

Wirral Council

Regeneration and Environment Directorate

Parks & Countryside Service

Royden Park

Management Plan

2022 - 2027



Management Plan written and updated by:	Date:
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Management Plan authorised by:	Date:
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Introduction

Wirral Council has produced this document in conjunction with the advisory group and Friends Group of Royden Park to provide a 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 write to:

**Wirral Council
Wallasey town Hall
Brighton Street
Wallasey
CH44 8ED**

The wider policy context

Wirral Council's Parks and Countryside Service are based within the Neighbour Services Department of Wirral Council.

1.1 Corporate Objectives:

The Council's Vision is that Wirral will be a place where the vulnerable are safe and protected, where employers want to invest and local businesses thrive, and where good health and an excellent quality of life is within the reach of everyone who lives here.

The Wirral Plan agreed by cabinet in September 2021 sets out a series of pledges which the Council and its partners will work to achieve by 2026 focussing on 5 key themes:

- Inclusive Economy
- Safe and Pleasant Communities
- Sustainable Environment
- Brighter Futures
- Active and healthy lives

The Wirral 2021-26 plan is available to download online:

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk.uk/documents/s50080601/aPPENDIX%201%20wIRRAL%20pLAN%202021-26.PDF>

1.2 Parks and Countryside Service Objectives for 2014-24

The department's role is to protect the environmental quality of key locations across the borough for all local people, communities, and visitors to enjoy and to influence investors to operate their businesses and encourage new investment. Parks and countryside site maintenance and land uses will be re-aligned where appropriate to achieve resource and economic efficiencies, whilst promoting health, social and environmental benefits to our communities.

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/sites/default/files/all/Leisure%20parks%20and%20events/parks%20and%20open%20spaces/Wirral%20Parks%20and%20Open%20Spaces%20Strategy%202014-2024.pdf>

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.

1.3 Environmental Initiatives

Wirral council is committed to carrying out its work in an environmentally responsible manner.

Wirral Council is committed to tackling the ecological and climate crisis that we face and has subsequently declared an Environment and Climate Emergency in July 2019.

The council and committed to action the following aim:

- Cut climate damaging pollution locally in line with global targets, whilst developing resilience to more extreme weather patterns and rising sea level that impact Wirral and enhance biodiversity.

As a local authority, we can have a positive influence through:

- How we organise our operations and services
- The regulations and policies we set.
- The goods and services we buy.
- The investment we make.
- The example we set to others.

Tackling the ecological and climate crisis presents major opportunities locally to improve quality of life, health, wellbeing, and the economy.

More information on the Climate Emergency Declaration can be found at:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/climate-change-and-sustainability/climate-change-action>

To deliver against these aims Wirral has developed '@Cool Wirral'. The Cool Wirral campaign is aimed at encouraging local climate related action in support of the delivery of the 'Cool 2 Climate Change Strategy for Wirral'.

The Cool Wirral Partnership co-ordinates local action on climate change. The partnership is supported by Wirral Council and a variety of partnerships.

More information on the cool Wirral Partnership maybe found at:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/climate-change-and-sustainability/cool-wirral>

Some key initiatives include: -

Designating Pollinators and Wildflower sites:

A large proportion of pollinators are flies, including more than 250 species of hoverfly. Bees make up about a quarter of the pollinating insects and in the UK alone there are approximately 250 species of bee, 24 species of bumblebee, 225 species of solitary bee and just one species of honeybee. Butterflies and moths are also pollinators as well as bugs and beetles.

In line with the council's Climate Emergency Response, steps are being taken to priorities pollinators. Dependant on the location of a verge, pollinators are prioritised in various ways. These methods can include:

- Planting pollinator friendly plants.

- Not mowing grass verges when wildflowers are in season.
- Reduced weed removal in pollinator sights.

For a full list of pollinator sites visit <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/environmental-problems/street-care-and-cleaning/pollinators-and-wildflower-sites>

No Mow May:

Throughout the month of May, the council takes part in the No Mow May campaign. As part of this campaign general grass areas in parks are not cut to help bees, butterflies, and wildlife.

Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands:

The council have been working with partners and stakeholders to develop a 10-year strategy to consider how we manage and respond to the borough's current trees and the future provision of trees. In the ten-year span of this strategy over 210,000 trees will be planted, at least 21,000 per year.

We will adopt the principle of 'the right tree for the right place' to ensure the most resilient tree population possible. We will establish a clear picture of Wirral's tree stock and its benefits. We will work constructively with individuals and groups to deliver this vision.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/climate-change-and-sustainability/trees-hedgerows-and-woodlands>

Site Information

Name: Royden Park

Grid reference: 324236, 386087

Address: Hillbark Road, Frankby, Wirral

Primary classification: Major Park

Ward: Greasby, Frankby & Irby

Size: 36.99 hectares

Typology: Wirral open spaces assessment November 2010 (based on PPG17 guidance) = Major Park

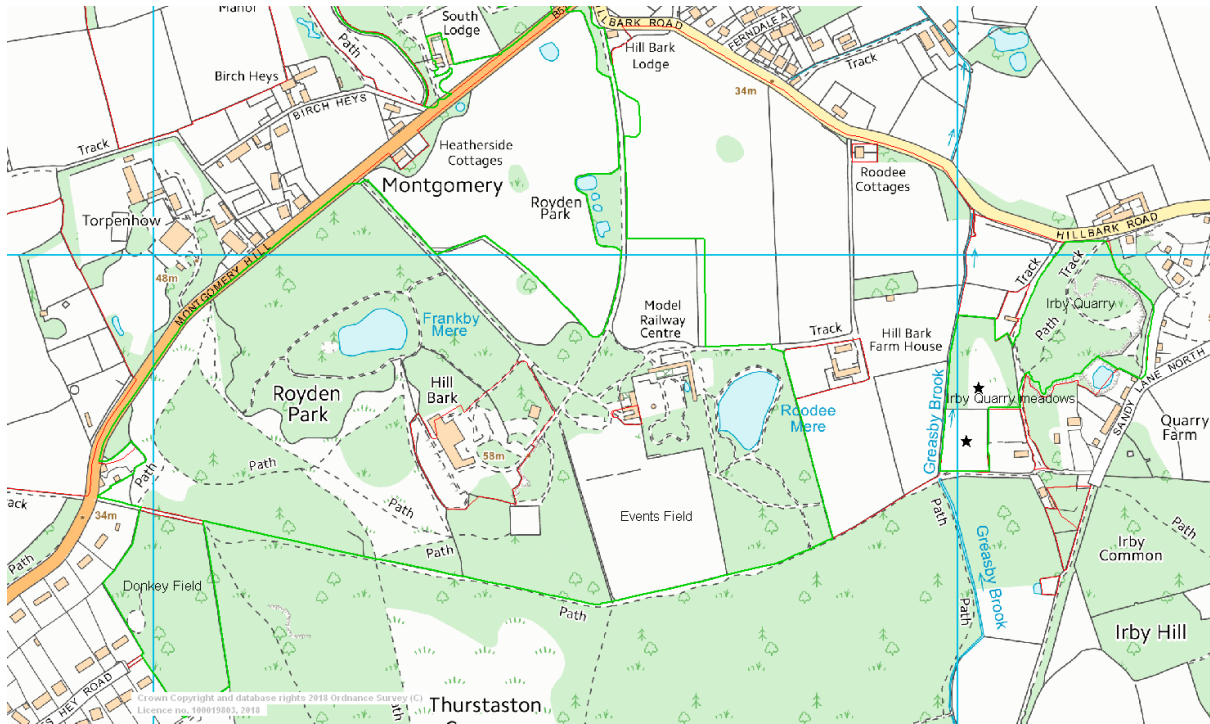
Primary purpose:

Intensively managed park which provides accessible, high-quality opportunities for formal and informal recreation and children's play including community events.

Location plan:



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Royden Park highlighting featured areas such as Donkey Field, Events Field, Irby Quarry, Irby Quarry meadows, Roodee and Frankby Meres, Model Railway.

