



LONG GROVE PARK

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018 – 2023



Prepared By

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

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1 INTRODUCTION

Long Grove Park is situated in the northern half of the borough of Epsom and Ewell, and lies adjacent to the Livingstone Park housing development, on the former site of the playing fields of Horton Hospital. The park was opened in April 2004 after the land was handed over to Epsom and Ewell Council in 2001. The park is approximately 15 acres and incorporates an open space, children's playground and a skate park. The park can accessed from Long Grove road by car and on foot from Horton Crescent and Livingstone Park.

The plan will identify how Long Grove Park is managed using the green flag assessment criteria. The management plan addresses the good practices and recommendations suggested by the Green Flag judges along with further opportunities. Long Grove Park has never been entered or awarded Green Flag but by producing a management plan that reflects the standard for Green Flag awards, this means that Long Grove Park could be entered for the award in the future.

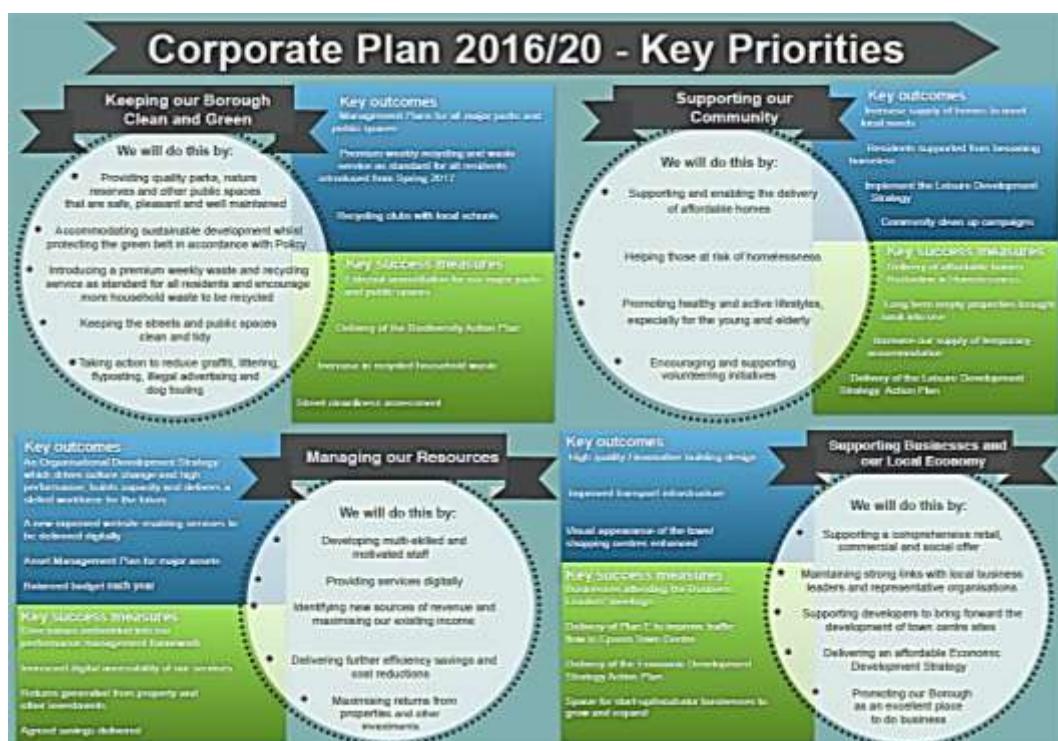
1.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the management plan is to:

- Ensure that the objectives of management and maintenance are documented
- To identify the resources required to manage and maintain the park
- To assess priorities and challenges for future action
- To encourage and support community involvement
- To promote and market the park
- To monitor and review changes that occur in the park

The management plan has been written to cover a 5-year period. It is a working document that brings together all information relating to Long Grove Recreation ground. It will be updated, and revised on an annual basis as part of the Green Flag award scheme process. The plan will serve as a benchmark against which delivery and performance objectives can be measured.

1.2 THE VISION FOR LONG GROVE PARK



'Provide a safe, attractive and sustainable environment for the benefit of all recreation ground users now and in the future'

To achieve this vision we have incorporated the key criteria set out in the Green Flag award scheme as a national benchmark for quality standards for public recreation grounds.

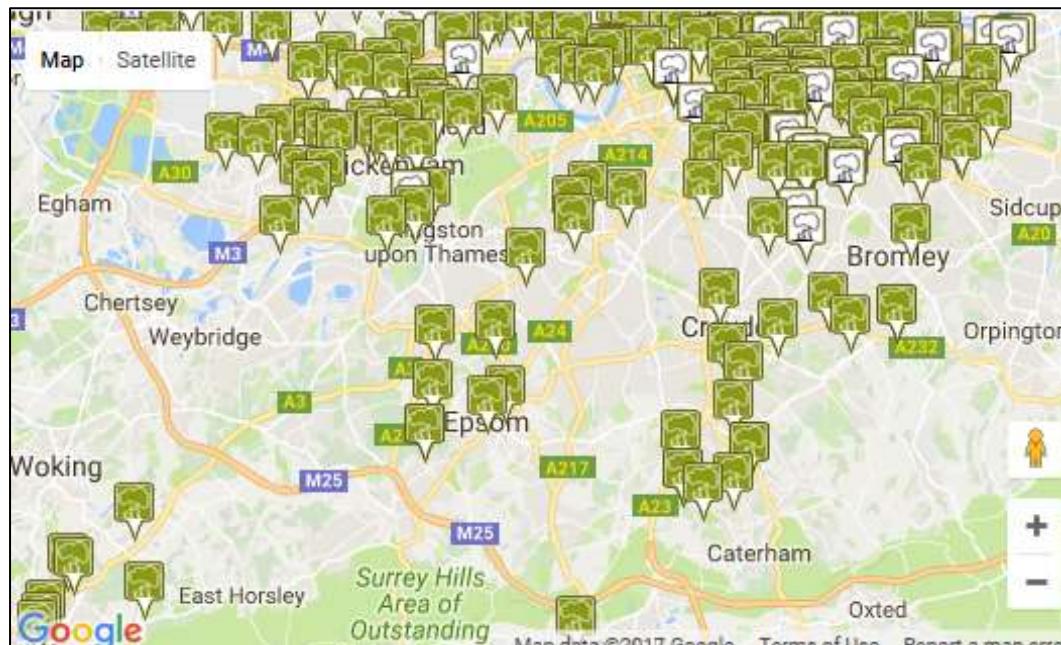


Figure 1 Distribution of Green Flag parks in the South East region

1.3 KEY OBJECTIVES

- To ensure the effective implementation of both financial and staffing resources to deliver a high level of quality management.
- Positively welcome people into the parks, in terms of both physical and social access.
- Ensure a healthy, safe and secure experience for park users.
- Provide a well maintained and clean park.
- Improve the environmental quality and sustainability of practices carried out in the park.
- Maintain the restored historic landscape character, whilst ensuring provision for contemporary users.
- Provide opportunities to increase community use and involvement, particularly through events, education and interpretation.
- Ensure effective promotion of the park as a community resource and as a desirable venue for commercial use.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council work to an annual maintenance schedule involving the Grounds Maintenance team, Street Cleansing and the Ranger Service. The teams work in unison to provide a safe, clean and enjoyable environment for all who wish to use Long Grove recreation ground.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council have strived to ensure its parks and facilities are open to all who wish to use them. In Long Grove Recreation ground there is good disabled access throughout. To ensure work is completed to Council specification there are policies in place for any issues that arise. When working on public areas such as parks and open spaces these issues tend to be litter (including drug paraphernalia), dog fouling, graffiti and vandalism of equipment. These policies ensure that the council can continue to keep its recreation grounds and open spaces as clean and safe as possible for its users.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 SITE OVERVIEW

Address

Long Grove Recreation Ground
Long Grove Road
Epsom
Surrey
KT19 8PZ

Size

12 Acres

Access

Long Grove Road
Livingstone Park

Ownership

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Management and maintenance

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Facilities

Skate Bowl and Ramps
Beginner's skate ramps
Children's Playground
Basketball hoop
Aerial Runway

2.2 LOCATION OF LONG GROVE RECREATION GROUND



Figure 2 Location of Long Grove Park and the surrounding roads



Figure 3 Location of Long Grove Park in relation to Epsom Town Centre



Figure 4 Location of Epsom in relation to London

2.3 HISTORIC CONTEXT

As well as Epsom's NHS General Hospital, the town was also known for having a large number of psychiatric hospitals, only today only two remain (St. Ebba's and West Park Hospital). Before their closure in the 1980's and 1990's, there were five such hospitals in the area, known as the "Epsom Cluster".

- Long Grove Hospital
- West Park Hospital
- St. Ebba's Hospital
- Manor Hospital
- Horton Hospital

Following legislation in 1888, the London County Council (LCC) began building institutions to house up to 2000 pauper lunatics. Over a thousand acres at Horton were acquired in 1896. The London County Council bought the estate from Sir Thomas Foxwell Buxton, who had immigrated to Australia. The LCC acquired the land for £35900.

The first hospital to start accepting patients was Manor Hospital in 1899. Horton Hospital was built to a semi-circular design and opened in 1903. Long Grove Hospital, with the same basic design was finished in 1906. St. Ebba's Hospital opened in 1904. West Park Hospital did not open until 1924. The hospitals shared a central 'engineering works' which supplied all 5 hospitals with water and electricity. The hospitals were also served by the Horton Light Railway. The cluster hospitals were planned together to be self-sufficient for water, gas, electricity, sewage disposal and even the burial of the dead. Each had a central water tower acting as a focal point, and the footprint hospitals (Horton, Long Grove and West Park) lay over a network of access tunnels.

