

Wirral Council

Parks, Allotments and Countryside Service

Coronation Gardens

Management Plan 2016 - 2021



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Introduction

Wirral Council has produced this document in conjunction with the Friends of Coronation Gardens to provide a comprehensive framework for the future development of the site.

We encourage suggestions from park users and the wider community to this plan.

If you wish to find out further information about this document or submit any suggestions please contact the Parks and Countryside Service at Wirral Council on 0151 606 2004 or email christinesmyth@wirral.gov.uk or write to:

Wirral Council
Parks, Allotments & Countryside Service
Cheshire Lines Building
Canning Street
Birkenhead
Wirral
CH41 1ND
0151 606 2004

The wider policy context

In 2015 Wirral Council published 'Taking Wirral Forward – A 2020 Vision' available for download from the Council's website here: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/wirral-plan-2020-vision> the Vision offers 20 pledges focussed on 3 themes:

- protecting the most vulnerable
- driving economic growth
- improving the local environment

Following a major restructure, the Parks, Allotments and Countryside Service is now located in the Community Services section of the Delivery hub and is specifically featured in the Council's Culture Strategy, which itself has 3 main priorities:

1. Promote and celebrate Wirral's parks, coast and countryside for leisure activities
2. Encourage people to take part in sports, leisure and social activities
3. Increase pride in Wirral's communities and encourage more residents to volunteer.

The Parks, Allotments and Countryside Service is well-placed to support delivery of a variety of the Council's 20 pledges.

Parks and Countryside Service Objectives for 2014/24

The Parks and Countryside Service have produced a 10 year Parks and Open Spaces Strategy that will inform and direct the next 10 years for the service. It is available online at: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/leisure-and-culture/parks-beaches-and-countryside/parks-development-and-maintenance>

The Strategy sets out how Wirral Parks and Countryside Service will aim to attract and retain investment in the borough through provision of attractive and well managed parks and open spaces, whilst being accessible; and providing positive and healthy activities for all local people, communities and visitors to enjoy. The service also intends to contribute to the environmental sustainability and biodiversity of Wirral to achieve a good balance by protecting habitats while supporting economic growth.

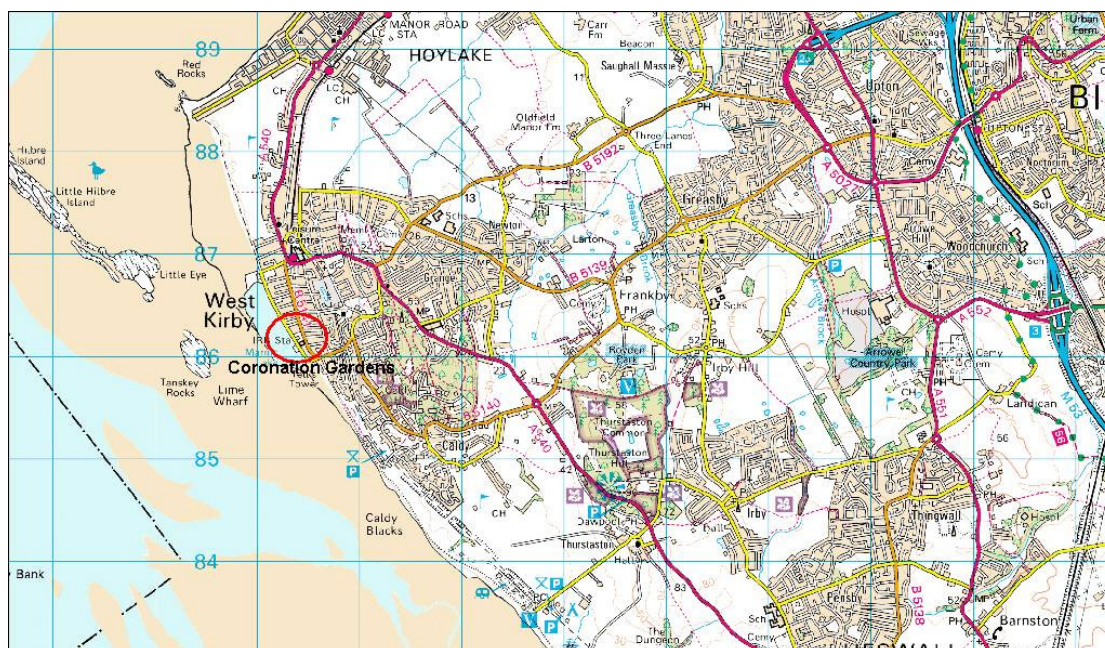
Site information

Name: Coronation Gardens

Typology: Local Park

Primary purpose: Intensively managed park used primarily by local people, providing accessible, high quality opportunities for formal and informal recreation and children's play including community events.

Location plan:



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Official site name: Coronation Gardens

Site address: Banks Road, West Kirby, CH48 3HU

Grid reference: 321433 386182

Ward: West Kirby & Thurstaston

Size: 0.88 ha

Tenure and concession agreements:

Wirral Council owns the site. The café is tenanted.

Brief description:

Coronation Gardens is typical in design of many traditional British seaside gardens. Laid out in the 1930s, the original high maintenance annual bedding was replaced during 2007 with a contemporary central feature incorporating a sculptured wind vane, shrub planting and seating. In addition the cross-park footpath between the promenade and Banks Road was resurfaced and incorporated within the central feature.

A Café selling refreshments occupies the promenade entrance to the Gardens.

Access:

The gardens are a feature of the seaside town of West Kirby and lie between the promenade and Banks Road.

The main entrance is on Banks Road. There are two access points each side of the café on the promenade. Access for wheelchairs at all points.

Good public transport links – short walk from West Kirby Station, and there is a bus stop directly outside the site.

Summary of features:

- Licensed Café
- Flagged footpaths with seating
- Trees
- Established ornamental shrub planting
- Central feature of seating, planting and sculpture sponsored by the Friends of Coronation Gardens



Central landscape feature (2013)

History

The Gardens were constructed on sand dunes that were accessed via a gate from the prestigious Hydro Hotel (apartments now occupy this site). They became a formal public space in the late 1930s with associated tearooms (now Tanskeys café). Opened on 9th April 1938 they were named to mark the coronation of George VI. Following the ceremony Councillor Selwyn Lloyd and guests were served tea in the café.