Facilities and features:

- Amenity grassland including events / picnic field
- Lowland heath sites
- Car parks
- Informal Camp site
- Sandstone quarry cliff face
- Public toilets
- Model railway
- Mere (with licensed fishing)
- Victorian Coach House and Tea Servery
- Walled garden
- Permissive horse ride
- Hillbark House – mock Tudor style mansion (now in private ownership)
- Hillbark Lodge (at main entrance and in private ownership)
- Stable Cottage (tenanted)
- Seating
- Mixed broad leaved and coniferous woodland

Tenure:

The site is owned and managed by Wirral Council, Delivery Department, Parks, and Countryside Service.

Brief description:

Royden Park is a designated Country Park within Wirral Borough Council and provides an informal recreational amenity for the local community. The site also has an important conservation value as it is classified as a Site of Biological Importance due to the diverse array of habitats. Such habitats include natural & acid grasslands, mixed woodland, and lowland heath.

History

Originally farm and heath land the site was privately purchased in the 1820s by Brian John Robin. During the 1860's the then owner Septimus Ledward JP built a sandstone house called 'Hillbark' on the estate and the area was planted and landscaped to include glasshouses, a dovecot, and a bowling green.

In 1928 the estate was conveyed to Earnest Royden who demolished the residence built by Septimus Ledward. He proceeded to move his mock Tudor house known as Bidston Court, built near Bidston Hill in 1891 for the soap manufacturer R.W. Hudson, to its present location. The house later became a home for elderly people. It then remained vacant for a number of years before being converted into a 5-star hotel known as Hillbark House.

Following the death of Sir Earnest Royden in 1961 the estate was conveyed by his executors to Hoyslake Urban District Council and opened as a public park. Following local government re-organisation in 1974 Wirral Council now manage the site.

Resources

There is currently no dedicated capital budget for improvements to the park.

Grounds maintenance is funded from the annual maintenance revenue budget. The Area Parks Manager has overall responsibility for grounds maintenance. This is carried out by an operative who is responsible for grass cutting / hedge flailing and a forestry team which carry out off-ground tree work.

The Ranger is based on site and is assisted by a Grounds Maintenance Team for the park. The Ranger carries out all conservation projects on site and is assisted by a volunteer group. Projects include tree coppicing, woodland management, maintenance of the butterfly meadow in front of Hillbark House, hedge laying and fence erection / maintenance. Other duties include guided walks, interpretation, liaison with adult groups, event organisation and educational programmes.

The walled garden is maintained by the Wirral Evolutions who operate a project for individuals with special needs.

Partners and Stakeholders

- Advisory Group of Royden Park
- Royden Park Volunteer Ranger Group
- Friends of Royden Park
- WMES (Wirral Model Engineering Society)
- Grounds maintenance staff
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust
- British Horse Society
- Wirral Evolutions
- Footpath and Open Spaces Preservation Society
- Wirral Ramblers
- Walking for Health
- Educational groups
- Conservation Volunteers
- Coach House users
- Hillbark Hotel

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 www.greenflagaward.org.co.uk.

Several improvements have been achieved. These include the restoration of Irby meadows and the creation of a new wildlife pond for Great Crested Newts. Other improvements include a new footpath along the main events field and new site interpretation boards, which have been placed at strategic entrances to the park. There is also new signage in and around the main facilities buildings and a community notice board. A new disabled toilet has been installed. The overflow car park has also been substantially upgraded at a cost of £60,000.

The intention is for the site to continue to achieve the standards as defined by the Green Flag Award Scheme. The condition of the site has been assessed using the following criteria as defined by the Green Flag Award scheme:

1. A welcoming park
2. Healthy, safe, and secure
3. Clean and maintained
4. Environmental Management
5. Biodiversity, landscape, and heritage
6. Community involvement
7. Marketing and Communication
8. Management



Green Flag flying at Royden

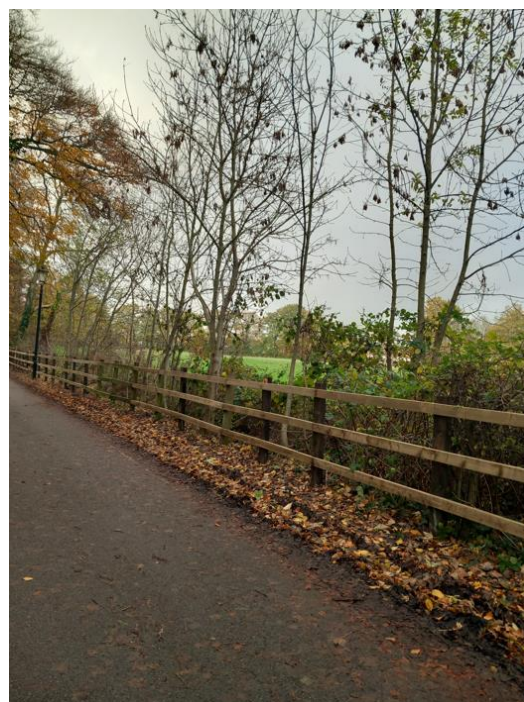
1) A welcoming park

1.1 Access:

In order to locate the park, there are a number of brown heritage style signs positioned along the main roads surrounding the site. These are located on Telegraph Road, Frankby Road and Hillbark Road. More brown heritage signs are to be installed further afield as part of the Wirral 2020 pledges.

There are many access points into the park, however, the main access point for vehicles is located off Hillbark Road near the junction with Montgomery Hill. This entrance boasts an impressive sandstone lodge (in private ownership) and substantial sandstone gate pillars. The main drive is shared with Hillbark hotel and is lined with streetlights and has speed humps to slow the traffic. Parking is not permitted along this drive and is highlighted with double yellow lines. There is currently no separate pedestrian footway along the drive.

The main drive is bordered by fields which are managed by a tenant farmer. This area has the landscape features of 'old Cheshire' with spinneys, hedgerows, and ponds. In December 2023, 211meters of wooden fence was replaced along the main drive. The hedgerow along the main drive has also been supplemented with the planting of 300 new saplings. The species which have been planted include Hawthorn, Wild Cherry, Field Maple, and Hazel.



Drivers should be aware the drive is often used by horse riders who are accessing the permissive bridal route off the main drive.

The nearest train stations are West Kirby or Heswall. Train timetables for these stations are available at: <http://www.merseyrail.org>

The nearest bus stop is in Frankby village. Details of bus routes in the area are available at: <http://Merseytravel.gov.uk>



Main Drive

1.2 Car parking and arrival:

Car parking is available from both sides of the main drive.



Markings on the main Drive at Royden Park

If visitors turn right from the main drive, they will find an area to park which is unsurfaced and contains a number of mature trees.



Montgomery Hill car park

If visitors turn left from the main drive, they will again find an unsurfaced area to park which is situated within an area of mature woodland.



Car park closet to the facilities

Within this car parking area there is a disabled drop off point for visitors to use.



Disabled drop-off Area

To try and improve parking facilities on site an additional area of small unit pavers and improved tarmac has been created on the old events field. There is a one-way system around the main car park to ease congestion.



New Surfaced Car Park in 2016

Car parking charges were implemented in 2018 at the following costs: £1 for one hour, £2 for two hours, £3 for three hours, £4 for four hours and £5 for all day. The visitors to the park can pay the charge by several means including contactless card or via downloading the parking app onto their smart phones. An annual permit can also be purchased for £100 which can be used by car users at all charged park sites on the Wirral. These sites include Eastham Country Park and Wirral Council Park.

Cyclists:

Royden Park is a designated no cycling zone. If cyclists wish to visit the site, they can access the park via the main drive. All bikes must then be left in the cycle racks provided, which are located near the café and toilet facilities.



Cycle racks outside the courtyard area of Royden Park

Pedestrian access points:

There are numerous pedestrian entrances to the park. New interpretation boards have been installed near most pedestrian entrances.