Of the asylums that have closed, three have been converted into housing: Horton, The Manor and Long Grove Hospitals, and the remaining two (West Park and St. Ebba's) continue to run with limited usage including day services and a cottage hospital. Interestingly Long Grove Park was not developed on the site of Long Grove Hospital as some may believe (the Long Grove Hospital site is now the Clarendon Park Housing Development), but was created out of the sports ground of the former Horton Hospital and named after Long Grove Road. In the proposed development plan a corner of the land was to be used as a primary school (now Southfield Park Primary School), Cherryfield Nursery is also situated on the land.

Composite 1930s OS Map showing Horton Hospital

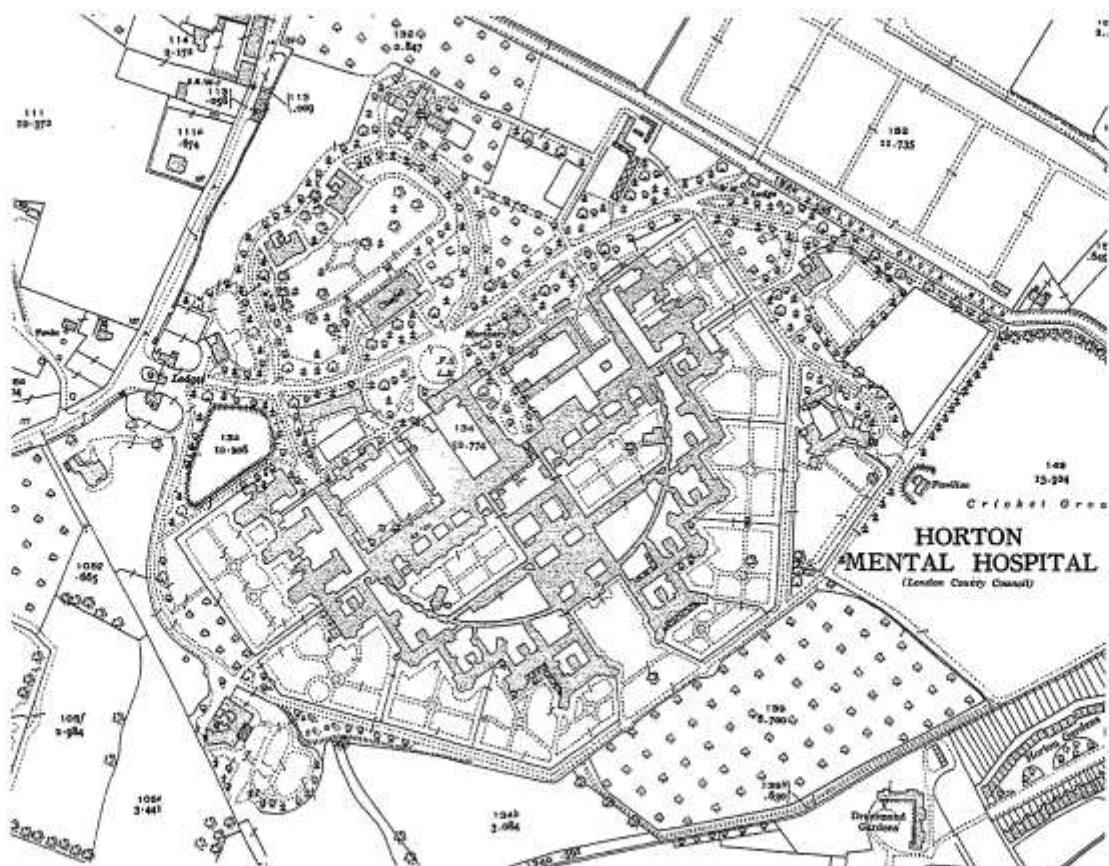


Figure 5 1930's OS map of Horton Hospital

In 2000, the brief given to Roger Steadman, the project manager, was "to provide a pleasant open space for people to enjoy". There was to be a children's playground and skatepark, but the atmosphere was to be that of a landscaped park rather than recreation ground. (*Parks in the Past* by Carol Hill)

2.3.1 FIELDS IN TRUST



Figure 5 Fields in trust plaque

Fields in Trust was founded back in 1925 as the National Playing Fields Association by King George V. Their mission is the same now and as it was then: to ensure that everyone – young or old, able or disabled and wherever they live – should have access to free, local outdoor space for sport, play and recreation. These spaces are vital to building happy and healthy communities and sadly continue to be threatened by all kinds of development.

They are a national charity and operate throughout the UK to safeguard recreational spaces and campaign for better statutory protection for all kinds of outdoor sites. Long Grove Park is one of their sites in Epsom and Ewell and in 2015 Fields in Trust celebrated

their 90th anniversary. 90 years of protecting parks and playing fields across the UK for current and future generations to enjoy.

Since it was founded by King George V in 1925, Fields in Trust has been privileged to have the support of the Royal Family. The Duke of Edinburgh was President of Fields in Trust for 64 years - without his help and contribution the organisation could not have achieved what it has done if, indeed, it still existed as an independent charity.

In 2013 his grandson The Duke of Cambridge stepped into the role of President following this patronage of the successful Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge (*Fields In Trust.org*).

In 2012 Long Grove Park was one of seven recreational spaces in Epsom & Ewell given QEII status. Known as the Queen Elizabeth Fields Challenge in Scotland, where it is still ongoing, this is the most successful engagement and land protection programme ever run by Fields in Trust. They created a grassroots legacy across the UK from 2012's big events, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympic & Paralympic Games. They worked with 873 landowners from parish councils to sports clubs, local authorities to charitable groups. Over 20,000 acres have been nominated for protection through the Challenge, on 1585 sites. Fields in Trust were committed to producing a strong and enduring legacy from the Olympics, in the name of Her Majesty, which shows in the numbers. Operating since 1925, in the years before the Challenge, Fields in Trust protected 1,180 sites covering 7,377 acres (qe2fields.com).

2.3.2 LONG GROVE PARK TODAY

Today, there are several hard-surfaced paths that lead through the park and into the grounds of the housing development. The park contains mature trees and new trees have been planted since the park was opened. There are a few shrub beds close to the paths. The children's playground and original skate park were installed in 2003. Long Grove's current concrete skate ramp and skate bowl were designed by Wheelscapes and built in 2013. An extension to the skating area (beginner's skate ramps) was completed in the early part of 2018. Members of the public using Long Grove Park are able to use the car park to the right hand side of the park. The car park is split into two parts; the first area on the right hand side intended for use by the staff and visitors of the primary school, and the second part for shared use between park users and the nursery.

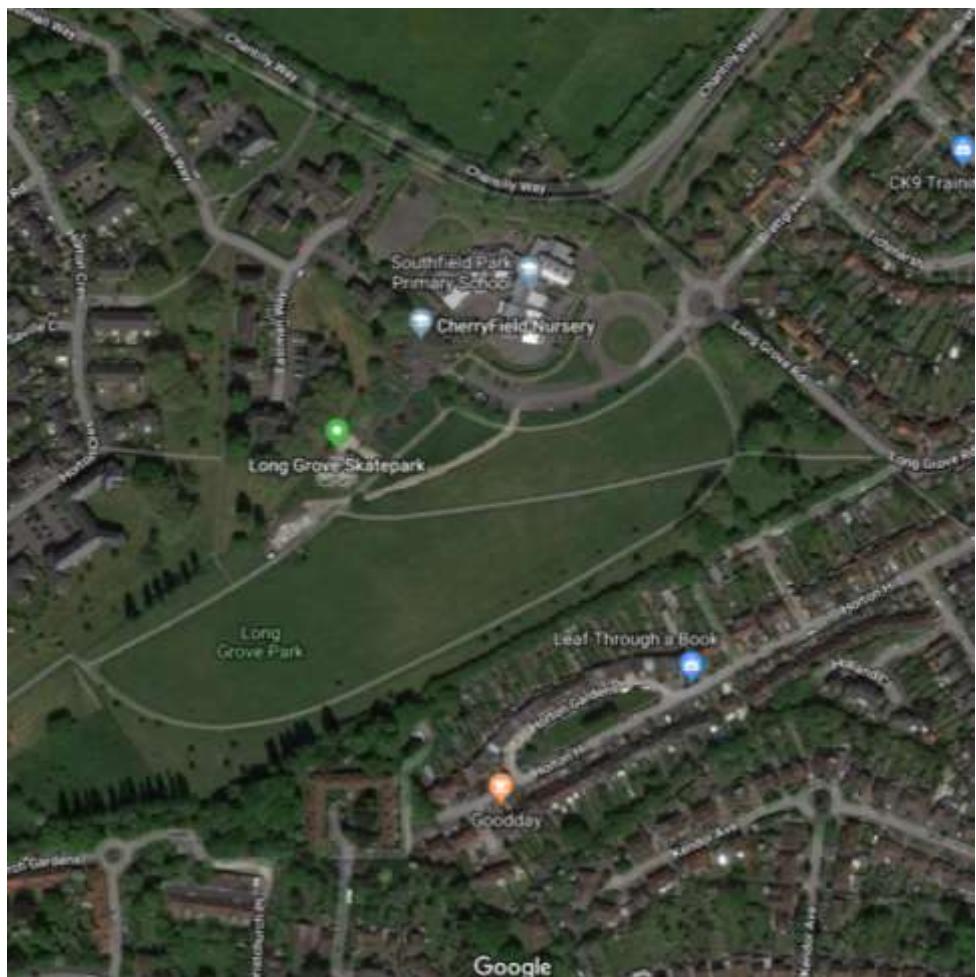


Figure 6 Birds Eye View of Long Grove Park 2018 (Google)

3 MANAGEMENT

The Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is responsible for the maintenance of all public grounds in the borough. The Operational Services Streetcare team and the borough's Property and Estates team carry out the majority of works relating to parks and open spaces which include:

- grounds maintenance
- litter collection
- street cleansing
- public realm maintenance
- building and infrastructure maintenance
- graffiti removal
- ranger patrols

Tasks specifically within Long Grove Park include grass cutting, pruning and planting, clearance of litter, security, events, playground maintenance and other aspects of park management. Maintenance is output based as far as possible – it specifies the standard to be met, rather than the way in which the service is to be provided.