Although the Hydro Hotel was demolished in the 1960s the gardens continued to be well maintained by the Local Authority. However during the 70s and 80s the annual bedding, feature glass block walling and circular footpaths were removed and the site was allowed to generally decline. More recently the public toilets have been closed on the site.

The Friends of Coronation Gardens have sourced funding to reverse this trend and have funded two schemes to improve the entrance and provide a central feature.



Coronation Gardens shortly after completion in 1938

Green Flag analysis and assessment

The intention is for the park to continue to meet the required standards as defined by the **Green Flag Award Scheme**; further details concerning the scheme can be found at <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/>

The following Green Flag assessment criteria will be used as a focus for the development of the park.

- A welcoming park
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Clean and maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing
- Management



Banks Road entrance notice board

1. A welcoming place

There are 3 access points, one on Banks Road and two on the promenade.

All three have good access for the mobility impaired, including wheelchairs. This is important as the park is popular with elderly people who either live locally or visit. The area has a high concentration of resident elderly people, and is therefore there is increased risk of social isolation. This well maintained space makes a valuable contribution to the health of local people by providing a place for social activity and a chance to get involved with a local group.

The main entrance on Banks Road has an information board and an attractive entrance sign in the form of a wrought iron arch funded by the Friends.

There is vehicle access at this entrance point controlled by a drop bollard to prevent unauthorised access. The size of the access point does limit the range of machinery that can be used.



The entrances to Coronation Gardens

The two entrances to the site from the promenade one each side of the café were improved in 2010 with the exterior of the Café being refurbished from top to bottom and new community artwork being erected.

The Café was renamed 'Tanskeys' (a Viking derivative meaning toothed rocks) by the new lessee, named after the teeth like rocks that are visible from the Café at low tide.

There is a sign at the Promenade access, funded by the friends, indicating site name and contact numbers.

Events in the park and the presence of the Friends, also contributes to make the park a welcoming place for local people and tourist visitors alike. In particular the 'Art in the Park' events.

2. Healthy, safe and secure

Dog fouling

The whole of the Wirral Borough is designated under Dog Control Orders (that implement section 55 and 56 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005) these provide increased levels of enforcement for five offences prescribed in a dog control order, these are - failing to remove dog faeces, not keeping a dog on a lead, not putting a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised officer, permitting a dog to enter land from which dogs are excluded and taking more than a specified number of dogs onto land. Failure to comply can result in a prosecution and a maximum fine of up to £1,000. Alternatively offenders may be offered a £50 Fixed Penalty Notice. Wirral's Community Patrol Officers have been authorised to issue notices. A media campaign 'Don't give a dog a bad name' was launched to highlight the new powers.

Signs are provided at entrance points indicating the park is a 'clean it up' area at the entrances. Dog walkers are advised to wrap the droppings and place in a litterbin. Dog fouling is classified in law as litter for street cleaning purposes and can be disposed of correctly wrapped in Council litterbins consequently dedicated 'dog waste only' bins are not provided by the Council. Many dog walkers do use the park's litterbins for the disposal of removed faeces. The siting and type of waste bins has been improved during 2010 utilising a 'hooded type' as they are also used for dog waste.

Anti social behaviour

Wirral Council operates a 24 hour Community Patrol force, established to provide a response to any concern notified to them regarding anti-social behaviour occurring within Council owned land. The Patrol can be contacted on telephone number 666 5265.

The Gardens are covered by Byelaws, made under Section 164 of the Public Health Act, 1875.

Incident reports compiled by Wirral Council's Community Patrol are made available to the Parks and Countryside Service and are provided to the Team Leader.

Wirral Council has an up to date Health and Safety Policy.

Infrastructure

Staff carry out regular inspections to identify defects within the park that present a safety problem for staff, users and adjacent residents. A formal annual site safety inspection is carried out by the Team Leader. The following items are appraised:

1. Paths, steps, ramps
2. Walls, fences, gates
3. Buildings
4. Furniture – signs, seats, litterbins etc
5. Soft landscape – grass, planted areas, water features etc
6. Trees

The Council's day-to-day repair system and relevant contractors undertake any repairs requested.

Buildings

With the exception of the café, the council's Asset Management Team are responsible for maintenance and repair of buildings onsite.

Any major repairs or refurbishment can be included or considered as part of the council's planned preventative maintenance programme or included on the Council's capital programme.

Tree Inspections

Vulnerable trees are identified by parks staff as part of patrols and reported to the Area Manager, whereupon urgent safety work is carried out directly as needed.

Conservation and amenity tree work is carried out where resources allow, by the mobile tree team as part of the winter works programme.

For details on council owned trees near to or overhanging private property, please refer to the council's policy published on the council website available at: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/transport-and-streets/roads-highways-and-pavements/highway-maintenance/highway-trees>



3. Clean and well maintained

Buildings maintenance

The condition of the built environment has improved greatly over the last five years with the boundary wall to the seaward side receiving a refurbished roof and sections of cracked and missing render with loose or missing roof tiles were repaired or renewed respectively.

More recently the installation of glass walling blocks to allow light from both the Gardens and the promenade, making the wall a real feature. The café has also received a new roof and been extensively refurbished inside by the new lessee.

With the exception of the café, maintenance of the buildings within the gardens is carried out via the Asset Management team's day-to-day repair system.

Horticulture maintenance

A team of 7 staff dedicated to the West Kirby, Hoylake and Meols area are based at nearby Ashton Park, and carry out grounds maintenance.

Horticultural maintenance is carried out according to the 'Coronation Gardens Service Requirement' (Appendix 3).

Shrub beds require remedial pruning of dead, diseased and crossing branches. This work happens annually in winter, with ongoing replacement of shrubs where resources allow.