Site interpretation board



Figure 1



Figure 2

The above images show the main public access point into Royden Park from Montgomery Road. This access point is suitable for a wheelchair user, pushchairs, and buggies. This access point is also used by emergency vehicles.



Figure 3

Figure 3: shows a permissive pedestrian access point into the park from Montgomery Road.



Figure 4

Figure 4: highlights the access from Sandy Lane. There is a gated entrance point which leads to a small wooden bridge over Irby Brook. From this entrance point visitors will enter straight onto National Trust land. An information board highlighting the different sections to the site is situated close to this entrance.



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

Figures 5, 6 and 7: show the public footpath from Montgomery Road. This is a narrow track, which leads down to a metal swing gate from which the public can access National Trust land or enter Royden Park through a series of gaps in the sandstone wall. (See pictures below)



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10

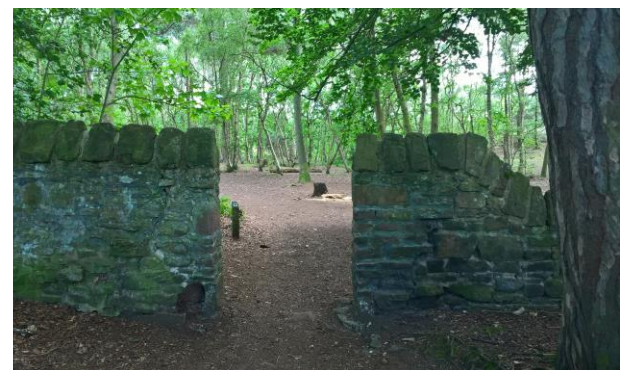


Figure 11

Figures 8, 9, 10 and 11: show a series of access points in the boundary wall between National Trust land and Royden Park. These gaps are wide enough to fit a wheelchair or pushchair, however, the terrain is uneven and muddy in places.

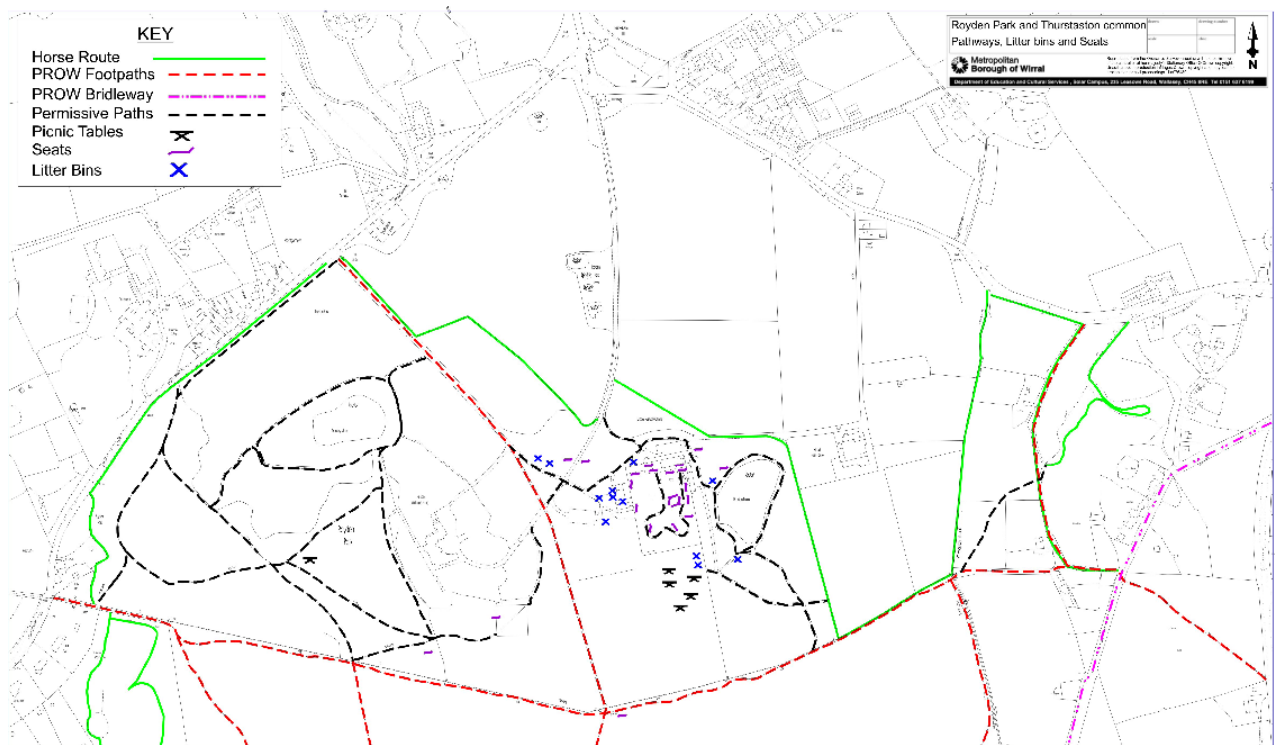


Figure 12

Figure 12: shows the access point from Royden Park into the National Trust Pine Forest. This path is well maintained and is accessible for all user groups.

1.3 Accessibility for all:

The terrain within Royden Park is predominantly flat and covers an array of different paths and trails. In 2013 the park was successful in gaining a grant from the English Woodland Grant Scheme to fund the creation of two accessible footpath trails within the park (The Woodpecker and Common Lizard Trails). Both trails start and finish at the main car park which is accessed via the main drive. Interpretation boards and way markers are situated along the trails to help people navigate around the site. By creating these trails, the site has become more accessible thus enabling a wider demographic of people to enjoy green spaces within the borough. A Site Access Audit is carried out under the Country Park Accreditation Scheme to safeguard access for all.



Map to highlight public footpath around Royden Park

Access for fishing on Roodee Mere has been improved with the creation of new fishing platforms, which includes a disabled access fishing point. The paths around the mere do, however, remain uneven in places due to tree roots.



Figure 13

Figure13: shows the disabled fishing platform on Roodee Mere, which can be accessed via a ramp.

Footpaths within the Walled Garden are maintained by Wirral Evolutions and consist of paved areas and bark chippings is accessible to all.

1.4 Public facilities:

Adjacent to the main car park is the Coach House which contains various displays. The Coach house is used throughout the year by a variety of organisations including a local art and crafts organisation, schools, and youth groups. The coach house is also

used for other events / activities including wild bird displays, wildlife workshops, family activities during school holidays, mother and toddlers' groups and children's parties.

The Courtyard café is situated in the area adjacent to the Courtyard. It serves a selection of hot and cold food/drinks and is open seven days a week to the public.

A public convenience building is situated in front of the Coach House. There are two disabled facilities on site. One is situated in the courtyard area near to the coach house whilst the other is in front of the courtyard which is accessible even when the gates to the courtyard area are closed. Access to this toilet facility is via a radar key. The toilet facilities are open between 9.00am to 4.00pm most days, however, this is dependent on staff working hours. The facilities are basic but well used.

The Rangers office and Walled Garden are situated at the back of the coach house. The Walled Garden is maintained by Wirral Evolutions who operate a project for individuals with special needs. The garden is open weekdays from 9:00a.m. – 4:00p.m.

A tenanted cottage is also located next to the coach house. In addition to the above facilities there is also the events field, model railway, informal campsite (for organised groups only) and Roodee Mere which is used for recreational fishing. The event field is popular with local dog walkers. It is also extensively used by families during the weekends and school holidays as an area to enjoy a picnic and play family games. The model railway is run by volunteers and comprises of a raised track and lower ground track which was installed in 2000. The lower track operates on a Sunday and bank holidays all year round whilst the raised track mainly operates on a Sunday during the summer months. The volunteers of the lower track also host a Santa special event during December whereby children can experience a train ride to Santa's grotto where they meet Santa and receive a small gift. This is an extremely popular event and tickets sell out within a day. The operation of both these facilities is however dependent of sufficient volunteer numbers and weather conditions.