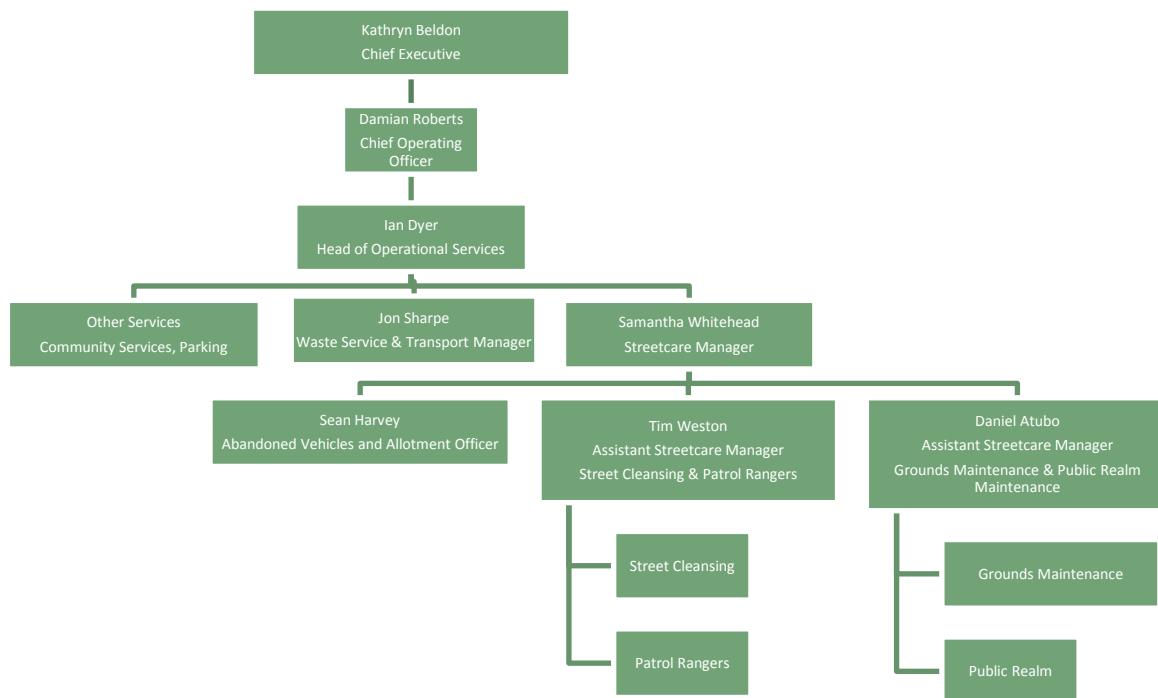


Figure 7 Operational Services Management Structure

4 LONG GROVE PARK IN RELATION TO GREEN FLAG CRITERIA

4.1 A WELCOMING PLACE

4.1.1 ACCESS

There are six access points into Long Grove Park, all of which are gated entrances as shown in figure 8. The main entrance to the park is at the junction of Long Grove Road and Brettgrave, immediately to the left of the roundabout when approaching from Long Grove Road. At the main entrance there are double gates providing vehicular access to the park via a tarmac path. These double gates remain locked at all times to prevent unauthorised vehicles entering the park. As an extra security measure a heavy duty locking post is in place and recently a height barrier has been installed (see figure 9). Key holders include Operational Services staff and Contractors. Next to the double gates is a single gated entrance allowing members of the public into the park.

To the left of the main entrance is a shared car parking area for Cherry Field Nursery, Southfield Park Primary School and for members of the public using the park. At the top end of the car park there is a double gated entrance. This entrance provides access to Operational Services staff vehicles, although it is a fairly narrow opening and one gate is locked closed to allow pedestrian access only. There are two further access points into Long Grove Park from the open space adjacent to Horton Crescent in the Livingstone Park housing development. These are both single gated entrances. The fifth entrance lies on the bend of Long Grove Road and is also a single gated entrance.

The sixth entrance into the park is via a pair of double gates at the top end of the open space. These provide vehicular access into the park but there is no hard standing accompanying this. For this reason these gates remain locked at all times and are only to be used in emergency situations.

Due to concerns with antisocial behaviour in the car park, a Joint Action Group meeting was called in date. Attendees included Epsom Police, Nursery and Primary school staff and a Council representative. At this meeting it was decided that in an effort to deter or prevent this antisocial behaviour, the large car park gates would be locked by the Rangers at 8pm on weekdays and half an hour before sunset on bank holidays and weekends. Operational Services staff hold the keys to the locks on the gates, and the nursery, Primary School, police and fire service will also be issued keys.

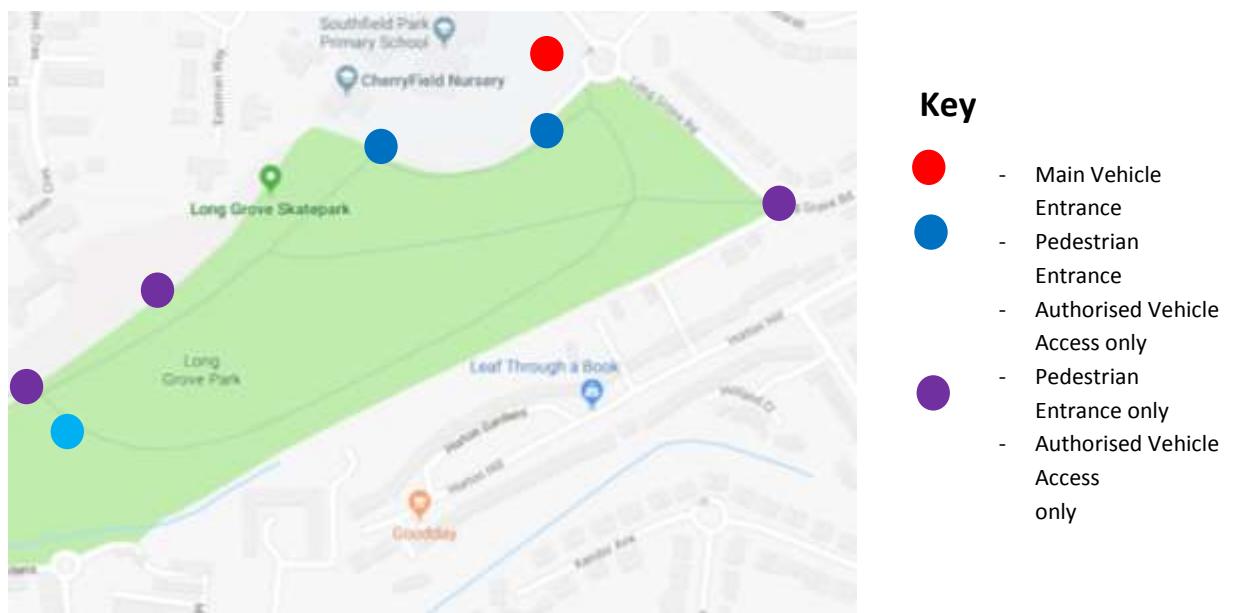


Figure 8 Map Showing the Location of the six Entrances to Long Grove Park



Figure 9 Height Barrier installed December 2018

4.1.2 SIGNAGE

Throughout the Borough, extensive work is carried out to keep all signs clean and legible. One of the most common problems faced by the Ranger service is graffiti. Epsom and Ewell Borough Council are dedicated to

ensuring the removal of graffiti, as a result, members of the ranger service were trained in 2017 in the use of graffiti chemicals to help combat the issue. It has been found that it was more beneficial to use signs with Perspex fronts. By using Perspex fronts on signs and noticeboards it is easier to clean away graffiti.

One of the most common signs that can be seen in Long Grove Park is the dog fouling sign asking all dog walkers to pick up after their dog. During the dry, summer months, the Rangers spray the pathways around the park with anti-dog fouling stencils. These signs and stencils have proved to be a successful deterrent to help tackle the nuisance of dog fouling.

There is one main information board as can be seen in figure 10, located at the main vehicle entrance. This only shows the main details of the park including a phone number but do not contain any kind of map of the park. Signage with park rules can be seen on each entrance to the park. In 2015, budget was secured to design new informative signs to go in some of the other parks in the borough. The boards consist of a map showing the layout of the park and key features as well as historical background. After successful installation of the new notice boards in the borough's parks of Nonsuch, Auriol Park, Shadbolt Park, Rosebery Park and Alexandra Rec (see figure 11), Long Grove's new boards are currently in the design process and will be installed in 2019. The boards will also have a dedicated notice section where information and events can be displayed when relevant.



Figure 10 Information Board by the Main Vehicle Entrance



Figure 11 New Notice Board at Alexandra Recreation Ground

4.1.3 FACILITIES

Long Grove Park is home to:

- Under 12's children's playground
- Skate bowl and ramp
- Beginner's skate ramps
- Aerial runway
- Basketball hoop

As the list of facilities above would suggest Long Grove Park prides itself on being an open space within an urban environment, sporting large swathes of grass, a children's playground and a popular and well used skating area, rather than extensive infrastructure such as pavilion, sports pitches and tennis courts.

The under 12's playground is split into two sections; a junior area and an area designed for toddlers.



Figure 12 Junior playground area (Google Images)

The skate park was originally installed in 2003, however it became apparent that the ramps were subject to vandalism and became easily damaged. In 2013 Wheelscapes designed and built a sturdier concrete bowl and ramps (an advanced skate park). The skate park is very popular with local skaters and BMX bikers as well as people from further afield. As such, an extension was designed and built by Gravity Engineering Ltd in May 2018 (a beginner's skate park). To accommodate the extension, the aerial runway (sometimes referred to as the zip wire) that stood beyond the skate bowl was moved to the other side of the path. Unfortunately it was decided that the aerial runway was no longer fit for purpose and quotes are being sought to replace the unit in 2019.

There are no football pitches in Long Grove Park as the nearby Court Recreation Ground has extensive facilities for this purpose.