In 2007 a central feature was constructed with associated seating and planting by the Parks Service. In addition the cross-park footpath between the promenade and Banks Road was resurfaced and incorporated within the central feature.

Re-laying and replacement of individual flagstones has now taken place allowing improved weed eradication.



Repaired flagstone footpaths

Monthly work parties

The formation of the Friends of Coronation Gardens has assisted maintenance improvements to the site particularly litter collection and footpath edging, which is carried out by the group on numerous weekends through the year. In addition they carry out maintenance of the shrub beds within the central feature.

The Friends assist with litter picking and presentation of the Gardens via organised monthly work parties. Wirral Council allows use of a storage shed within the Gardens for the Friends private tools and equipment to enable these works.

It is a challenge for the Friends to sustain membership, and many of their members are elderly, so it is a constant job to look for new people who want to be actively involved. The need for new volunteers is advertised wherever possible.

The friends have provided a new notice board at the main entrance indicating forthcoming events and the vision for the gardens.



View from
Café over the Gardens

4. Sustainability

Water and energy consumption at the park is monitored and where necessary modification is made to minimise wastage, thereby achieving economies in usage in line with the Council's Environmental Policy and Carbon Reduction Programme 'Cred'.

Pesticide usage does not take place within the Gardens at present. The Friends are currently investigating other cultural methods of weed control.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (C.O.S.H.H.) assessment records of the chemical based products used within the park together with pesticide records are retained at the district depot. Chemical storage and usage within the park complies with the requirements defined within the current pesticide handling legislation.

Motorised mowing equipment used at the park is checked for emission levels.

Waste handling within the Parks and Countryside Service was subject to a review during 2006. Green waste generated at the park is separated out and composted at the depot. Any waste timber or metals recovered are also separated for reuse/recycling at the depot.

Tree brash resulting from tree work is chipped and stored at Frankby Cemetery depot for reuse.

The Garden's bedding plant requirement is produced using 100% peat free compost. The Friends are aware of the Council's aim to reduce and eventually eliminate peat use, however the Friends planting has been a matter of their own choice.



Informal area to northern boundary

5. Conservation and heritage

Many of the original footpaths and ornamental planting beds within the gardens have now been removed.

One of the most attractive original features of the Gardens was the glass walling blocks set into the promenade boundary wall and reinstatement of these was begun during 2011.

In the following years, Wirral Council continued to work in partnership with the Friends to provide three further glazed bays to the perimeter walling, two to the long side and one to the shorter side.



Glass walling block replacement begun in 2011

Public toilets are no longer open in the Gardens, however, these facilities have been included in the overall Café refurbishment scheme.

Informal management of the tree and shrub areas allows for wildlife diversity. Many birds nest here.

The Friends erected bird boxes in 2010 to selected trees.

The friends carried out bulb planting during 2008 and 2011, to the bank in front of the copse to add spring colour.

Bulb planting using bulbs donated by the Local Rotary Club also took place in 2016.

The creation of a wildflower area on this bank is under consideration.

6. Community involvement

The community of Wirral both in general and in the form of constituted community and voluntary sector organisations are a key partner in relation to Wirral Council's parks service. This is represented in Wirral Council's vision "to provide and maintain high quality parks and open spaces in partnership with the local community".

Partner organisations:

- Friends of Coronation Gardens
- Café proprietor
- Grounds maintenance staff
- Incredible Edible
- RNLI

Coronation Gardens has an active Friends group that has been successful in sourcing grant aid to fund improvements to the site.

The Friends organise regular weekend litter picking sessions throughout the year supported by the Parks and Countryside service.

The Friends have recently funded a hard and soft landscaping scheme as a central feature located on the main footpath that bisects the site. The scheme has also included extending the resurfacing of this footpath from the Banks Road entrance.

Events and fund raising

The Friends organise 'Art in the Park' events on the first Sunday of each month from April to September. These events allow local artists to display their work within the Gardens, for a small charge, that goes towards the Friends funds.

The Friends organise and fund the annual 'Spring Community Fair' that includes fairground and donkey rides amongst other attractions, to raise funds for the future development of the Gardens.

During November of each year the Friends are involved in a seasonal 'Lantern Procession' that begins in the Gardens and proceeds through West Kirby. The event is a celebration of Armistice Day and the feast of St. Martin.

An annual Alzheimer walk, raising funds and awareness of the condition, begins and finishes in the Gardens.

Food for Free

'Incredible Edible' manage a community allotment in the park, where fruit and vegetables are available which can be picked and eaten by members of the public. Staff from the RNLI have volunteered to water the allotment in times of drought. In 2016 a new picket fence was erected to set off the allotment.

7. Marketing

The Wirral Council web site www.wirral.gov.uk contains some information about Coronation Gardens. The Parks and Countryside Service's homepage now includes links to information about Wirral's Green Flag parks.

The information board at the main entrance to the gardens has current information on local events and management proposals for the Gardens.

The Friends produce a quarterly newsletter keeping the community abreast of their vision for the site and progress to date.



The Mayor attending the raising of the Green Flag 2008

8. Management

Staff and their functions

The Area Parks Manager for Wirral West and Team Leader for West Kirby, Hoylake and Meols are responsible for the management and maintenance of the site.