Roodee Mere is a popular local fishing site. There are number of fishing platforms located around the mere itself. The mere used to be managed by AWAC, however, it is now under council management. The mere is open to the public for fishing if they have a rod licence from the Environment Agency. They can contact the ranger on site who will issue a fishing ticket which is valid for a year and just requires a donation which goes towards the maintenance of mere. In 2023 one of the fishing pegs was resurfaced and there has been significant management around the mere to try and improve the water quality and surrounding habitat.



Roodee Mere with fishing peg

There are a number of information boards situated close to the main buildings. These boards are designed to keep the public informed of events and activities that are taking place at the park. Local organisations can also utilise the main board by the toilet block for advertising.



Notice board

2) Healthy, safe, and secure

2.1: Dog fouling and Anti-social behaviour

The whole of the Wirral Council area 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
- 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. In August 2007 a media campaign 'Don't give a dog a bad name' was launched to highlight the new powers.

Since the introduction of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act in 2014, the Local Authority has the power to issue Community Protection Notices or Public Spaces Protection Orders.

We know from evidence produced from the Wirral Parks Survey (2012) that dog fouling and dogs off leads are major concerns for park users in Wirral. In light of these findings, thermoplastic signs have been sealed onto ground in three locations close to the car parking indicating the park as a 'clean it up' area. Other signs have also been positioned around the site to remind the public to clean up after their animals.



Clean it up signs on post and thermoplastic on ground.

The placement and type of waste bins has also been updated to try and encourage dog walkers to use the park's litterbins for the disposal of dog waste. Two new dog waste bag dispensers have also been installed in the main car parks. These new dispensers are well utilised by the public.



Sponsored Dog Waste bags dispenser situated in the car park

2.3 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 via the following telephone number: 0151 666 5265.

2.4 Site inspections:

Site based staff carry out regular inspections to identify defects within the park that present a safety problem for staff, users, and adjacent residents. The following items are appraised:

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

Members of the public also report problems to site-based staff on a day-to-day basis, they provide an ‘eyes and ears’ service which supplements the work of paid staff, and represents a valuable contribution to the running of the park.

Maintenance of the buildings on site is the responsibility of the Council’s Asset Management team.

3) Clean and well maintained

3.1 Site Patrols:

The onsite Rangers and volunteers carry out litter picking, and general inspection and the Walled Garden is maintained by Wirral Evolutions.

Horticultural maintenance is carried out in accordance with the ‘Royden Park Service Requirement’ (Appendix 3).

3.2 Tree Inspections:

Tree work for Parks and Countryside is managed in several ways. All sites are on a scheduled Tree Inspection Regime. This involves all sites being inspected on a minimum of a three-year cycle. A survey report is then produced which is sent to our newly appointed Tree and Woodlands Officer, who reviews the recommendations and amends if required. Contractors are then used to complete any necessary tree work.

Tree inspections are also conducted by parks staff who report any concerns to the Local Team Leader.

In 2019 / 2020 a full tree inspection was conducted of the site to identify any dangerous trees. Contractors were then used to carry out the work highlighted by the survey.

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>

4) Environmental Management

4.1 Energy and Chemicals:

Water and energy consumption in the park is monitored and where necessary modification is made to minimise wastage, in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.

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

The introduction of a 'Strebel' Gasifier has been commissioned to provide hot water and central heating to the outbuildings and offices within the park. This is to replace the existing boiler and provide high performance from an optimum low pollution wood-burning boiler.

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 Central district depot.

All pesticide products are now stored centrally at the district depot and are issued only to staff who hold the Certificate of Competence in the use of pesticides by the National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC) to include refresher training.

No pesticides are currently used within the park.

Peat is not used in any capacity on site.

4.2 Waste and Recycling:

The private contractor Biffa Waste Services currently dispose of general litter from the site on a weekly basis.

All paper and cardboard is collected fortnightly by the Wirral recycling service.

Any forestry work carried out on site recycles the brash by chipping and spreading on the horse routes or other locations that warrant its use. Some logs are removed while large logs are generally left on site to rot and some brash is used to create habitat piles. All plant waste is composted and used within the Walled Garden.

5) Biodiversity, landscape, and Heritage

5.1 Built Conservation

Hillbark House is a grade II listed building and 5-star hotel, and a dominant feature within the boundary of the park.

The main complex of a Coach House and associated buildings and Walled Garden are examples of Victorian architecture.

There is a historic perimeter sandstone wall which is also a major feature of the site, along with the main entrance sandstone gate pillars.



Coach house and facilities buildings

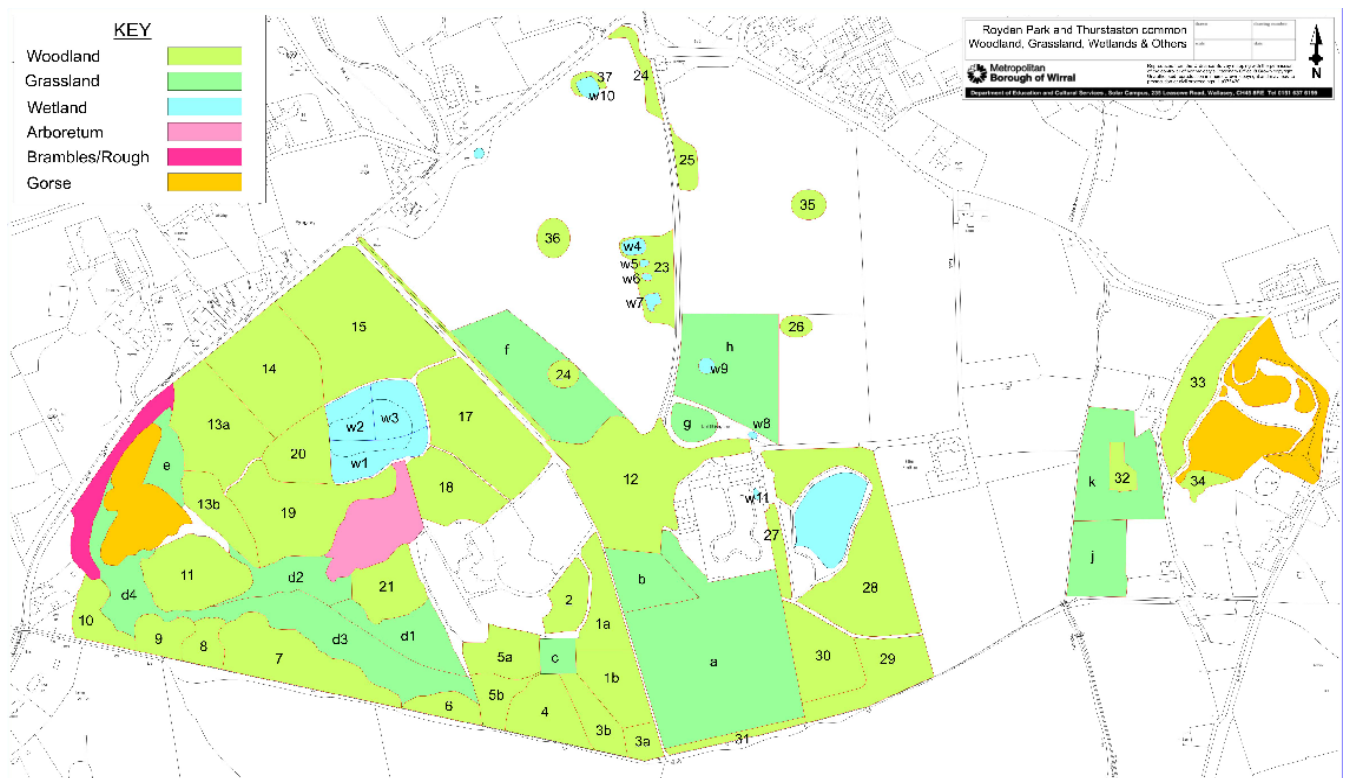
5.2 Nature Conservation:

Wirral council has declared an Environment and Climate Emergency. As a result of this, all planned conservation management within the park aims to protect and enhance biodiversity for future generations. The woodland, grassland and wetland habitats within the site are identified by zone and a detailed work programme for each habitat is held on site by the Ranger.

