
<b>Signed (Contractor)</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Signed (Line Manager)</b>	<b>Date 15/6/09</b>

<b>RISK RATING</b>				
<b>Likelihood of Harm</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>Severity of Injuries</b>	
1	Improbable		1	Trivial injury
2	Possible	<b>x</b>	2	Minor injury <b>x</b>
3	Occasional		3	Over 3 day
4	Frequent		4	Major injury
5	Common		5	Death
<b>ACTION LEVELS</b>				
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Risk</b>		<b>Action</b>	
0-5	Low		Satisfactory	
6-14	Medium		Action Required	
15-25	High		Immediate action	

# Appendix 6: Example Site Infrastructure Inspection

## Infrastructure Safety Inspection Form for: Springfield Park inc Hesters Way Lane

- February, May, August, November
- During inspection of the above site the following features were inspected:
- Flowerbed
  - Shrub bed
  - Metal bench
  - Wooden bench
  - Building/Pavilion
  - Grill cover,
  - Manhole cover
  - Metal fence,
  - Wooden fence
  - Gate
  - Grass Surface
  - Litter Bin
  - Bitmac path
  - Gravel, bark or other unmade path
  - Paved Path
  - Lamp post
  - Sign post
  - General signs
  - Other feature:.....

Defect	Location	Remedial Work Required	** Category	*** Action	Sign & date when job complete.
MANHOLE	BY NEW PATH	GRANITE	P	DOUG	Ordered: 26-2-10 Complete: 2-3-10
ROOTS IN GRASS BY LORRY WHEELS	TOWARDS PILLON AND BOTTOM PATH	ROLLER	P	PETE BAGE	Ordered: 26-2-10 Complete: 2-3-10
TRENCH KEPT OPEN ON NEW PATH	L.H. SIDE PLAY AREA	FILL & TURF	P	DOUG	Ordered: 26-2-10 Complete: 2-3-10
WELD ON BARRIER BROKEN	WELDON RD ENTRANCE	REWELD JOINT ON CROSS BAR	P	JASON	Ordered: Complete:
					Ordered: Complete:
					Ordered: Complete:
					Ordered: Complete:
					Ordered: Complete:
					Ordered: Complete:
					Ordered: Complete:
					Ordered: Complete:
					Ordered: Complete:
See continuation sheet? No € Yes € If yes, sheet of					
** E	Emergency safety defect - 24 hours	7	Maintenance defect 7 day repair	P	Planned Maintenance/Minor Development Works (6+ months)