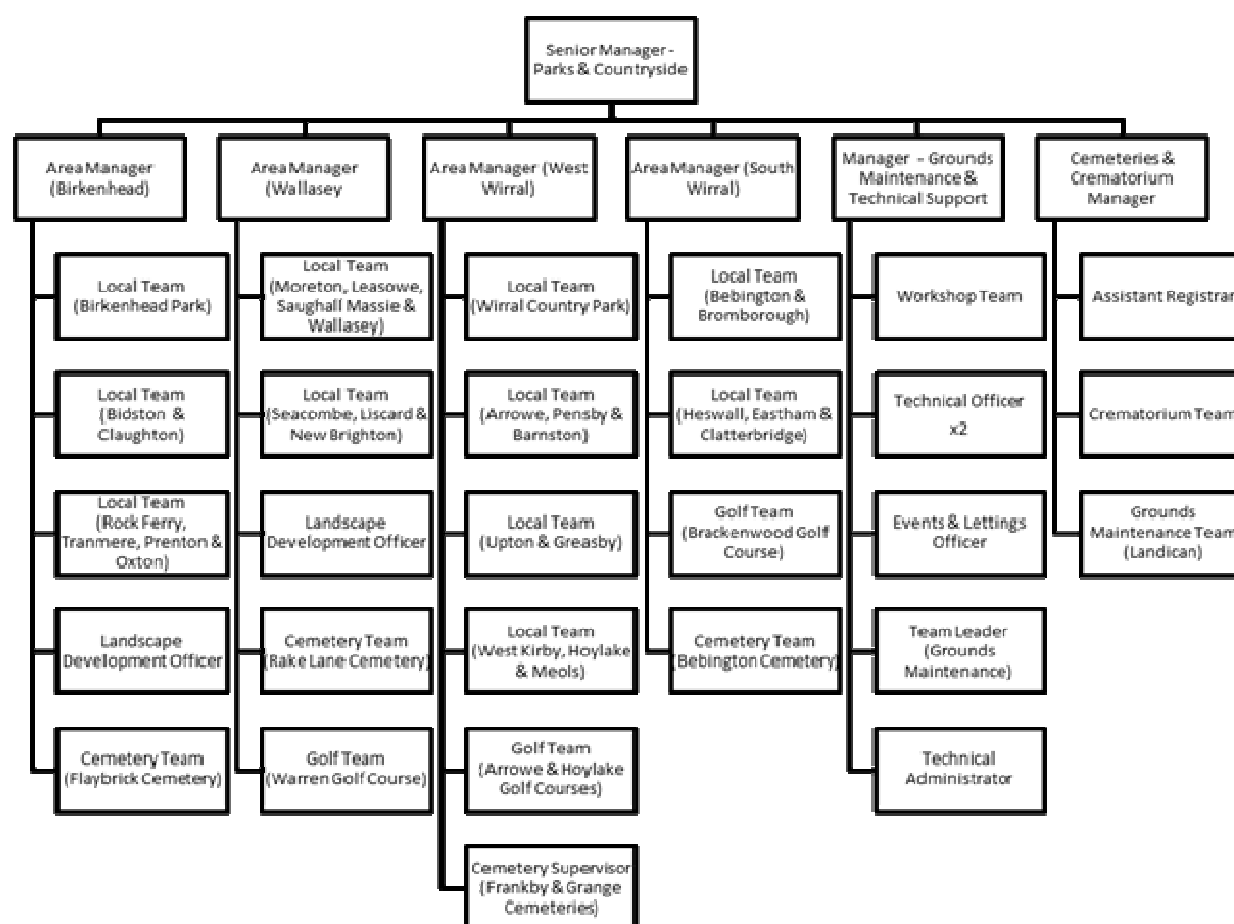
A team of mobile gardeners based in Ashton Park maintain the park, and a visiting tree team undertakes seasonal specialist tree pruning and felling work.

The management plan will help to inform staff and members and the public about the aspirations Wirral Council and The Friends group have for the future development and maintenance of the park.

Enquiries regarding the management and maintenance of the park can be made directly to the Team Leader on: **0151 606 2004**. Email christinesmyth@wirral.gov.uk

The Parks and Countryside Service like other public services around the country is experiencing budgetary pressure and face challenging times to deliver service improvements. The parks service underwent a major restructure in 2015 and the new structure is bedding in.

Current Wirral Parks and Countryside Service organisation chart (2017)



Appendices

Appendix 1: Location Plan



Appendix 2: Aerial Photograph



Appendix 3: Coronation Gardens Service Requirement

Cleansing: litter, rubbish & leaf collection

Collect and remove litter and refuse from all of the sites included within the service requirement. In the case of adopted highway verges this responsibility is limited to the occasions immediately prior to grass cutting activities. Government guidance and Regulations for the disposal of noxious or hazardous waste, for example empty chemical containers or 'sharps' shall be followed.

Inspect and empty all litter bins, and dispose of the rubbish, clear all litter from around each bin.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 does not specify frequencies and this requires the requisite standards to be maintained by:

- Ensuring familiarity with site plans and locations
- Programming works effectively
- Applying resources appropriately

Litter control shall conform to the Environmental Protection Act 1990: Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (updated November 2006).

The park shall be maintained to Grade B standard in accordance with the Code of Practice Part 1: litter and refuse

- Predominately free of litter and refuse apart from some small items

The maximum response time to restore to Grade A standard (no litter or refuse) if it falls below Grade B shall be 1 day; this means by 6pm the following day.

Ensure that all staff uses their reasonable endeavours to collect and minimise the effects of litter on the sites, whenever it is encountered in the pursuance of their duties, whether or not those duties are primarily litter control.

Sweeping and cleansing

This requirement is applicable to all surfaces other than grass within all sites. The entire surfaces of all tarmac, concrete or paved areas, rubberised surfaces and tiles, including play facilities and safety surfaces and other surface areas including loose surfaces such as bark and shale shall be kept clear in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990: Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (updated November 2006) to Grade B standard.

Sweeping, including gutters and drainage channels within the surface areas, shall be carried out by appropriate methods that do not damage or disrupt the surface.

Surfaces shall be washed down whenever necessary in order to maintain a clean and useable area.

All paths and hard surfaces shall be swept at even intervals and be kept cleared of grass cuttings following mowing operations.

All slippery surfaces caused by whatsoever nature, shall be made safe by the removal and / or treatment of the hazard.

All hard surfaces shall be maintained in a substantially weed free condition including moss and algae growth.

Fallen leaves

Fallen leaves shall be regularly cleared from areas of:

- Main entrances and key pedestrian routes and paths
- Visitors' centres and attractions
- Ornamental grass areas
- Soft horticultural features such as bedding and herbaceous borders
- Surfaces within play areas
- Grass sports pitches and facilities
- All weather sports pitches and facilities

Leaf clearance shall take place so that the features remain:

- In good horticultural condition
- And / or useable for sports play
- And / or with a safe, well drained hard surface

Any leaves that have accumulated into drifts or are unsightly or damaging to plants and bulbs shall be removed as a priority.