5.2.1 Woodland:

Most of the woodland within Royden Park was planted from the late 1800's onwards as part of a major landscaping project. To enhance the biodiversity of the woodlands onsite, the management involves:

- Ensuring tree cover is maintained by protecting existing woodland within Royden Park.
- Selectively thinning areas of woodland to allow light to reach the woodland floor.
- Encourage the regeneration of native tree species by removing rhododendron from selected areas.
- Encourage diversity by protecting areas with fencing or other methods,
- Replanting certain areas with native tree species. During 2022 – 2023 over 1000 new trees have been planted in the park through the creation of new hedges and the planting of standard trees and saplings throughout the park.



In sections 13a, 14 and 15, Rhododendron will be removed, and replanting / natural regeneration of woodland will be encouraged.

5.2.2 Donkey Field:

This is a section of secondary woodland consisting of Silver Birch, Oak, Sycamore with other species scattered throughout. This area of woodland has an open route allowing horse riders access and links up to the permissive horse route close to Montgomery Road. Management of this area involves cutting back vegetation to ensure good access.

5.2.3 Acid meadows:

The grasslands within Royden Park are the most botanically valuable habitats within the site. All acid grasslands found on the site are maintained through seasonal or rotational cutting.

The grassland to the south and west of Hillbark House is divided into different compartments. Each compartment is cut on a different yearly rotation. All cut material is removed to reduce nutrient levels. This is important to maintain the botanical diversity of the habitat as it contains a colony of Common Spotted Orchids (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) and Southern Marsh Orchids (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*).



SBI (Local Wildlife Site) Acid grassland

The old Irby Quarry meadows had become neglected. Consequently, the area had become dominated by brambles, bracken, and other invasive species. However, through a successful grant funding bid undertaken by the Royden Park Ranger Voluntary Group, restoration work has been undertaken to restore these meadows in a bid to protect and enhance their botanical interest.

Whilst they are still in the early stages of their development they should be cut and raked yearly until they become fully established. Once the meadows become have matured, they will be surveyed for the flora and fauna.

5.2.4 Frankby Mere:

Once an open Mere, the area is now managed as a wetland in its late hydroseral stage. By managing this area as a wetland habitat, it adds diversity and increase the biodiversity of the site. Management takes place to prevent the natural process of succession from occurring. This entails the constant removal of Willow and Silver Birch sapling which would otherwise dominate the habitat.

5.2.5 Roodee Mere:

This is an open water mere surrounded by rhododendrons. There is a footpath which circulates the mere. Fishing takes place here throughout the year and suitable fishing pegs are provided. Blue-green algae can be a problem during hot spells.

To improve this habitat, it requires either a permanent pump to be installed to enhance the oxygen levels of the water and prevent algal blooms or the creation of a reed bed. By creating a reed bed, it will help to filter the water and improve oxygen levels. It will also enhance the biodiversity of the pond by providing a suitable habitat for invertebrates such as dragon flies and damson flies and well as providing a breeding site for fish.

Other management tasks for the mere include removing some of the vegetation from the water's edge to improve light levels. Also, the inflow and outflow ditches need to be cleared once a year to prevent them from becoming blocked by leaf litter.

5.2.6 Ponds:

There are several ponds situated around the site.

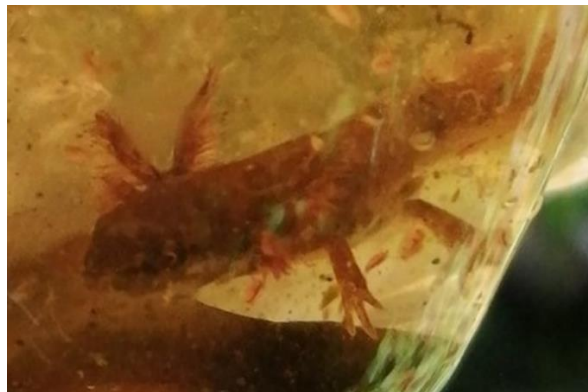


Location of the ponds within Royden Park and Thurstaston Common

During Spring 2020, a survey of amphibians took place at various sites within Royden Park and Thurstaston Common. The results from this survey revealed Great Crested Newts, Smooth Newts and Common Frog were present in some of the ponds.



Great Crested Newt egg,
Frankby Mere.



Newt larva, likely of a Smooth Newt,
Frankby Mere.



Smooth Newt male in a bottle trap, Frankby Mere.



Great Crested Newt, adult male in bottle trap, Frankby Mere.

A key observation from the survey was the resilience of these ponds to withstand low rainfall during the spring / summer months. It became apparent Frankby Mere, the meadow pond and some of the roadside ponds completely dry out by July. This poses a significant risk to maintaining the population of Newts on the site as they will be unable to complete their metamorphosis if the right conditions are not maintained. Consequently, the survey clearly highlighted that if the right management is not undertaken then the Great Crested Newt population with Royden Park is likely to become locally extinct within the next few years.

In light of the findings, the Royden Park Ranger Voluntary Group successfully gained funding to create a new wildlife pond which was completed in March 2022. Since its creation the pond has become a mecca for wildlife and will hopefully help to safeguard the future of Great Crested Newts for future generation to enjoy.





5.2.7 Dead material:

Throughout the park standing and lying wood is made safe and retained where possible, to provide nesting and roosting habitat for birds, bats, and a whole range of invertebrates.

6) Community involvement

6.1 Advisory Group:

Royden Park has an active Advisory group who meet with officers from Wirral Council and other stakeholders. They represent a wide variety of interests including local resident groups, 'Friends Groups', badger, bat, owl and other wildlife groups, horse riders, walking groups, dog walkers, Scout and other youth groups and model railway engineers.

There are themed topics to these meetings:

Community Involvement, Access and Management - with representatives from Public Rights of Way Officer, Wirral Footpaths, Wirral Ramblers, British Horse Society, Wirral Cycling Campaign, Wirral Evolutions, National Trust, Wirral Wildlife, local wildlife groups, Scouts Association, Wirral Model Engineering Society, Local residents, Friends Group and the neighbourhood Police.

Visitor Services and use of Coach House and Tea Servery - with representatives from, Peninsular Arts and Crafts Association and other Coach House and Tea Servery user groups.

6.2 Wirral Evolutions:

The Walled Garden is a particular feature of the site and is funded and run by staff and trainees under the supervision of Wirral Evolutions.



Walled Garden features

Wirral Evolutions also assist Wirral Council staff with a wide range of projects throughout the park.

6.3 Corporate volunteer days:

To enhance community involvement within the park, companies are encouraged to undertake corporate volunteer days. Timberland is one example of a corporate company who has volunteered their time to help manage the site. During their visit they assisted Wirral Evolutions, Wirral Council staff and Royden Park volunteers with a large-scale conservation project. All the teams worked together to remove rhododendron from around the mere and cleared an inflow stream. This work was undertaken as part on the ongoing management plan to try and improve the water quality of the Mere.

www.timber.com/responsibility/stories/serv-a-pal zooza-impacts-communities-worldwide.html

Another example of a successful corporate volunteer day involved support from the Environment Agency. They helped to restore a grassland meadow by removing encroaching alder trees.

6.4 Educational Use:

Educational use of the park via links with schools and youth groups continues through the Rangers as a priority. The aim of the ranger's education provision is to increase young people's confidence and re-connect them with their environment and nature.

The University of Liverpool and Edge Hill utilise the Park for research activities and biological studies.

Use of the informal campsite for organised groups is promoted.

The local scouts and other local groups help to plant a variety of trees and shrubs within designated areas in the park. They also assist with other conservation projects around the park.