Figure 13 skate park 'bowl' area (Google Images)



Figure 14 Beginner's skate park after installation in May 2018



Figure 15 Aerial Runway pre relocation (PSS Live Image)

4.1.4 HEALTHY LIVING

The park is popular with dog walkers, cyclists and families and thus contributes to the promotion of healthy living and physical activity.

Epsom & Ewell Council also actively promote health walks for their residents and visitors (see figure 22), and try to educate them on the benefits of walking to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

A promotional poster for the Epsom & Ewell Health Walks Autumn Programme. The title 'Epsom & Ewell Health Walks' is at the top, followed by 'Autumn Programme: October – December 2018'. Below this is a box titled 'FACTS ABOUT WALKING' containing the following points:

- A 30 minute walk at a moderate pace can burn at least 200 calories
- Walking improves mental alertness and memory and can help prevent/reduce depression
- Walking helps promote restful sleep.

Further down, a box says 'Enjoy the outdoors, step into fitness and walk your way to health'. Another box states 'No booking required' and 'Walks for all ages and abilities' with 'Trained Walk Leaders present at all times'. At the bottom, it says 'Visit www.epsomandewellhealthwalks.org.uk to view the latest Health Walk programme and location maps'. Logos for 'numbers an initiative of Epsom & Ewell' and 'walking for health' are at the bottom left, and the 'EPSOM & EWELL' logo is at the bottom right.

Figure 16 Epsom & Ewell Health Walks Programme

4.2 HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE

Safety and security is identified as being the main issue for users of parks and open spaces. To allay users concerns a number of steps are put in place to ensure a safe environment. Managers and Rangers are responsible for the identification of hazards and the assessment/reduction of risks including those relating to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health. The legislation relating to Duty of Care and Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 make the responsibility for public safety of paramount importance.

4.2.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Training is issued when using new machinery and to new members of staff (in conjunction with the health and safety at work act 1974). This applies to the Ranger team, the Grounds Maintenance team and Street Cleansing team. Training is always available throughout the year for anyone who feels it will benefit them. Risk assessments are carried out on all tools and tasks conducted by the services. Risk assessments are encouraged even if it is felt the risk is manageable. Situated in the council depot there are three fire officers, two health and safety officers and there is a health and safety committee. The health and safety committee meets to discuss the Council health and safety policies to ensure they are up-to-date and relevant to the staff they are placed upon. The system that was used to report accidents in the workplace was updated in 2012. It was originally a paper based reporting system but it was felt the paper trail was too long, leading to a longer time frame from when the accident was reported to it being logged. A new database has been put in place to reduce the amount of time and the paper being used in reporting accidents. By computerising all reports on a spreadsheet, everyone has access to them at all times. This enables results to be analysed at ease. Analysis allows the council to identify patterns and accidents which aids the development of new policies and suitable training for specific areas where accidents occur.

All staff operate in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy and Codes of Practice outlined by the council. Specific risk assessments are undertaken for tools and task based procedure. The health and safety of visitors is taken very seriously and visitors are encouraged to report any possible health and safety risks to either themselves, other park users or staff. These calls or emails made by members of the public are logged as cases on a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system and sent to the relevant department so a case history can be kept and timescales can be met.

4.2.2 RANGER SERVICE

The ranger service are a team of 8, covering 48 sites across the borough, ranging from small open spaces to formal parks and recreation grounds and patrolling the larger sites of Epsom Common and Horton Country Park. They work on a 7 day rota and the shifts are worked out so there are rangers on duty from 8am to 11pm. When rangers are on shift they respond to emergency calls placed to the council. Rangers carry the duty phone with them at all times so they can respond quickly to requests, thus eliminating the need to return to the office. When the Rangers finish their shift at 11pm, the duty phone is diverted to a duty officer who takes all out of office hours calls; so effectively if someone has a problem in a park they can reach someone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All parks and recreation grounds in the borough have signage with the relevant information for contacting the ranger service or the out of office call out service. When rangers are called out to an emergency all correct procedures are completed in compliance with council policy.

Due to the Ranger services job profile it is important to provide a wide spectrum of training, this may include:

- Handling conflict
- Awareness and enforcement of bye-laws
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour
- Emergency first aid
- Playground inspections
- Carrying out patrolling and inspection duties
- Knowledge of green flag, what work is being carried out to achieve green flag status and the overall management plan

4.2.3 FIRE PROCEDURES

In response to the 2017 fire at Grenfell Tower in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Epsom & Ewell Council Property Services department has conducted an in-depth fire risk assessment of their buildings and properties. It is planned that in 2018/2019 that all council staff will be trained as fire wardens, this will include: generic topics such as fire science, hazard spotting, good housekeeping and practical use of extinguishers. New Ranger vehicles were acquired in 2017 and are fitted with small fire extinguishers.

4.2.4 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If the emergency services are needed the Ranger service do not hesitate to get in contact with them and also encourage the public to contact the emergency services if the rangers are not on site. All ranger vans carry a first aid kit and Rangers are first aid at work trained. When the Ranger service is on shift they respond to emergency calls placed to the council. When on shift Rangers carry the duty phone with them so they can respond quickly to requests, thus eliminating the need to return to the office. When the Rangers are not on shift, the ranger duty phone is diverted to a duty officer who takes all out of office hours calls. When Rangers are called out to an emergency all correct paperwork procedures are completed in compliance with Council policy. All parks and recreation grounds in the borough have signage with the relevant information for contacting the Ranger service or the out of office call out service. Accidents in the skate bowl and removal of injured persons can prove quite challenging as there are no steps or emergency exit points (due to the need for the skate bowl to be clear of obstructions). In the past the Rangers have assisted with helping the emergency services extract injured persons from the bowl and specialised emergency services such as HART (Hazardous Area Response Team) have had to assist in some circumstances.

4.2.5 POLICING IN LONG GROVE PARK

It is probably safe to say that most boroughs in the country have seen an impact of reduced or redeployed police numbers. Epsom & Ewell is no exception with its regular police force reduced to 2 Neighbourhood Officers and 7 Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) for the whole borough, and emergency 999 responders prioritising life or death situations above any other calls. Long Grove Park falls under the 'Epsom and Ewell South' section of the Surrey Police safer Neighbourhood Team. It would be up to the PCSO's to carry out patrols of the park to deal with issues such as anti-social behaviour and other community concerns. The Safer Neighbourhood Team also works in partnership with the Ranger Service to tackle these relevant issues. The current dedicated Neighbourhood Specialist Officer for the particular area is PC 3701 Elena BOAFO.

In order to make users feel safe, Council staff are often visible in the park. The street cleaners are responsible for opening the park in the week and the ranger service for opening at weekends and locking it daily. Rangers also carry out a weekly inspection of park facilities, street cleaners will check the bins daily and ground

maintenance will be carrying out grass cutting and horticultural work. This provides a staff presence, which could act as a deterrent to offenders.

An arrangement exists with Rangers and PCSO's whereby joint patrols of the parks and open spaces are carried out. This includes patrolling Long Grove Park. As well as joint patrols, the Ranger service and all departments that may be in the parks are encouraged to report any damage or crime to the police. In addition, Ward Councillors and other park tenants are also very active with reporting antisocial behaviour and crime to the police and it is hoped that as a result it will raise the profile of Long Grove Park with the Police and the Park will benefit from additional police patrols of the area.

In the interests of security, Long Grove Park is locked at night. It is locked half an hour before sunset and reopened early in the morning. This however cannot rule out those who want to scale the fences and gates and any open space will attract a degree of antisocial behaviour. As mentioned in 4.1.1 ACCESS, recent bouts of antisocial behaviour have resulted in a Joint Action Group meeting, bringing together the Council, police, Head teacher of the Primary school, and Nursery Manager. This meeting was held to set up practices going forward to help reduce antisocial behaviour. This led to park rangers doing more regular patrols around school pick up time and police increasing their patrols. The Ranger Service and Police attend bi-monthly meetings to discuss any particular issues in certain areas or parks which helps to decide where patrols may be more necessary. To help reduce the antisocial behaviour in the car park, the gates to the car park will be locked overnight in addition to the park being locked.

Another option that the council are investigating in response to crime in parks and open spaces is the use of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's). These could supersede the byelaws and allow fixed penalty notices to be issued to offenders. Repeat offenders could also be taken to court. To implement PSPO's the Council would need to start a borough wide and hold a consultation with the public before it could be implemented.

Figure 17 shows the area analysed (Long Grove Park) for crimes recorded by the police from November 2017 to October 2018. Figure 18 shows the list of crimes reported and figure 19 shows the outcomes of the listed crimes.