The operation shall be carried out frequently throughout the autumn in order to facilitate shrubbery and rose bed cultivation, and to prevent leaves from spreading back onto lawns, paths, hard surfaces, sports and horticultural features. Where necessary, after leaf clearance, beds shall be lightly pricked through to remove footmarks.

The final clearance of all autumn leaves shall be completed by the end of December in each year of the contract period.

Graffiti and fly-tipping

Information on graffiti and fly tipping shall be collected. Data shall provide such data to the Service Manager on a weekly basis as part of his weekly inspection reports.

Data for incidents of graffiti shall include:

- Date
- Location
- Surface type
- Paint type
- Description including offensive characteristics

Offensive or racist graffiti shall be reported as a priority. This shall be reported to the Service Manager within one hour of identification, to enable this to be removed by the Employer's specialist operator within 24 hours.

Fly tipping shall be defined as any single quantity of tipped material that cannot be lifted by two members of staff and removed from the site. If tipped material can be lifted by two members of staff, it is deemed to be covered by the litter control clauses of this service requirement.

All instances of fly tipping shall be reported to the Service Manager.

Grass maintenance

The use of growth regulators will not be permitted.

All grass cutting machinery used across the entire range of standards shall be appropriate and fit for the purpose of achieving the specified standard.

On each occasion that grass cutting takes place the following shall be achieved:

- An even, uniform sward to the requisite height across 100% of the surface area, including all obstacles, grass margins, weed growth, seed and flower spikes and bents.
- Litter on areas to be mown shall be removed immediately prior to mowing.
- Any litter subsequently shredded as a result of the mowing operation, shall be collected and removed

Should grass exceed the maximum permissible height, the grass shall be brought back into conformance by frequent repeat mowing.

The use of herbicides around obstacles and margins shall not be permitted on ornamental and associated grass areas. The use of appropriate herbicides to kill growth around obstacles and margins in other areas shall be permitted unless otherwise stipulated in the relevant site management plan or by instruction from the Service Manager. In such areas, the maximum bandwidth of kill shall not exceed 50mm.

The edges of turf adjacent to hard surfaces, cut backs, planted borders, beds, channels and kerbs shall be kept maintained to a neat even line. On each occasion of re-cutting all finished bed edges shall be sharp, neat and vertical.

In the case of ornamental lawns all cuttings, clippings or other mowing arisings, no matter where they fall, shall be removed for recycling or reuse immediately on completion of the operation.

All cuttings, clippings or other mowing arisings across the complete spectrum of grass mowing operations which land on hard surfaces, shrub borders or flower beds shall be cleaned up and removed immediately on completion of mowing.

Arisings that fall on general grass/amenity grass, highway urban verges and rural verges shall not normally require removal, unless excessive growth has occurred, in which case arisings shall be collected and removed for recycling or reuse.

Unless otherwise stipulated in the relevant site management plan, grass areas over naturalised Narcissus, Galanthus and Crocus bulbs etc, shall remain uncut from the commencement of the grass cutting season to the third week in May, unless the bulb leaves have died down sooner, at which time the grass and bulb tops shall be cut and removed and the areas brought into conformance with the surrounding areas. Subsequently these areas are to be maintained to the same standard as the rest of the area.

In drought conditions, subject to the approval of the Service Manager, the height of cut shall be adjusted so as not to cause added stress and damage to the sward. If grass growth is at a standstill an obligation remains to control grass and weed flower spikes by cutting.

On resumption of mowing operations after adverse weather conditions have caused them to cease, ensure that a return to the appropriate standard is achieved by increasing the frequency of mowing.

General/amenity grass

All general/amenity grass areas shall be maintained within the specified height range:

- Minimum height 25 mm
- Maximum height 60 mm

Hard landscape infrastructure: hard surfaces – roadways, pathways, car parks; parks and green spaces site infrastructure – benches, lighting, fencing, walls (see also Cleansing: litter, rubbish & leaf collection)

Undertake a rolling programme of condition surveys of the hard landscape infrastructure of parks, open spaces and other sites.

Hard surfaces weed control

Undertake a programme of effective weed control on all hard surfaces including roads; footpaths, car parks, steps, ramps and bridges Including the bases of all walls and fences where adjoining hard surfaces, along kerbstones and around landscape and park furniture. The use of residual herbicides shall not be permitted.

Hard surfaces gritting, salting and snow clearance

Hard surface gritting, salting and snow clearance is required to ensure that, where reasonably practicable, safe passage along a road or footpath is not endangered by snow ice.

Although there is no requirement to treat all roads and footpaths there are locations where this is required. The sites and areas to be treated are limited to those where essential only access is required which includes to cemetery chapels, access for planned burials, visitor and community centres and known problem locations and hazardous gradients.

Treatment shall include pre-treating to prevent ice from forming and post treating when ice has formed or snow has accumulated.

Benches and seating

All benches and seating, including picnic benches & tables, shall be kept clean at all times, and in good order through the use of such means as repainting or re-staining surfaces according to type of material.

Fences, railings, walls, gates, handrails, stiles, boardwalks, revetments and bollards

Any minor repairs such as loose bolts, protruding nails and sanding of sharp edges shall be undertaken. All other repairs must be reported to the Service Manager.

Defects, which represent a hazard that cannot be repaired immediately, must be made safe until an effective repair can be undertaken.

Regularly maintain gates, locks and mechanisms to ensure good working condition.

Notice boards and signs

Keep all signs, signposts and notice boards clean at all times and in good order through the use of such means as repainting or re-staining surfaces according to type of material of construction.

Shrubs, roses, herbaceous and annual bedding

Maintain shrub beds attractively presented, free of litter, weeds, other unwanted vegetation, and pests and diseases. The use of residual herbicides shall not be permitted.

Shrubs shall be maintained by pruning and training using the best horticultural practices to allow the development of each shrub in keeping with its habit, location and purpose.