6.5 Wirral Model Engineering Society:

The Wirral Model Engineering Society provides train rides to the public on Sundays and Bank Holidays, weather permitting, throughout the year. They have their own website at: <http://www.wirralmodelengineeringsociety.co.uk/>

6.6 Events and Activities:

A wide range of activities and events are provided to encourage people from all sectors of the community to get involved in the park. The Ranger and stakeholders produce an events programme including nature clubs, guided walks, children's activities, wildlife watching, creative workshops and task activity days.

Various displays and interpretation material is available in the Coach House. This is also a venue for Art and Craft organisations, Art Exhibitions, Musical Functions, Displays of Birds of Prey, Wildlife workshops, Themed events, talks and a variety of functions.



Tea Servery and Coach House craft display

6.7 Volunteers:

The Royden Park Ranger Volunteer Group are volunteers from all walks of life and help every week with various 'hands on' practical tasks throughout the year. The volunteer group have succeeded in obtaining grants to restore Irby Quarry Meadows and to improve the different habitats found within Irby Quarry. They have also obtained a grant to create a new wildlife pond to protect a variety of newt species found on site. In 2023 the volunteers group planted a new community orchard to help support Wirral councils' tree and pollinator strategies. The orchard includes a variety of fruit species including apple, plum cherry and damson. Other projects completed by the volunteers include sowing wildflower seeds in the main car park area. In recognition of their hard work and efforts to help support pollinator species and increase biodiversity within the park, the volunteers have received the 2023 'Bee's Needs Award' from DEFRA.

7) Marketing and Communication

7.1 Wirral Parks Survey:

This was undertaken in 2012 to find out what visitors think about their parks, beaches and countryside, and to inform management of Wirral's Parks. The Wirral Parks Survey Consultation Summary can be viewed here:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/downloads/5916>

Important general information was learned from the survey including the following:

Peak times for visitors to the park are afternoons, followed by mornings and evenings. Evening use is greater on weekdays than at weekends. The majority of visitors travel for between half an hour to two hours to reach the park. Around one in five people visit for more than two hours.

One sixth of Wirral people visit parks, beaches, and open spaces for events. A quarter said more events would encourage them to use these places more.

Less dog fouling and better toilet provision stand out as the top two things that people say would encourage them to use parks, open spaces and beaches more, with 53.7% and 46.5% of responses respectively. Almost three quarters of people rate Wirral's parks, beaches and open spaces as having a very good or good standard of cleanliness and being maintained in a very good or good condition.

7.2 Information:

The Wirral Council web site: www.wirral.gov.uk has information about Royden Park. Wirral's tourism website also carries promotional information, including guided walks which begin and end at the park: <http://www.visitwirral.com/coast-and-countryside>

Hillbark hotel have their own website at: <http://www.hillbarkhotel.co.uk/>

Information leaflets and posters are on display within the Coach House/Court Yard.

Information boards offer people an ever-changing provision of information on events and management proposals in the park. Interpretation boards throughout the park provide clear maps, which highlight footpaths, features, buildings and other points of interest.

7.3 Events:

The Rangers run an annual events programme which provides plenty of opportunities for people to get involved. These are publicised on the Wirral Council website and through one-stop shops and libraries, Facebook, press and local messengers as well as advertised on posters in the local area.

7.4 Income Generation:

Various methods and ideas are always forthcoming on how to provide some income generation for the park. Present and possible ideas are highlighted in the table below:

Project	Detailed information	Participants	Facilities and Provisions
New inhouse café proposal	As part of the council's budget proposal a new inhouse café provision has been proposed.	Internal organisation	Café refurbishment and opening completed in 2022
Angling on Roodee Mere.	Ask the public to provide a donation to fish on the Mere.	Staff, Friends Groups, and volunteers.	Upkeep of pegs etc.
General events and activities.	Guided walks, school groups, family events, Outdoor clubs.	Staff, volunteers, Trusts, organised groups.	Provide a set fee to individuals, groups.
Rent out coach house	Hire out the space in the coach house for events such as children's parties, wedding receptions etc	Staff, public	Maintenance of the coach house to ensure it is in good condition to hire out.
Rent an Outdoor area with basic provisions.	For organised outside activities such as theatrical productions, exhibitions.	Outdoor play productions, static shows.	Instate ground with provision of essentials, possible electrics.
Plant sales of home-grown trees and plants.	Grown in containers small tree and plant specimens. Container grown.	Staff, volunteers.	Plant pots, plant feed, display stands.

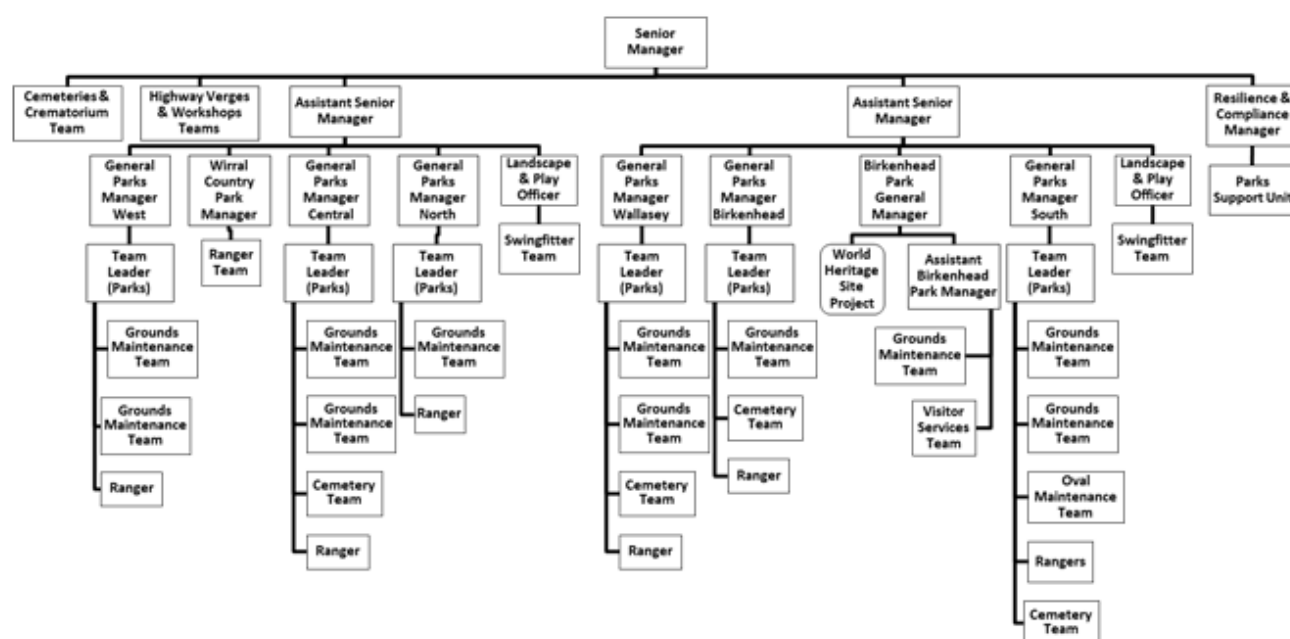
8) Management

8.1 General Information:

The Central Area Parks Manager is responsible for the management and maintenance of the site. Enquiries about the management of the park should be directed to the Central Wirral Area Parks Manager on **0151 606 2004**. Email: Streetscene@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.

8.2 Parks & Countryside Management Structure 2021



5.2.1 General Manger's Role:

General managers are responsible for the management and development of Parks and Countryside sites, open spaces, coastal areas, trees, playgrounds, events, and allotments throughout their designated constituency. The General Managers manage the Local Team Leaders for their area.

5.2.2 Local Team Leader's Role:

Local Team Leaders are responsible for the day-to-day management of Council's Parks, Allotments and Countryside sites in their area and are the main point of contact for Friends Groups and Allotment Site Secretaries. They are all responsible for managing Ground Maintenance Supervisors and Rangers.