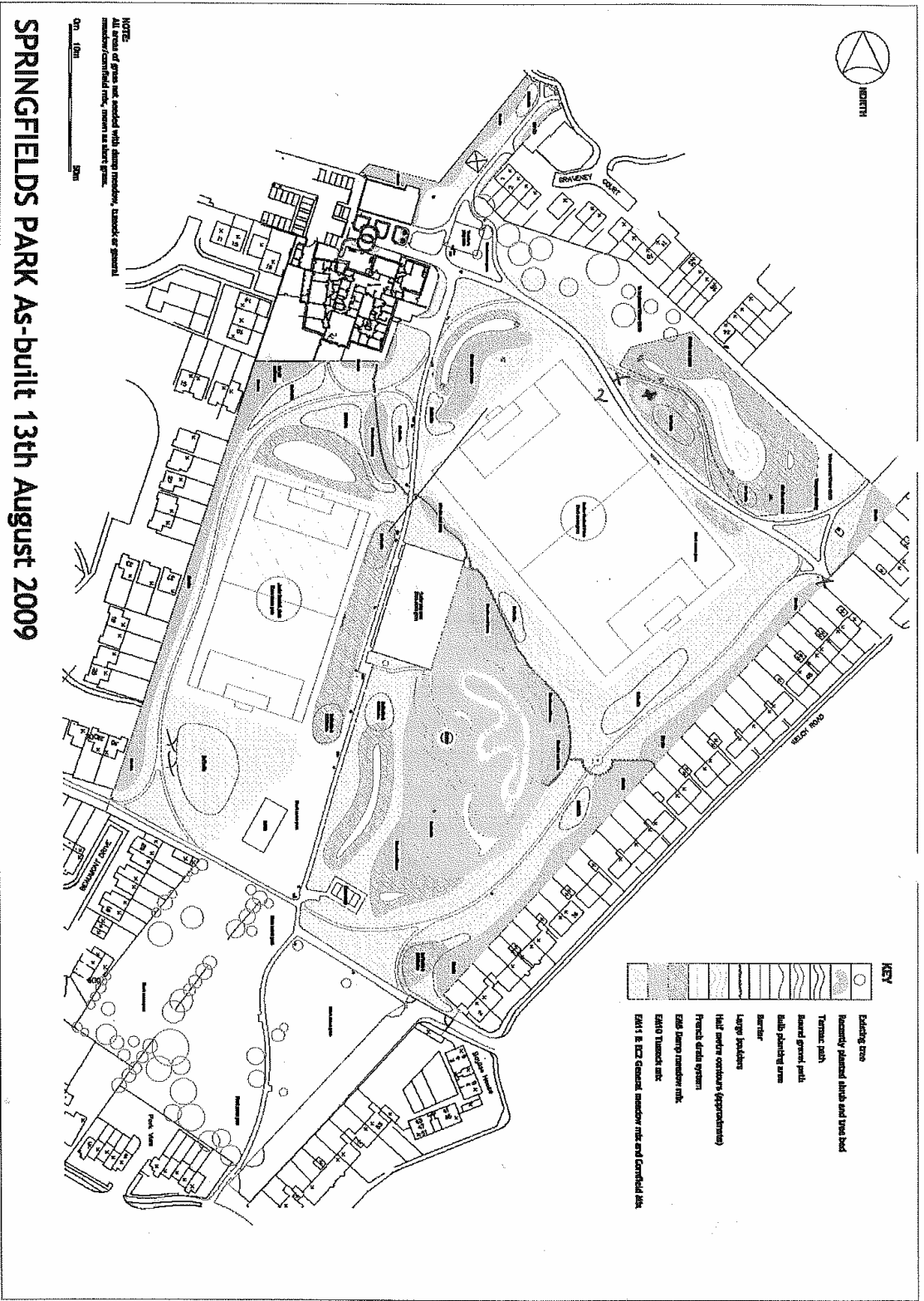
**\*\*\* Action Taken**  
 Refer to Property Services      Response maintenance only  
 Refer to External Contractor      Work contracted out.  
 Dog Foul Sign at entrances to Park? Y/N (circle)      Level of Dog Foul: (low) 1 2 3 4 5 (high) (circle)

I declare that following the inspection no other defects were found other than those specified above:

Signed... *[Signature]* Date: 26-2-10

All repairs complete.

Signed..... Date.....