Cultivation work in weather or ground conditions that would be harmful to the soil condition and its structure shall not be undertaken.

Observe that the purpose of pruning is to establish a strong framework of branches, keeping the shrubs healthy and vigorous, maintaining the size, shape and balance, whilst ensuring the maximum amount of flowering wood and fruit are produced.

Carry out the pruning of individual shrubs and roses appropriate to the requirements of each species or cultivar.

Hedges – ornamental and non-ornamental

Maintain all ornamental and non-ornamental hedges to their previously cut height, width and shape, ensuring that the top and sides of each hedge are cut neatly so that all growth is removed to the point of the previous cut on the old wood. Maintain hedges to ensure the safe and free flow of motor traffic along adopted highways and other vehicle routes, and to ensure the safe and free flow of pedestrians and cyclists along adopted highway footpaths and all other access routes across sites.

All trimmings shall be removed for recycling or reuse.

The base of the hedge shall be left clean, tidy and vegetation free on every occasion the hedge is cut.

Be aware of his obligations when undertaking any work on or near a highway with regard to public safety and traffic regulations.

Planting areas general – replacement, renewal and new planting

Where requested by the Service Manager proposals for replacement, renewal and new planting of shrubs, roses and hedging shall be submitted.

Trees and woodland

All tree work shall be undertaken in accordance with BS 3998: 2010 'Recommendations for tree work'. Be responsible for making all necessary checks to determine if there are any laws and regulations, including Tree Preservation Orders that would affect any work proposed, and to ensure that all permissions and licences are gained prior to proceeding with work.

All persons employed to undertake tree work, shall be suitably trained and qualified and shall be in possession of appropriate certification.

Consider all paths, grassed areas, pavements, kerbs, approach roads, manhole covers, fences, walls, overhead cabling etc that are either adjacent to or on the work area. These are to be preserved in good condition and make all necessary arrangements to make good any damage to the entire satisfaction of the Service Manager.

Include for stump removal and subsequent surface reinstatement following tree felling in highways locations. Stumps intended for permanent retention should be cut at a specified height and left free from snags.

On completion of all tree work ensure that the work area is thoroughly cleaned and is left in a condition appropriate for its intended use.

All timber and brushwood resulting from tree work shall be disposed of. The only exceptions to this shall be at woodland locations where the Service Manager may instruct timber and brushwood to be retained on site. The Service Manager may on occasion instruct delivery of brushwood chippings to sites within the Borough where these materials are required for composting, mulching, or creating footpaths or bridleways.

All trees and woodland – emergency and out of hours call out service

Provide a 24 hour, 365 days a year, emergency and out of hours call out response service for trees or limbs that have collapsed or are in a dangerous condition. A response unit consisting of a minimum of two suitably trained staff with appropriate vehicle and equipment shall be provided within one hour's notice following notification of an event by the Service Manager or emergency services authority. Incidents of this nature are often associated with high winds, collision damage, root severance and acts of vandalism.

Provide sufficient labour, vehicles and equipment required for emergency tree work operations. Heavy lifting equipment and cranes will need to be obtained as soon as reasonably practicable for special operations.

Trees in parks

Have a duty of care to ensure that users of parks, green spaces, cemeteries, churchyards and golf courses and all adjacent land and neighbouring properties are not at unreasonable risk from possible failure of trees. As part of the regular site health and safety inspections assess and act on any tree related risks.

Individual trees in parks and green spaces – arboricultural management

Undertake reactive management of selected trees in parks, green spaces, golf courses, cemeteries and churchyards in response to hazard risk identification, through an agreed programme of work. This may be supplemented by requests/complaints received from members of the public and others.

Individual trees in parks and green spaces – replacement and renewal

Undertake occasional requests for commemorative and other tree planting within cemeteries, parks and green spaces.

Vandalism and third party damage (see also Cleansing: litter, rubbish & leaf collection)

Work with community stakeholders and partner organisations to reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour in sites covered by the service.

Soft landscape

Rectify minor incidents of vandalism or third party damage to soft landscape features including trees, planted and grassed areas within 24 hours, inclusive within his routine maintenance activities. This shall include any minor incidents of damage caused by any other source.

Hard landscape infrastructure

Rectify minor damage to fencing, gates, walling, furniture, signage, notice boards, lighting and surfacing and other hard landscape infrastructure resulting from any act of vandalism or third party damage within 24 hours, inclusive within his routine maintenance activities. This shall include any minor damage caused by any other source. Minor damage shall be defined as requiring no more than 1 hour of labour per occasion to rectify with a minimal requirement for materials.

For more significant incidents of vandalism or third party damage make safe immediately.

Appendix 4: Action Plan

| Actions | Lead Officer | Target date | Resource | Completed |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Instigate repairs to damaged walling / roofing due to coastal flooding | Team Leader | 2015 Onward | Coastal flooding council fund | ✓ |
| Gap up shrubs to central feature | Team Leader | 2016 | Volunteers, legacy donation | ✓ |
| Consider creation of wildflower area to bank | Team Leader | 2016/17 | unknown | |
| Complete phase 2 footpath resurfacing | Landscape Architect | 2015 | Parks service | ✓ |
| Add 'clean it up' thermoplastic markings to entrances | Landscape Architect | Summer 2016 | Parks service | ✓ |
| Create additional planted areas and renovate existing beds | Team Leader | 2016/17 as resources allow | Requires Additional Funding £2K? | |
| Install nesting boxes to wooded area | Team Leader | 2010 | Requires Additional Funding £100 | ✓ |
| Install bicycle racks | Team Leader /Transport | 2015/16 | Requires Additional Funding £2K | |
| Complete reinstatement of selected glass walling | Landscape Officer | 2015/16 | Requires Additional Funding £6K | ✓ |
| Annual meeting with Friends to update management plan | All Parties | annual | Volunteers and staff | ✓ 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 |
| New 5 year plan to be developed with partners | All | 2017 | Parks service | ✓ |
| Retain Green Flag Award | Team Leader | 2017 | Parks service | |
| Assist Friends with regular work days | Team Leader | Ongoing | Parks service | ✓ |
| Plan improvements to planting with legacy funding | Friends | 2016 | Legacy funding | ✓ |
| Improve Parks website | Service manager | 2017 | Parks service | |
| Friends to produce regular newsletter for gardens | Friends | Ongoing | Voluntary and grant funding | |
| Improve site interpretation in notice board | Friends | 2016 | Volunteers | ✓ |
| To work with Friends to gain external funding | All Parties | Ongoing | Parks service/voluntary | |
| Actively seek new Friends to help maintain gardens | | | | |