Figure 17 Area analysed for crimes from Nov 17 to Oct 2018 (police.uk)

Crime type	Number of crimes		Crime type	Number of crimes	
	Total	Percentage		Total	Percentage
Anti-social behaviour	32	56.14%	Possession of weapons	0	0.00%
Bicycle theft	1	1.75%	Public order	6	10.53%
Burglary	0	0.00%	Robbery	0	0.00%
Criminal damage and arson	3	5.26%	Shoplifting	2	3.51%
Drugs	0	0.00%	Theft from the person	0	0.00%
Other crime	0	0.00%	Vehicle crime	2	3.51%
Other theft	5	8.77%	Violence and sexual offences	6	10.53%

Figure 18 List of crimes recorded to the police in this area from Nov 2017 to Oct 2018 (police.uk)

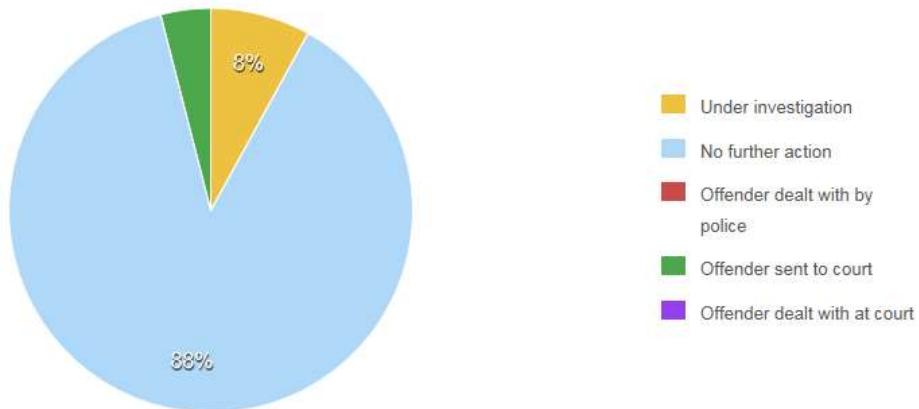


Figure 19 Comparison of outcomes in this area from Nov 2017 to Oct 2018 (police.uk)

As it can be seen from the results, antisocial behaviour was the highest category for the area (56.14%). Anti-social behaviour covers a wide range of unacceptable activity that causes harm to an individual, to their community or to their environment. This could be an action by someone else that leaves you feeling alarmed, harassed or distressed. It also includes fear of crime or concern for public safety, public disorder or public nuisance. Examples of anti-social behaviour include:

- Nuisance, rowdy or inconsiderate neighbours
- Vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
- Street drinking
- Environmental damage including littering, dumping of rubbish and abandonment of cars
- Prostitution related activity
- Begging and vagrancy
- Fireworks misuse
- Inconsiderate or inappropriate use of vehicles

(police.uk)

4.2.6 SECURITY

To aid security, Long Grove Park is surrounded by fencing and has gated entrances, and is one of the ten parks in the Borough that are locked at night. All the gates are locked by the ranger service and the procedure for locking is designed to minimise the risk of any members of the public getting accidentally locked in. Should a member of the public get locked in, they can call the number displayed in the park and will be let out. The park is locked as early as half an hour before sunset so the locking up times vary throughout the year and it is dependent on the sunset times.

4.2.7 CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION

CCTV has not been installed in Long Grove as it has not been felt a necessary measure thus far. As the park is monitored for bye-law offences and criminal offences, should it seem CCTV would be beneficial to the park it may an option for the future.

4.2.8 BYELAWS

Byelaws apply to all pleasure grounds and open spaces in the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. The Byelaws for Long Grove Park are made under Section 164 of the Public Health Act, 1875, and Section 15 of the Open Spaces Act, 1906.

Particular byelaws have been chosen from Section 12 and 15 of the Open Spaces Act 1906 and section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875. These byelaws are consistent across all areas designated as pleasure grounds and open spaces except for byelaws pertaining to dog prohibition, canine faeces and dogs on leads, which are allocated to individual named areas. Long Grove Park has two areas where dogs are prohibited (Schedule 1, Part 1, Under section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875), these being the skate ramps and children's playground. The rest of Long Grove Park, outside of the dog exclusion zone is covered by the canine faeces removal byelaw (Schedule 2, Part 2, Section 12 and 15 of the Open Spaces Act 1906). The byelaw requiring that dogs must be kept on a lead (Schedule 3, Part 1, Section 164 of the Public Health Act 1875) do not apply to Long Grove Park.

The current byelaws that the council use are severely out of date in both language and context. For example:

4. A person shall not bring or cause to be brought into the pleasure ground any cattle, sheep, goats, or pigs, or any beast of draught or burden, unless, in pursuance of an agreement with the Council, or otherwise in the exercise of any lawful right or privilege, he is authorised to do so.

It is highly unlikely that this will occur in today's times and both the language and context should be updated to reflect the current climate. Whilst all of the byelaws use outdated language some are still very relevant and the rangers will uphold these if they witness the following activity for example:

3. A person shall not in the pleasure ground

- (a) carelessly or negligently deface, injure or destroy any wall or fence in or enclosing the pleasure ground, or any building, barrier, railing, post or seat or any erection or ornament;**
- (b) climb any wall or fence in or enclosing the pleasure ground, or any tree, or any barrier, railing, post, or other erection;**
- (c) wilfully, carelessly, or negligently remove or displace any barrier, railing, post or seat, or any part of any erection or ornament, or any implement, provided for use in the laying out or maintenance of the pleasure ground.**

The ways in which the byelaws would be enforced would be an on the spot fine of £2 or to be forcibly removed by an officer of the council or constable. Again due to the change in times and peoples priorities and liabilities, it would only be an incredibly serious offence resulting in criminal activity that a person would be removed from the park and this would be left to the police rather than the ranger service. Therefore, if a ranger came across a member of the public who was breaking a byelaw but not causing criminal activity they would take the approach of speaking to the person and explain the reasons why they need to stop what they are doing. This approach lends itself to the notion that education is more effective than punishment.

As briefly mentioned, the byelaws need to be completely updated to remove outdated language and to cover issues that are relevant today such as people flying drones, playing golf or driving their mopeds and off road vehicles through the parks. However due to the legal nature of the byelaws this would be a very large project for the councils legal team and is unlikely to be updated anytime soon, especially since the council are exploring the use of PSPO's. In the meantime, the rangers will aim to confront any unwanted behaviour when witnessed in parks and report it to the police where necessary.

4.2.9 DOG ENFORCEMENT

All of the parks in the borough are extremely popular with dog walkers which in turn lead to the problem of dog fouling. It is an issue that is a high priority for the council. If dog walkers find themselves in a need of a dog poo bag, Rangers carry bags on them or in their vehicles at all times. There are notices up all over the park instructing people to pick up after their dog. These include stickers and bin posters, and the rangers carry out stencilling on the ground as can be seen in figure 22. When carrying out inspections, the ranger service will pick up any dog mess they come across on public walkways.

It is important to encourage the public to pick up after their dog as the health impacts of dog mess when making contact with eyes is well documented. Toxocariasis occurs when toxocara worm eggs in dog mess come into contact with the eyes. This can lead to partial and/or complete blindness.

Over the course of the last few years there has been an increase in the concern over multiple dog walkers. This ranges from members of the public who own more than two dogs to people who run dog walking businesses and have been seen to have in excess of ten dogs. The concern is that as commercial dog walking is a fairly new concept, the legislation on what is acceptable is not clear. The issues range from: should there be a limit to the amount of dogs per person? Should they be on a lead? Does the walker have the necessary insurances? etc. The Council understand that this is an issue that needs to be addressed and has started investigating the legislation surrounding this topic and will aim to decide, along with members of the Leisure Committee, whether they wish to put more stringent measures in place to control commercial/multiple dog walking in parks. Naturally, this is a controversial topic as it has strong opinions from both sides.



Figure 20 Bag it bin it pavement stencil

4.3 CLEAN AND WELL MAINTAINED

4.3.1 WORK SCHEDULING

Epsom and Ewell's work program is designed to ensure that each team is allocated a program of works that is defined prior to the start of each period by the management team.

To reach the required standard in our parks, the program of works is based on a schedule of need, for example grass and hedge cutting, emptying of bins etc. which is on a specific frequency or rotation but is also responsive to seasonal changes and sporadic events which could have an impact like flooding or a large public celebration. As well as this, the Council will also respond to user feedback which could come in the form of a letter, telephone call or CRM case from a member of the public, Councillor or Council staff members. This will be given a priority and then scheduled appropriately into daily tasks to minimise the impact.

4.3.2 MONITORING

Monitoring of the services is undertaken at a number of levels and on an ongoing basis. The Council monitors the performance of the staff to facilitate rapid identification and response to operational issues. A rigorous works order programming system enables each service element to be integrated as part of a seamless approach by enabling effective monitoring and reporting. The Operational Services department also uses the system to perform internal random monitoring of works previously completed. All inspections would be logged and used to monitor performance against established Key Performance Indicators.

4.3.3 LITTER

Long Grove Park ground has litter bins placed in a number of locations along the pathways and also in the children's playground. The litter bins were replaced a few years ago to a new style which can also advertise in the perspex doors and can also be used to dispose of dog waste. The bins are checked and emptied Monday through to Friday by the street cleansing team. The ranger service also provides a litter picking service when they are on patrol. In the summer when there is more activity in the park additional patrols are made to combat the increased activity which leads to a sharp rise in litter.

4.3.4 CLINICAL WASTE

Any litter such as clinical waste, syringes etc are collected by the rangers or street cleaners who are 'sharps' trained. Using tools specific to the task, the item is inserted into a lockable 'sharps' box. The location of the 'sharps' will be recorded and when full, the box will be transported to the designated clinical waste disposal point.

4.3.5 GRAFFITI

There is a graffiti team working all year round who respond to call outs from the public and from staff members who have found graffiti on their day to day inspections. Rangers are also trained to use some of the chemicals and can remove on site if possible, however if the graffiti covers a large area or stronger chemicals are needed then the graffiti team will attend. If the graffiti cannot be removed using chemicals then the graffiti team stock paints that can be used. Epsom and Ewell Borough Council actively seek to prosecute those who spray graffiti in the area.

4.3.6 PARK FURNITURE AND MAINTENANCE

The ranger service not only patrol the parks and open spaces, they also carry out minor maintenance work on amenity infrastructures such as the park signs, benches, bins and playground equipment. The rangers and a dedicated street care team operate with a 'find fault and fix it' approach. Repairs are carried out as soon as possible but if the item is considered a risk to health it will be immediately decommissioned and cordoned off with an appropriate sign put in place warning of its danger. If the fix is out of the capabilities of the ranger service it is passed on to the maintenance ranger team. The fault will be given a priority rating based on severity and fixed to an appropriate timescale. The maintenance rangers carry an extensive array of equipment in their vehicles so most issues can be resolved on site without the need to remove.

Long Grove Park's street furniture and equipment are visually checked by rangers who are RoSPA (The Royal Society for the prevention of accidents) trained to level 1 – Routine Inspections. Although the inspections are largely centred on playground equipment, the rangers are also trained to inspect gates, surfaces, bins and benches. Visual checks are carried out by the Rangers on a weekly basis, however all staff who visit the site are encouraged to report any faults that they identify.