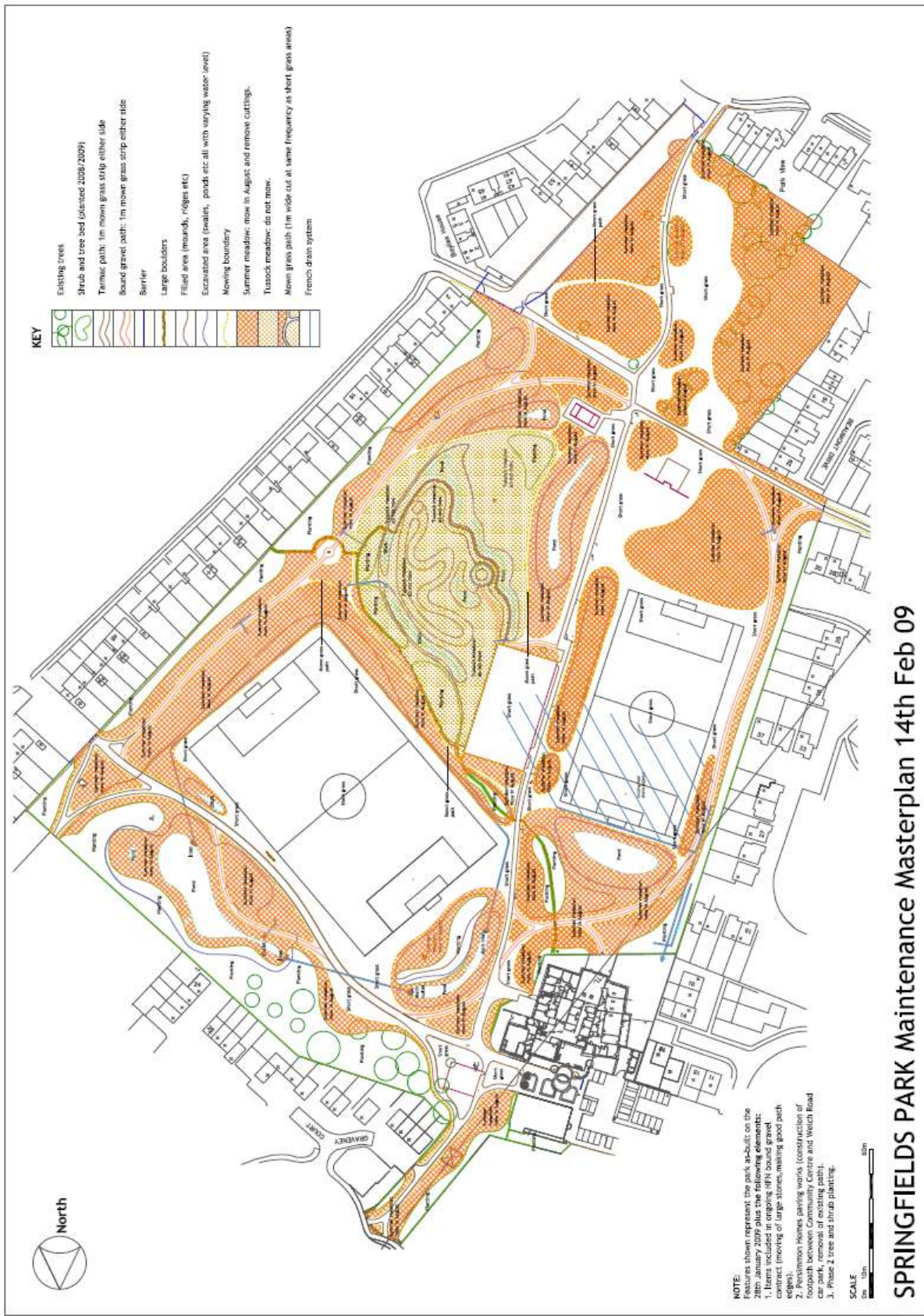
**NOTES:**  
 All areas of grass are seeded with grass seed, lavender or general  
 meadow/cornfield mix, unless as shown above.

0m 10m 20m

**SPRINGFIELDS PARK As-built 13th August 2009**

- KEY**
- Existing trees
  - Recently planted shrubs and tree bed
  - Terrace path
  - Lowered ground path
  - Built planting area
  - Barrier
  - Large planters
  - Half meter sections (approximate)
  - French drain system
  - 2000 ramp monitor rnk
  - EM10 Trench sink
  - EM11 & EC2 General monitor rnk and Cornfield site

# Appendix 7: Springfields Park Maintenance MasterPlan (Under Review)



## Appendix 8: Example Safe System of Work – Application of Herbicide

### Safe System of Work

REF.NO. SSW 29

ACTIVITY :

APPLICATION OF HERBICIDE [GENERIC]

SEE ALSO SSW FOR SPECIFIC CHEMICALS BEING USED

LOCATION:

1. All operators to be trained and pass PA1 and PA6 as a minimum. To enable non – qualified employees to be supervised during operations if required.
2. Correct chemical for task to be identified.
3. Chemical to be stored in chemical store when not in use.
4. Chemical log to be stored in chemical store when not in use
5. Record kept of daily amount used on form provided.
6. Records kept of location, weather conditions etc on forms provided.
7. Compliance with chemical data supplied with chemical.
8. Chemical used at correct dosage.
9. If chemical transported, done so in a safe manner and in an appropriate storage container.
10. Correct PPE worn at all times.
11. Sign used if required.
12. Equipment used to be correct for application, functioning and cleaned after each task or day's work, whichever is appropriate.

SIGNED [ASSESSOR]

DATE

SIGNED [LINE MANAGER]

DATE