Appendix 5: Project bank

| PROJECT BANK | | |
|--|---|---|
| Project | 'Ballpark' cost estimate (inc design and contract management fee) | Justification, policy fit and evidence of need |
| Replace flagged paths | ? | Medium/long term project requiring capital investment |
| Replace shrub beds | | Medium term |
| Replant replacement trees to north of the site further away from flats | | For discussion with Friends/residents |

Appendix 6: Green flag award judges feedback



Mystery Shopping - Interim Quality Assessment

Answer the questions below providing detailed feedback that will benefit the site. All 'No' responses require comments.

Name of Site: Coronation Gardens

Managing Organisation: Wirral MBC

Date, time and duration of visit: 11/05/16, 2pm, 1 Hr

Weather conditions: Sunny

Name of Judge: Philip Hurst

1. Was the site easy to find e.g. directional signage?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: No directional signage (not required for such a site) but prominent signage and boundary at either end of the site.

2. On approaching the site were you encouraged to enter?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: Both east and west boundaries well presented. West boundary formed from covered promenade seating with bistro building as central feature forming entrance. East boundary dressed with pruned holly bushes and low wall with archway entrance feature. Welcome signage and noticeboards with useful information at both entrances. Eastern entrance bollard did have 'no dog fouling sticker on it' and western entrance had sprayed stencils of 'no dog fouling' on floor – may be good to incorporate this message into main signage rather than make prominent message at entrance – gave first impression that it was a problem.

3. Were entrance signs visible announcing the site and did they provide contact details for complaints/praise?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: Main archway with name of site at eastern entrance. Noticeboards at eastern and western entrances giving information about site. Welcome sign at western entrance provided contact numbers for Wirral MBC. Perhaps could include on this sign 'user guidance' information such as 'no littering', 'no dog fouling', etc. to avoid use of stickers and stencils at entrances. Victoria Gardens Welcome Sign nearby has this information on it.

4. Were entrances safe and accessible to people of differing abilities?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: No steps required to access the site. Eastern entrance did have a sloping entrance. Couldn't confirm if this met DDA standard of 1 in 20 drop. Western entrance accessible.

5. Were entrances and car parks clean, litter free and well maintained?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: No Car Park (street parking). Western entrance clean and well maintained. Eastern entrance clean – some weed growth along sloping entrance path edges – could be removed for clean finish.

6. Were signs throughout the site of good quality, well maintained, and displaying up to date and relevant information?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: Welcome sign and noticeboards well presented and up-to-date. Would be useful to incorporate user guidance information into these rather than using the stickers and stencilling as mentioned before (nearby Victoria Gardens welcome sign includes these).

7. Were paths in good condition, clean, unobstructed and accessible to people of different abilities?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: Paths generally in good condition. Perhaps needed edging and dealing with weeds growing between flags/block paving to address grass encroachment and to tidy them up.

8. Were any staff on site easily identifiable to the public, knowledgeable and approachable?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Comments: No staff on site – only staff in bistro.

9. Were facilities such as toilets, cafés etc. clean, well maintained and open as advertised?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: Bistro very well presented with managed planted borders at entrance and pleasant covered outdoor area overlooking gardens, plus views out onto promenade on western side. Bistro toilets only accessible for customers (understandably).

10. Were buildings, structures and features such as walls fences etc in good condition and free from graffiti?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: Boundary walling and structure providing covered seating for promenade in good condition. No sign of graffiti.

11. Was all children's play equipment well maintained and clean?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Comments:

12. Were benches, bins etc. well located, clean and in good condition?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: Good provision of seating – many were memorial benches. One or too may need re-paint/treat at some point. Bins well located across site.

13. Was safety equipment present, fit for purpose and in good condition (if provided)?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Comments:

14. Was lighting, CCTV and other security measures in good condition (where provided and able to be assessed)?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Comments:

15. Did litter bins appear to be emptied regularly and was the site litter free?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: Only one or two pieces of litter within the shrub borders. Minimal.

16. Was dog and other animal fouling adequately controlled?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: One piece of dog fouling found in north western corner of site. Generally clear otherwise. Noticeboard showcased Friends Group campaign against the dog foulers in their newsletter, which outlined enforcement approach and reporting process that would fine perpetrators. Entrances provide guidance on no dog fouling in form of sticker (eastern entrance) and stencils (western entrance).

17. Were horticultural standards being maintained?

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

Comments: The area being managed by Friends Group showed high level of activity by volunteers and was a positive demonstration of volunteering on site. It would be good to see if this practical voluntary effort could be encouraged across the wider site.

However, main shrub and planted borders were in poor condition. Shrubs had been trimmed and shaped, but the borders were affected heavily by encroachment of weeds. Bindweed growing in parts, ground elder evident in many places, bramble growing through shrubs, snowberry by eastern entrance was suckering and growing through other shrubs. Weed Sycamore appeared to be getting pruned regularly and was now forming part of the shrub border display. Many specimens of shrubs were also dead or in poor condition.

There was extensive encroachment of the borders by grass/weeds. Border along eastern boundary is formal shrub border that should be weed free with no grass verges, but frontage nearest the path was grass/weed covered – would be much more presentable if this was managed (weeded and mulched for example) at least along the boundary with the path, as shrubs further back would provide enough cover to suppress weeds (bramble/bindweed being exceptions) – though also need to check presentation from the street side over the wall, as weeds evident from this side too.