Traditionally, inspections were logged on paper inspection sheets but in 2014 Epsom and Ewell Borough Council began to use a playground safety check system called 'Playsafe'. These playground safety checks are carried out using a mobile phone application that links directly with an online 'Playsafe' database. By logging any faults found on the 'Playsafe' handheld devices, it eliminates the need for paper which can get lost and ensures that the maintenance rangers have direct access to the findings so they can see photos, the risk, and then prioritise repairs accordingly. After trialling the software it was felt that the software was not keeping up with how the Council wanted to use it and only covered playground equipment and not all assets within a park. Eventually it was decided to move back to paper reporting as the rangers were having to use a combination of both. In mid 2017 the Council met with the company who manage the software and have found that it has moved forward and will likely meet the needs of the rangers and the council. The biggest change being that all park assets can be added regardless of if they have a playground or not. Currently all the park assets are being added to the software and we are in the process of procuring new handheld devices. The Council aim to have this software (now renamed PSS Live) in place and used for inspections by 2019.

4.3.7 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

All grounds maintenance work is carried out to a schedule managed by the Assistant Streetcare Manager who is responsible for Grounds Maintenance and Public Realm maintenance. After each site is complete it is logged on the grounds maintenance database with the appropriate times, dates and names of the staff who were on site. The work carried out is varied throughout the year according to the season and landscape present at the site. Schedules will vary depending on whether the area has general or ornamental grass, spring-flowering/annual/shrub/rose beds, herbaceous borders, hedges, rockeries and/or woodland. Plants and soft landscape maintenance are all maintained with the aim of providing a safe, attractive and stimulating environment for those who visit. All organic waste accumulated from grounds maintenance work is taken to a composting site until it is suitable for using on the shrub beds.

As well as carrying out scheduled work and responding to seasonal changes, the grounds maintenance team also respond to CRM (customer relationship management) notices. These may have come via a call from a member of the public or from a staff member after visual inspections of the sites.

All hard surface sports facilities (playgrounds, five-a-side pitches, tennis courts and basketball courts) are all spray cleaned when it is felt necessary. A build-up of dust and dirt on these hard services make them increasingly slippery underfoot. Spray cleaning using a jet power washer plate that glides along the surface removes all dust

and dirt from in between the tiny crevices in the tarmac surface. All dust and dirt that has been excavated is then removed with either a hard brush or a backpack blower before it has the chance to work its way back into the tarmac.

Weed control

This is carried out in the parks and recreation grounds by staff that are certified with PA1 and PA6 certificates. It is important that only trained staff use these chemicals, not only for their personal safety but when working in recreation grounds as there are animals and recreation ground users to consider. The certificate PA1 is the theory behind pesticide application. It covers legislation regarding environmental, public and personal safety and all procedures regarding health and safety. PA6 is the certificate for manual handling and application of pesticides. Epsom and Ewell Borough Council do not have a schedule for spraying in the recreation grounds. It is felt that scheduled spraying may lead to excessive spraying. When recreation grounds are inspected by the Ranger services and Grounds Maintenance, they will determine as and when spraying may need to be carried out.

Litter

Litter is collected as and when it is necessary. The Ranger service carries out litter picking when on patrol. The grounds maintenance teams also carry out litter picking as part of their duties when working in the recreation ground.

Leaf Clearance

At the end of the grass cutting season, the parks team will go out with a tractor, blowers and a ride on cut and collect mower which they remove the blade from the bottom and use it to hoover up the leaves. The leaf collection period runs from roughly the end of October up to Christmas. The leaves collected are distributed between council allotment sites and Nonsuch Park where they are left to become leaf mould. Leaf mould is fantastic soil improver and is welcomed by the allotments holders who use it to improve their crops. The leaf mould pile at Nonsuch Park is used by the gardening staff for the Formal Gardens and any remaining is distributed to other flower/shrub beds around the borough.

4.3.8 EQUIPMENT

All grounds maintenance equipment is purchased centrally with great consideration for staff safety in regards to emissions and vibration. All staff are inducted either internally on equipment such as strimmers and blowers but for equipment like chainsaws, staff are sent for external training. Annual service programs are in place for all equipment and daily safety checks are carried out and recorded.

Hand-Arm Vibrations

Hand-arm vibration is vibration transmitted from work processes into workers' hands and arms. It can be caused by operating hand-held power tools, such as strimmer's, powered lawnmowers, or by holding materials being processed by machines. Hand-arm vibration can cause a range of conditions collectively known as hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS), as well as specific diseases such as carpal tunnel syndrome. HAVS is preventable, but once the damage is done it is permanent. In July 2005 the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 came into force which aims to protect employees from hand-arm vibration. Therefore since then by law, the council as an employer, must assess and identify measures to eliminate or reduce risks from exposure to hand-arm vibration so that they can protect their employees from risks to their health (HSE.gov.uk).

The council records their employee's hand-arm vibration exposure in order to reduce the risk of them developing HAVS. When the council acquire new equipment it is given a unique code and its initial vibration magnitude (m/s^2) value is recorded, this informs the council of how much vibration the piece of equipment produces. Every piece of equipment is tested annually but if a piece of equipment becomes damaged it will be tested after being repaired and its vibration magnitude logged; this is due to the vibration magnitude gradually worsening with age and damage and therefore can be used for less time.

Each new employee is given an initial screening questionnaire and then carry out an assessment which will determine whether or not they have any pre-existing HAVS symptoms, if they do they will be referred to occupational health who will decide if they can use tools that cause hand-arm vibration and for how long each day. Members of staff who show no existing symptoms of HAVS will be allowed to use the tools and every time they do, the operator fills out a sheet at the end of the day with the equipment code and how long they used the equipment for. This is logged into a database that has a points system provided by HSE.gov.uk, the database then calculates how much hand arm vibration that operator has been exposed to. Currently they have a daily exposure action value of 100points and a daily exposure limit value of 400points, this allows the operator to accrue a maximum exposure limit of 2000points per week. Should the operator exceed this before the end of the week they will be stopped from using the tools for the remainder of the week.

4.3.9 ARBORICULTURAL MANAGEMENT

Increasing public concerns about environmental and sustainability issues are focusing our attention on the importance of trees in our towns and countryside. The Borough Council manages and maintains thousands of publicly owned trees; these include 8000 street trees and over 50,000 trees distributed across our 2500 acres of public open space. Trees make a major contribution to the quality of the local environment but they also need careful management and we have a duty of care in respect of tree management to take reasonable steps to ensure that trees do not constitute a danger or a legal nuisance.

To comply with our duty of care and legal responsibility, the Council follow a tree risk management policy. It is important that the Council keep these programmes intact and adequately funded. This will help to ensure we comply with duties over public safety and nuisance as well as promoting environmental care.

As part of this policy the Council operate a comprehensive tree inspection programme every 3 years. Tree care is the responsibility of the Council tree officer Jeremy Young; he oversees all inspections and work carried out and when he is not in the office the deputy tree officer takes over. The professional tree inspections are undertaken by Council officers and qualified tree inspectors and sites are zoned in accordance with risk. The inspections involve visual tree assessments to evaluate whether there are any observable defects that constitute a danger or actionable nuisance. When defects are identified they are scheduled for work under the defect management programme. The time scales for these works are undertaken in accordance with the assessed priorities as agreed in table 1.

Priority	Target Response
Emergency	Within 24 hours
High	Within 12 weeks
Medium	Within 1 year
Low	Within 3 years or reassessed within this time frame.

Table 1 Agreed timescales for defect tree work

In addition to defect management, the council operate programmes of routine tree pruning to help control tree growth. Routine tree pruning involves pruning to raise the canopy above the road, clearing phone wires and

lamps etc. Access work is the removal of suckers and low branches for pedestrian footway clearance. The work is done as appropriate for subsidence management. One of our main council priorities is to protect and enhance the environment. Therefore we will not undertake tree works which could be detrimental to natural biodiversity or the aesthetic quality of the landscape, unless absolutely necessary. Where possible trees will be allowed to grow naturally and maintenance tends to focus on higher priority public safety and nuisance factors, such as storm damage, dealing with decayed or dead trees, removing branch obstruction to the highway or pruning branches encroaching onto buildings.

The Council has awarded the tree maintenance contract to a locally based and well equipped arboriculture company called Advanced Tree Services LTD (ATS). ATS undertake the vast majority of council tree maintenance, including emergency call out, routine pruning, tree felling, planting and stump grinding. They also assist the council tree officers with tree inspections. There is at least one team of tree surgeons from ATS that work in the Borough full time.

During spells of adverse weather, the ranger service will inspect the park to check for falling trees or limbs that may be a hazard to park users. This is not as big a problem on some sites like Epsom Common where many of the trees can be left where they fall, but in Long Grove Park it is vital to keep the green space and pathways clear from tree debris.

4.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council strives to maintain and improve its green spaces using sustainable methods. All service departments involved in the maintenance of Long Grove Park are encouraged to carry out their duties using methods that are environmentally friendly. As sustainability in definition, is the quality of not being harmful to the environment or depleting natural resources, and thereby supporting long-term ecological balance (*Dictionary.com*), the council understand the importance of maintaining these standards wherever possible for the long term ecological benefits to its parks and open spaces.

4.4.1 ORGANIC MATERIAL/RECYCLING

Throughout the year, the grounds maintenance teams remove all organic waste produced from pruning and grass cutting. This green waste is taken offsite to a large composting facility in the nearby Horton Country Park. Any leaves are collected and taken to Nonsuch Park or allotment sites. An independent contractor used to be hired to compost all the green waste, but it is now done in house. This coupled with the fact the council does not have to buy in readymade mulch saves the council a considerable amount of money every year.

The process involves shredding the waste but burning it sufficiently to kill the weed seeds. This compost is piled and left to continue decomposing. When it is sufficiently composted it can be returned to the beds in the form of mulch. This mulch provides nutrients to the beds but it can also serve another purpose. Previous winters, in particular, of 2009 and 2010 left all of Epsom and Ewell covered in snow and dealing with sub-zero temperatures. Newly planted shrubs will struggle to cope with such low temperatures in comparison to established shrubs, therefore leaf mulch can be used to insulate the beds. By insulating the beds it gives the root systems a little extra help in resisting frost damage. Mulching also helps keep weed growth under control.