8.3 Action Plan:

Actions	Lead Officer	Target date	Resource	Complete
A welcoming place				
Provide new site information board to main car park	Local Team Leader		Completed	✓
Provide signage and improve aesthetics to remaining entrances. Provide user friendly signage in Main Car Parks indicating points of interest	Local Team Leader		Requires Additional Funding £5K	✓
Provide extra brown tourist signage on roads leading to site	Local Team Leader	2018	£880 through 2020 pledges	✓
Improve and provide additional car parks. The present overspill car park requires landscaping and additional car spaces within the existing car parks is recommended within a sympathetic environment	Local Team Leader	2016	Requires Additional Funding £70K	✓
Upgrade / create two circular footpath trails	Local Team Leader		Approx. 30K to be funded by EWIGS and Wirral Council	✓
Line marking on Main Drive to indicate Car Parks and Yellow No Parking lines down each side.	Local Team Leader	2016	Requires funding £1 - £2K	✓
Healthy, safe, and secure				
Improve toilet facilities	General Parks Manager		Requires Additional Funding £5K	
Standardise, renew and re-position waste bins	General Parks Manager	2021	Requires Additional Funding £2K	✓
Annual Site Safety Inspection	General Parks Manager	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Re-erect / repaint dog signage to entrances	General Parks Manager	2017	From existing resources	✓
Remove all graffiti as it occurs	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Improve sight lines in car parks	General Parks Manager		Completed	✓
Instigate rolling programme of sandstone walling repairs	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	

Improve footpath across Events Field to Model Railway by sandstone wall	Local Team Leader	2019	From Capital Budget	✓
Ensure barriers / gates are locked each evening	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	Form existing resources	

Clean and well maintained				
Improve surface management of muddy footpaths	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Improve path surface around Roodee Mere	Local Team Leader	2023	Funding to be sourced	
Improve fishing pegs/platforms around Roodee Mere	Local Team Leader	2023	From existing resources / Environment Agency	
Produce annual winter work programmes to reflect this plan	General Parks Manager / Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Continue rolling programme of footpath resurfacing	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Rectify flooding at Hillbark Road horse ride	Local Team Leader		From existing resources / Environment Agency	✓
Improve drainage to areas identified in plan and ensure drains are well maintained	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Selectively prune vegetation around Roodee Mere	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Assist Wirral Evolution staff with Walled Garden	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Provide dog waste signs and encourage dog owners to use the bins. Installation of Dog Poo Bag dispenser	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	✓

Environmental Management				
Manage Frankby Mere as wetland habitat	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From in house resources plus possibility of external funding	
Encourage recycling with grey bin	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Extend bicycle racks	Local Team Leader		Completed	✓
Assist in Strebel Gasifier project	Local Team Leader		Completed	✓
Carry out woodland management as identified in plan annually	Local Team Leader	Ongoing		
Carry out grassland management as agreed in plan annually	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	Obtained external funding through the volunteer group based at Royden Park	
Manage access through Donkey Field woodland for horse riders	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	Liaise with volunteers, Public Rights of Way Officer and horse riders	
Restore Irby meadows and manage as a meadow	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	Acquire funding for initial clearance work and manage through existing resources	✓
Create a new wildlife pond and manage	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	Acquire funding for initial pond creation and manage through existing resources	✓
Biodiversity, landscape, and heritage				
Improve / maintain Victorian building complex	Senior Area Manager / Asset management	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Maintain and enhance biodiversity of site	Senior Area Manager	Ongoing	From existing resources	

Refurbish main user buildings	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	Raise funds through projects	
Enhance on site interpretation about the history, natural history of the site	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	Raise funds through grants etc.	
Community involvement				
Support and work in partnership with stakeholders	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Retain Green Flag Award	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Work with stakeholders providing events / attractions	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Encourage / extend educational site use	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Promote campsite for organised youth/community use/educational use	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Marketing and Communication				
Update Park notice boards	Local Team Leader	Ongoing	From existing resources	
Link events to social media	Local Team Leader		From existing resources	
Provide community notice board	Local Team Leader	2019	Completed	✓
Consider green flag feedback	Local Team Leader	2019	From existing resources	
Management				
To work with volunteers to gain external funding	Local Team Leader	2020 / 2021	Funding to be sourced	
To provide income generation	General Parks Manager	On going	From income funding projects	
Maintain / review management plan	Local Team Leader	2022 / 2023	From existing resources	

Appendices

Appendix 1. Royden Park Service Requirement

1. Litter:

Collect and remove litter and refuse from all 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.

2. Sweeping and cleaning:

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 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 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.

3. Fallen leaves:

Fallen leaves shall be regularly cleared from areas of:

- Main entrances and key pedestrian routes and paths
- Visitors' centres and cafe
- Soft horticultural features such as bedding and herbaceous borders

Leaf clearance shall take place so that the features remain:

- In good horticultural condition
- 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 to prevent leaves from spreading back onto paths and hard surfaces.

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

4. 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 exception 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.

5. 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 because 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.

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

Following recent concerns around the use of herbicides, particularly Glyphosate, Wirral Parks and Countryside Service is undergoing a trial ban on the use of Glyphosate and is only used in exceptional circumstances or to deal with invasive non-native species. Previous use of Glyphosate within the park was minimal.

The edges of turf adjacent to hard surfaces, cutbacks, 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 arising's, no matter where they fall, shall be removed for recycling, or reuse immediately on completion of the operation.

All cuttings, clippings, or other mowing arising's 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.

Arising's 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 arising's 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.

6. Hard landscape infrastructure:

Undertake a rolling programme of condition surveys of the hard landscape infrastructure with the park. This will include inspecting roadways, pathways, car parks, benches, lighting, fencing and walls.

7. Hard surfaces weed control:

Undertake a programme of effective weed control on all hard surfaces including roads, footpaths, car parks, steps, ramps, and bridges. This should include 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.

8. 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.

9. Benches and seating:

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

10. 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.

11. Notice boards and signs:

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

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. Public toilets:

Be responsible as key-holder for opening, closing, and securing the buildings.

Maintain public toilets to a sufficiently high level of cleanliness to protect public health and maintain good appearance.

Toilets shall be kept free from unacceptable odours. All sanitary wares shall be kept free from all, stains, dirt and any build-up of lime scale.

Replace where necessary all consumables such as toilet rolls.

Use best endeavours to conserve supplied utilities including electricity and water and arrange access for the reading of meters by the utility suppliers.

Store all equipment and materials in a safe condition and provide and display the necessary warning signs/barriers to ensure public safety during cleaning operations.

Remove any graffiti as part of the cleaning operation.

Comply with all the responsibilities and requirements on waste collection and disposal.

Inspect the premises after each cleaning operation and notify the Service Manager immediately of any fitting or part of the building requiring repair or replacement.

15. 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.

Refer to section 'Waste management including recycling of biodegradable waste' (green waste).

16. Emergency and out of hours call out service for trees:

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.

17. Trees in parks:

All Parks and Countryside staff have a duty of care to ensure that users of parks, green spaces, cemeteries, churchyards, and golf courses are not at unreasonable risk from possible failure of trees. This also included trees that are adjacent to privately owned land or properties. Trees will be regularly checked as part of the annual site health and safety inspections. Any dangerous trees will be recorded and reported to the Local Team Leader / General Parks Manager.

18. Individual trees in parks and green spaces – arboriculture 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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 2: S.B.I. Citation and Plan

Site name: Royden Park

Site code: B13

Ward: Frankby

Grid Reference: SJ242858

Area: 29.4 ha

Date of Notification: 1954

Date of Revision: 1999

Status: Adjacent to Thurstaston Common SSSI. Owned by WMBC

Description: Royden Park is an area of coniferous and mixed plantations with two large meres, grassland, and gorse areas. Frankby Mere is dry in summer and shows succession through to willow carr. Both meres are surrounded by Rhododendron thickets, which are important thrush roosts. There is acid grassland to the south and west of Hill Bark, with small patches of heath land. A large colony of common spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) with some southern marsh-orchid (*D. praetermissa*) grows on the damp grassland west and southwest of Hill Bark. There is a large bat roost in Hill Bark.