South eastern and north eastern corners of site appear to purposefully be left as grass, with bulbs planted within the area. Presumably after bulbs finished, area will be regularly mown. If so, boundary with adjoining formal shrub borders should be tidied, as main areas appeared to have been cut/trimmed, but edges nearest shrubs were left long and unmanaged and encroaching into borders giving an untidy look. Might be an option to consider these open areas as wildflower areas to add colour to site after bulbs have finished (area treated and sown in autumn before bulbs emerge), helping to screen/soften the boundary with the more formal shrub borders surrounding.

Northern shrub border of the site was set back from the path with a grass verge in front of it, which was being cut regularly to about 1-2m from the path. Behind this, the grass was being left to grow, with the shrub border behind. The long grass was growing into the shrub border, which made the border look unmanaged and untidy. It may be a management decision to carry out differential mowing to help keep the management of this border within resources, but the result is a mismatch of decorative pruned/shaped shrubs with informal grass management that makes the border look choked with weeds and does not suit the formal horticultural nature of the site.

In stark contrast to the grass encroachment, there was a bare patch of ground under some holly trees and a desire line to it in the northern border that appeared to be being used as a congregating point/den area. This stood out prominently from a distance when looking at the border.

The approach to pruning the shrubs may need to be reviewed to allow the shrubs to develop a shape that helps them suppress weed growth themselves – many shrubs were pruned in mushroom or ball shape that allows much light to the base (and therefore weeds to develop). Considering a more naturalised approach to pruning that gives shrubs a more informal, natural form may either manage weeds naturally or be more in keeping with a differential mowing approach if this is being adopted.

The central borders were also affected by limited management. It was evident that there were emerging herbaceous perennials, but there was significant evidence of weeds within these borders as well.

Conversely the borders adjacent to the bistro were well presented and managed, showing the difference in standards of management compared to the rest of the site (presumably responsibility of bistro owner?).

18. Did trees appear to be safe and in good condition?

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

Comments: Generally shrubs and trees, notably the holly trees along the eastern boundary, were managed, pruned and shaped accordingly. However, there did appear to be a stand of trees within the northern border that were all dead – no emerging leaf growth on them. These may need to be checked, felled and replaced. These trees had also evidently been ‘topped’ in the past – a poor management practice that damages the health of the trees but also reduces their visual appeal by impacting on their natural form. The Council’s policy on dealing with boundary trees and complaints from neighbours about shading, etc. may need to be reviewed as it appears evident that these trees were topped for no other reason than to address concerns of neighbouring property, diminishing the amenity/visual value of the Gardens as a result.

19. Were features requiring or undergoing maintenance made safe with appropriate signage?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Comments:

20. Did you feel safe during your visit?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: No reason to feel unsafe. Gardens were open and well used by visitors, including dog walkers, older couples and parents with buggies. Evidence of den in northern border potentially indicates that area could be less welcoming at evening time.

21. Was the site flying its Green Flag, and was the flag in good condition and recognisable and was a certificate displayed?

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

Comments: No certificate for Green Flag Award within Noticeboards. Green Flag was flying but it was in poor condition (bottom attachment of flag had come loose and couldn’t see date on flag to check if it was the 2015/16 flag).

22. Did you obtain feedback from park users and/or staff?

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

Comments:

23. Would you like to make any additional observations?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Comments: The site was generally a pleasant space with open amenity grass areas that would evidently be ideal for picnics and general open play/recreational space for visitors including families. It adds to the general promenade setting and the character of West Kirby.

The bistro is a prominent feature of the gardens and it is positive that it is a high quality facility complementing the site, further adding to the visitor experience to West Kirby.

The Friends Group do appear to be a motivated and active group based on the content in the noticeboards and section of border they manage. It would be positive to work with the Friends on addressing the standards in horticulture on the rest of the site. The group could be a conduit for securing investment to restore deteriorating parts of the shrub borders, as well as potentially generating voluntary support to deliver maintenance works on the borders (again possibly securing funding to facilitate recruitment, training and mentoring of volunteers, as well as getting resources for new plants, etc.).

Overall is the Green Flag Award standard being maintained on the site?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If no please indicate the main areas that require action to achieve the standard.

Comments: Although the site is overall a welcoming and pleasant space, with positive community use and active involvement, I feel that the formal horticultural character of the site is currently diminished through reduced maintenance of the shrub borders, trees and central borders, as outlined above, which is an issue for a small site whose main offer is as a formal gardens.

It must be acknowledged that Council resources are under pressure at the present time, but to retain Green Flag Award, there still needs to be a retaining of good presentation, especially in a formal gardens such as this. The challenge is to alter the maintenance specification appropriately to sustain this presentation with reduced resources. I don't feel that is being achieved on this site as formal shrub and herbaceous borders simply appear neglected and encroached/choked by weeds and grass, yet still being shaped/ pruned, as if in a formal setting. There does appear to be an adoption of differential mowing to ease the maintenance requirements on the site. The southeast and northeast corners of the site do seem to show this approach working acceptably with planted bulbs – extending this display with wildflower sowing (perhaps supported by the Friends Group), could improve/extend the visual appeal of these areas. However, the differential mowing along the frontage of the northern shrub border may need reviewing as it does not give a positive image of this border with the decorative shrubs, which would be best presented in a formally managed setting, rather than naturalised with differential mowing.

Nearby Victoria Gardens will be facing the same challenges as Coronation Gardens in terms of resources, though planted borders were appearing to be managed with mulching in the main central border and volunteers adopting borders under an initiative by the Friends. Perhaps some of the principles/ approaches used there could be adopted at Coronation Gardens.

If a viable approach to managing the shrub borders could be found through assessment of Council maintenance resources, plus development and targeting of voluntary resources to help manage and maintain the borders, there is no reason that the Friends of Coronation Gardens could not work with Wirral Council to secure funding to restore the borders to a specification that is in line with maintenance capabilities (e.g. Tesco Community Fund, managed by Groundwork, currently offering grants of £8-12K for green space physical improvement projects by community groups – next deadline 3rd June 2016).

If required, photos can be supplied illustrating issues and observations made on site.