4.4.2 PESTICIDES AND POLLUTION REDUCTION

The use of pesticides is kept to a minimum, and where they are used, the most eco-friendly products are selected. Currently a basic glyphosate is the chemical utilised within the park. All staff must be trained to PA1 or PA6 standard. The purchase, storage, usage and disposal of chemicals is carefully controlled under COSHH. All chemicals are stored in secure containers that meet health and safety regulations. The distribution of keys is

regulated to ensure chemicals are not stolen or mislaid through negligence. Pesticide spraying in the parks is only carried out when absolutely necessary as it's felt that a schedule of regular spraying may lead to excessive spraying, therefore it's always the prerogative to weed manually.

Peat is not used in Long Grove Park and the Council uses its own recycled waste as mulch for the shrub beds. They also try to buy their plant stock from responsible nurseries that do not use peat.

4.4.3 WASTE MINIMISATION

Waste is not only expensive to get rid of but represents the underutilisation of a resource which itself has a cost. There are environmental costs for example the pollution caused by the disposal of such waste. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council identifies two ways of tackling this problem 1) reducing actual production of green waste and 2) re-using green waste after composting, with the emphasis being on the former of these. Green Waste can be reduced by avoiding unnecessary pruning, using herbicides correctly and allowing leaves to decompose naturally amongst shrubs and hedge bottoms. As much green waste as possible is recycled, however loads with a high percentage of weed content are not recycled so the risk of seeds spreading is minimised.

4.4.4 ARBORICULTURE AND WOODLAND

Newly planted trees are staked, watered well and checked on a regular basis. Dead wood should be left standing if possible, to provide an important habitat for invertebrates and other habitats. Clippings and cuttings should be composted where possible and re-used within the park environment.

4.4.5 WATER EFFICIENCY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Epsom & Ewell Environmental Policy aims to reduce the amount of energy used through good management, training, and informed purchasing practices and decisions. Vehicles and machinery are maintained regularly and the operational services team also tries to reduce dependence on mains water supplies for irrigation. Watering of plants is kept to a minimum and watering points are located away from public access. Effective training of staff, including health and safety, and following all environmental legislation relevant to the council, prevents incidents of pollution.

4.4.6 ASSET MANAGEMENT

Work is in progress to write an Asset management plan for all the parks in the borough. This will ensure all assets in the parks are accounted for and managed.

4.5 CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

Biodiversity, a contraction of "biological diversity," generally refers to the variety and variability of life on Earth. One of the most widely used definitions defines it in terms of the variability within species, between species and between ecosystems. It is a measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems (*United Nations Environment Programme, World Conservation Monitoring Centre*). However, during the last century, decreases in biodiversity have been increasingly observed. In 2007, German Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel cited estimates that up to 30% of all species will be extinct by 2050 (*BBC News*). As biodiversity contributes to our very existence on this planet, we must adopt the "Think Globally, Act Locally" concept which originally began at the grassroots level, however, it is now a global concept with high importance (*Warren Heaps, International Forum*), and adopting sustainable ways of living will ensure the protection of biodiversity and our future.

4.5.1 AGENDA 21 – LOCAL BIODIVERSITY

The need for biodiversity was recognised at the United Nations 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit. Leaders recognised that a diverse environment is essential to maintain air quality, to provide valuable species for food and medicine, and to provide a varied and interesting environment for future generations. As a result the Government were asked to produce national and regional biodiversity Action Plans, which filtered down at local authority level through the local agenda 21 initiative.

A 'Local Biodiversity Action Plan' has been produced for Epsom & Ewell to help ensure both the long term protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the Borough. The complete Epsom & Ewell Local Biodiversity Action Plan can be found at:

<https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/residents/planning/planning-policy/BiodiversityActionPlan.pdf>

This strategy provides an over-arching review of open space in the borough and has been developed in line with current national, regional and local policy context and initiatives. The following objectives from the biodiversity action plan for Epsom & Ewell 2010 are of particular relevance in informing the Management Plan.

Objective 1: Develop partnerships to ensure that the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Epsom and Ewell is maintained in the long term.

Objective 2: Ensure the conservation and enhancement of habitats and species, as specified nationally and in the Surrey Habitat Action Plans.

Objective 3: Ensure opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of the whole biodiversity resource in Epsom and Ewell are identified considered and acted upon.

Objective 4: Raise awareness, appreciation and involvement in the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Epsom and Ewell

Objective 5: Provide on-going monitoring of biodiversity in Epsom and Ewell.

Objective 6: Seek to increase the funding available for the long-term conservation, enhancement and monitoring of biodiversity in Epsom and Ewell.

Objective 7: Seek to identify the wider benefits to the community of improving biodiversity

4.5.2 EPSOM AND EWELL'S SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2011 – 2022

'A Brighter Future'

A Brighter future is Epsom and Ewell's Sustainable Community Strategy. The Strategy looks at the future for Epsom and Ewell, It sets out how the Borough's many positive aspects will be developed and how the issues and challenges faced by the Borough will be met through partnership working.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's ambition is:

"To maintain and develop those distinctive characteristics that make living and working in Epsom and Ewell a matter of conscious choice and, in conjunction with others, provide quality and innovative services that are based on the identified priorities of our residents"

The Local Strategic Partnership has identified the following topics as areas for future focus and partnership working:

- The visual appearance of the surroundings, both in terms of the natural and the built environment
- The impact of organisations and individuals in securing a sustainable future (recognising the need for economic health and more housing)
- The ability to get around (including the use of the existing transport and traffic infrastructure, car movements and alternative means of travel)
- The promotion of community safety and the enhancing of public confidence, recognising the formal position and responsibilities of the Borough's Community Safety Partnership
- The support for particular communities (children & young people, older people and the disabled, the disadvantaged and pockets of relative deprivation)
- Social change and the achievement of a balanced demography
- Economic prosperity
- Improving Epsom Town Centre and maintaining other local centres

4.5.3 GREEN SPACES STRATEGY

The development of a green spaces strategy for the whole of the borough provides the context in which land managers, planners and recreation providers can work to provide this borough with open spaces for the use of the residents and visitors alike. With a simple strategy in place, achievable strides can be made towards improving all Green Space in the borough. The green spaces strategy identified that residents of the borough use the parks on a regular basis for a number of different reasons. In the past the tendency has been to manage parks in isolation without a long term view of their role, the needs of users and their detailed management. In addition it was also felt that the priorities for the development of the parks were unclear. It is now the council's policy to consider the use of the parks in consultation with the users, to develop long term policies for each park and also to plan for their long term development integrating them with other green spaces as a unit.

4.5.4 EPSOM & EWELL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY

A Green Infrastructure Policy for the Borough was written in 2013 by the Countryside team and Head of Planning Policy. Green infrastructure (GI) is a term used to refer to the living network of green spaces, water and other environmental features in both urban and rural areas. It is often used in an urban context to cover benefits provided by wildlife, trees, parks, gardens, road verges, allotments, cemeteries, woodlands, rivers and wetlands. The report highlights the important role parks can play in conserving and enhancing biodiversity across the

Borough. It was noted that parks and formal gardens provide a valuable community resource and are important open spaces in urban areas. For example, Rosebery Park and Mounthill Gardens provide essential green spaces within Epsom Town Centre which are heavily frequented by residents and those employed there, as well as students from the UCA.

The main objectives of the study are to:

- Bring together existing green infrastructure evidence in Epsom & Ewell
- Identify gaps in the local plan evidence base
- Map the Borough's existing GI assets.

The study's main recommendation is to create a landscape scale Green Infrastructure Strategy that seeks to protect and enhance a Borough-wide network of green infrastructure that delivers a wide range of benefits including improvements to biodiversity, public access, health and well-being, sports provision, allotments, flood protection and air quality.

The full document can be found at:

<https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/residents/planning/planning-policy/Green%20Infrastructure%20Study.pdf>

4.5.5 LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

Along with national legislation protecting wildlife, for example the 'Wildlife and Countryside Act, the 'Greenbelt', 'Ancient Woodland', 'Protected Hedgerows, 'Tree Preservation Orders' and areas identified as 'Strategic Open Space', Epsom and Ewell also afford biodiversity some protection by limiting and controlling development. In addition some land in the borough is owned by trusts which aim to protect and enhance biodiversity.

Within Epsom and Ewell there are sites designated for their biodiversity value. There are four Local Nature Reserves (LNR) in the Borough including Epsom Common which is Surrey's largest LNR. The other LNR's are Horton Country Park LNR, Howell Hill LNR, and running parallel with Ewell Court Park, the Hogsmill LNR.

4.5.6 HABITATS, FLORA AND FAUNA

During the last century wildlife habitats have greatly diminished in size. Urban parks and gardens can be relatively wildlife rich and should therefore be recognised for their value and seek to conserve. It is not uncommon to see a Roe deer or two in Long Grove Park.

When looking across Long Grove Park from most entrances, the look of the park is of a wide open space. Most of the flora in the park is kept to the edges of the park, particularly along the Horton Hill side of the park, although there are shrub beds close to the playground and skate ramps.

Although there are no veteran trees in Long Grove Park, there are a number of trees and many of these have Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) orders on them.

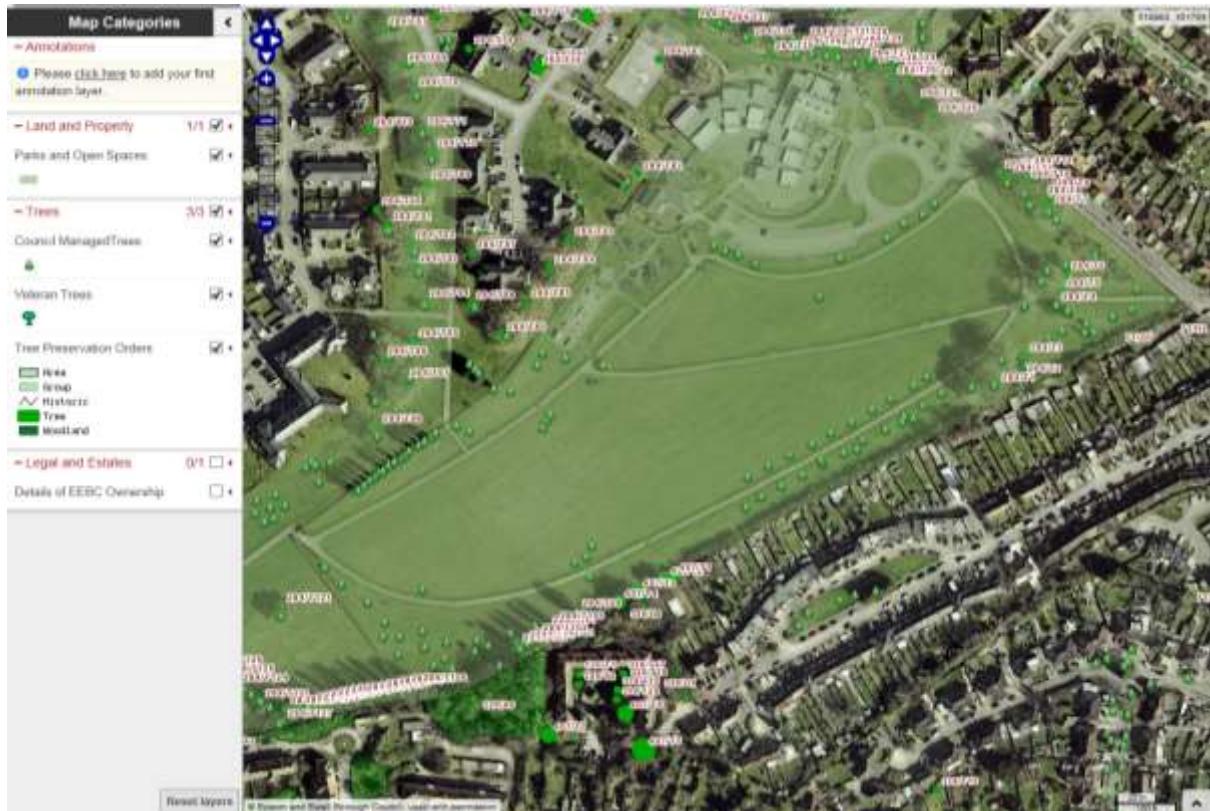


Figure 21 Satellite image of Poole Road Rec showing the distribution and types of vegetation

4.6 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Many of the Boroughs larger, well used parks have a 'Friends of' user group. These 'Friends Of' groups are also part of the larger group 'Friends of Epsom and Ewell Parks' (FEEP). The 'FEEP' groups are in place to ensure all parks are looked after as some are so small that they do not attract enough people to form their own individual 'Friends Group'. The 'Friends of Epsom and Ewell Parks' meet every three months along with members of the council to discuss current issues, projects and progress. At present, Long Grove Park does not have a "Friends Of" group, however the Council will be looking at encouraging resident's and park users to form a group in the near future.

4.7 MARKETING

All recreation grounds are advertised on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council website, which was updated in 2017. All of the parks and recreation grounds facilities are advertised as well as the 'Friends of' groups if applicable. This website is a great form of advertisement as all the information can be found in one accessible place. What we have to remember is that it is only accessible to those who have Internet access. Wherever possible up to date notices and events are displayed in the litter bins for those who use the recreation ground. As specified in the action plan we aim to introduce a new noticeboard to Long Grove Park to promote all events and facilities to those who may be new to the recreation ground or cannot view the information online. Noticeboards also

provide a fantastic platform for 'Friends of' groups to advertise themselves and their activities to attract new members. As discussed in 4.1.2 a new noticeboard in Long Grove Park will provide a great platform for getting information across to all members of the public.

4.7.1 IN HOUSE USER SURVEY

In the past the Council has used GreenStat to carry out surveys so the public can have their say on the green spaces in the borough. GreenStat no longer exists so the Council have created their own in house survey to get the publics opinion on what should happen in their parks. The council trialled their own in-house survey for Nonsuch Park, a well-used and loved park that is shared with the London Borough of Sutton. 1200 postal votes were sent out and 635 returned and was deemed a success. Due to this success the ranger service carried out surveys for Alexandra Recreation Ground in 2015, Auriol Park in 2016, Rosebery Park and Ewell Court Park in 2017. Surveys for Long Grove Recreation Ground and Poole Road Recreation Ground were distributed in October 2018 to coincide with the re-write of the management plans.

4.7.2 IN HOUSE SURVEY RESULTS

Questionnaire development:

The questions were developed in liaison with the Head of Operational Services and the Patrol Ranger. Areas include:

- Frequency of visiting the park
- Method of travel to the park
- Reasons for visiting the park
- Opinions on various aspects of the park
- Improving visitor experience and encouraging more use of the park, or staying for longer
- Volunteering opportunities.

Methodology:

The survey ran from 01 October to 19 October 2018. The survey was available in paper and electronic formats. 1,200 paper surveys were distributed to properties in the surrounding area and 1,000 postcard-size flyers were distributed to:

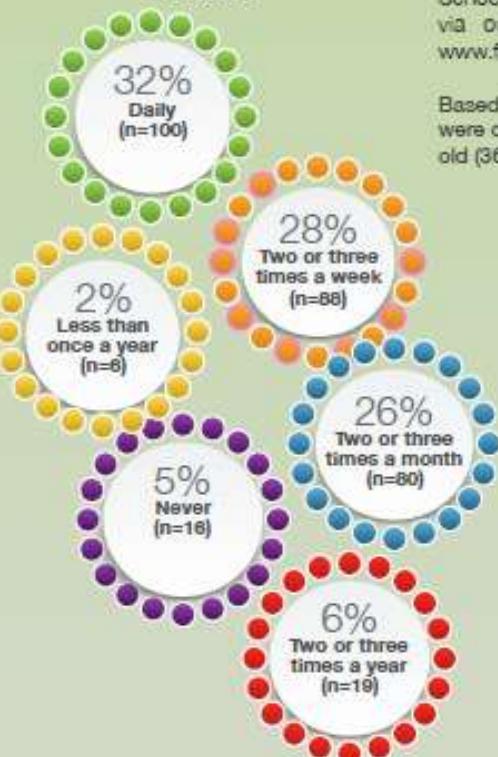
- Bourne Hall
- Town Hall
- Cherryfield Nursery
- Southfield Park Primary School
- Ebbisham Centrechool

The electronic version was featured on the Council's main webpage and publicised in Members' Update and via our social media channels:

- Twitter: @EpsomEwellIBC
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/EpsomEwellIBC

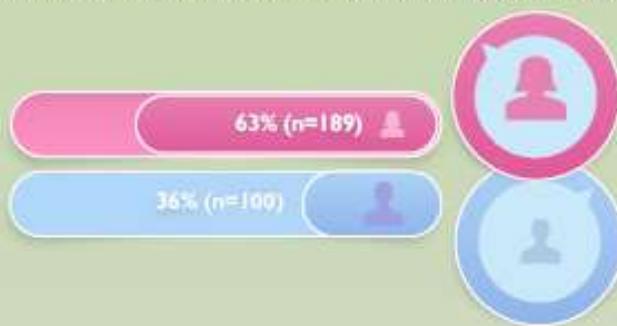
Summary of main findings

How often do you visit Long Grove Recreation Ground?

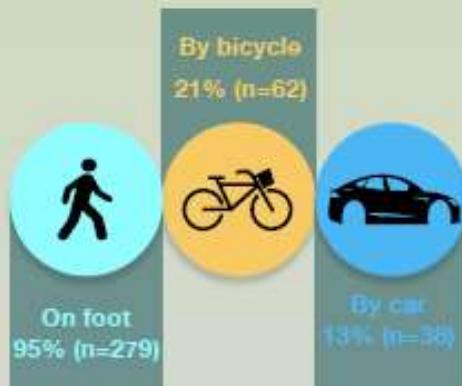


The survey ran from 01 October to 19 October 2019. It was available online and in paper format. In total, 310 responses were received; 73% were paper based (n=225) and 27% were submitted online (n=85). It was sent to properties within the area and postcard-size flyers were distributed to: Bourne Hall; Town Hall; Eobicham Centre, Southfield Park Primary School and Cherry Field Nursery School. The survey was also published on our website and via our social media platforms ie Twitter: @EpsomEwellBC and on Facebook: www.facebook.com/EpsomEwellBC and circulated to councillors.

Based on age groupings: 73% (n=219/302) were under 55 years old and 27% (n=83/302) were over 55 years old. The largest portion of respondents were between 35yrs and 44yrs old (36%, n=110/302). Seven in ten respondents rated the park positively (70%, n=202)



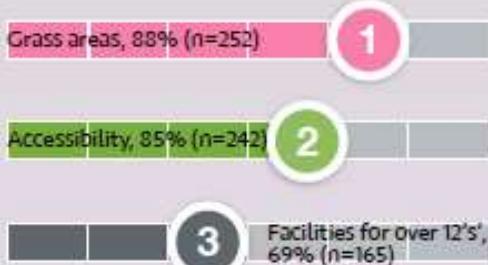
How do you normally travel to the park?



Why do you visit the park? Top five responses provided Respondents ticked all that applied



Top three positively rated aspects of the park



Top three negatively rated aspects of the park?



4.8 MANAGEMENT PLAN

In completing this management plan using the criteria for Green Flag and having put other recreation grounds in the borough successfully through the Green Flag process we now understand the importance of a structured management plan. An improved management plan is not just for the day-to-day running of the facility but also for its long-term future. Our management plan will be a work in progress with the help of the recreation grounds user groups.

4.9 ACTION PLAN

See Appendix A for the Long Grove Park Action Plan