Criteria for selection: (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)

Habitats: Woodland - coniferous (plantation)
Woodland - mixed (plantation)
Grassland - acidic (unimproved)
Open water - standing water
Swamp and mire - margin/inundation
Heath land - dry heath

Most recent survey: Amphibians and Reptiles 2020

Plants 2018

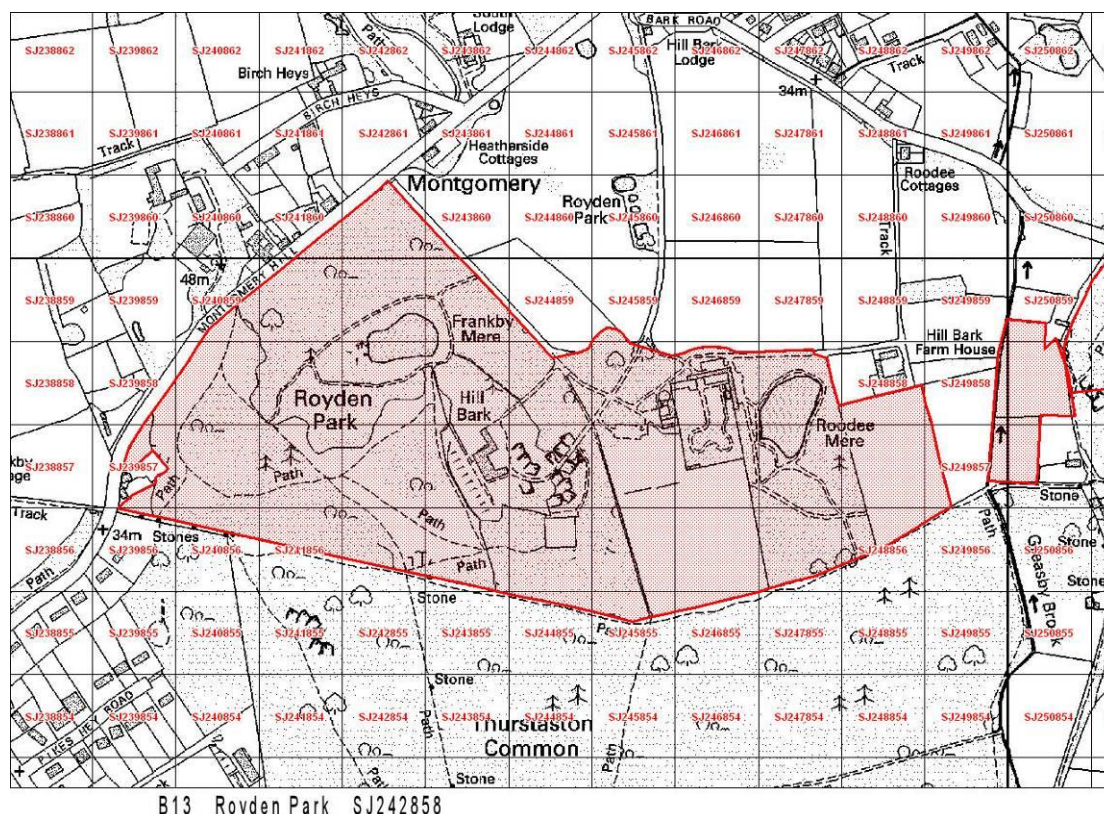
Mammals 2016

Birds 2018

Butterflies 2018

CONFIDENTIAL: Protected species present

Royden Park B13



Appendix 3: Historical, Biological and Physical

3.1 Historical:

3.1.1 Land use and landscape history

Roman period - Farmsteads featured on or nearby the site. Oval / sub-rectangular crop marks, often found in river valleys and low outcrops represent single enclosed farmsteads, often without trace of field systems (Higham 1986) are discussed by Philpott (1988). These are highlighted in a field in Thurstaston some 3-400 metres to the northwest where over a dozen Roman brooches, a scatter of Roman pottery, a key and coins have been found dating from the late 1st to 4th Century. The areas of Thurstaston and Irby have also yielded material from the Roman period. Concentrations of 4th Century coins found at Irby Mill (adjacent to Thurstaston Common) are associated with a feature interpreted as a farmstead enclosed ditch.

Dark Ages - Place names locally provide evidence of Saxon influence. Frankby derives from the Danish noun Frakki, and the ending denotes farmstead. Irby is a settlement of the Irish Norsemen. Thurstaston combines both Saxon and Norse elements, viz. 'Thorsteinn's farmstead' from the Saxon tun, and the Old Norse personal noun Porstein, anglicised Thurstan, (Mc Neal Dodgson 1972).

1086 - Thurstaston had become a manor with four plough teams. Domesday Cheshire shows little surviving woodland in Wirral. Much of the landscape was open heath and arable by this period.

Early 12th Century – The Hundred of Wirral was afforested but seems to have been ordinary countryside to which Forest Law was applied.

1384 - The people of Wirral were suffering from damage done by the beasts of the forest and the vigour of the Forest Laws (which had been in existence for 250 years). A great extent of the heathland area existed within this time.

1817 – Thurstaston Common. Early enclosures within the common waste of Thurstaston are those of Benty Farm and Hillside Farm. Benty Farm appears on the 1817 estate map as a farm of approximately 25 acres. Tithe apportionment of 1849 indicates that there was 200 acres (80.94 hectares of uncultivated moor at Thurstaston, which is not much different to the extent in 1817. Features that indicate strong landscape evidence for grazing are where the herding of cattle and sheep are to be seen leading to Thurstaston village known as a 'Head-dyke funnel'. The area now covered by Royden Park was part of a large private estate. This was landscaped and planted since about 1860.

1820-30 Bryan John Robin, who resided at Grove Hill, West Kirby, bought the estate as a unified ownership up to the time of his death in 1855.

In 1865 the trustees of Mr. Robin conveyed it to Septimus Ledward Esq. J.P. who built a sandstone house called 'Hillbark' on the site of an ancient tithe barn. The house was erected between 1868 and 1870 and the surrounding grounds were laid out with gardens and glasshouses, a dovecote, and a bowling green.

Enclosures Act 1883, provided for the subdivision of Thurstaston Common. 45 acres, which included the summit of Thurstaston Hill, was allocated to the Birkenhead Corporation to be managed as a place for public recreation. Five acres was set aside as field gardens for the poor of Thurstaston parish and a further plot was to be held in trust as a site for a new school which was not built until 1906.

Boundary Stones on the west and northern boundaries of the common suggests a once open landscape with the possibility of a more extensive common 'waste' shared by the townships of Thurstaston, Caldby and Frankby.

Field name and landscape evidence point to the existence of former heathland in the part of Frankby Township now occupied by Royden Park.

1870 - shows Irby Heath covering a large area from Irby village to Thurstaston, connecting with Caldby Heath.

1916 – 27.5 acres were presented to the National Trust by its owners Sir Alfred Paton.

1916 – 1925 – further large donations were made to the National Trust.

1928 - The estate now known as Royden Park was conveyed to Mr. E.B. Royden of Bidston Court, who married Mary the daughter of Morrecc Smith. Earnest Royden

demolished the residence built by Septimus Ledward. He proceeded to move brick by brick his mock -Tudor house known as Bidston Court built near Bidston Hill in

1891 for the soap manufacturer R.W. Hudson, to its present location.

1961 - Following the death of Sir E.B. Royden the Park was opened as a public park and conveyed by his executors to Hoylake Urban District Council.

1974 - Metropolitan Borough of Wirral.

1981 - Ranger Service introduced.

3.1.2 Archaeology

A couple of sites stated by Cowell (1987) have been identified on the Wirral. One at Greasby (OS Grid reference 257862 Sheet No. SJ 28/38) where flint scatters were found, and partial excavation revealed a number of manmade pits, small post and stake holes and a possible hearth.

A second site at Thurstaston (OS Grid reference 252833 Sheet No. SJ 28/38). Similar assemblage of material to the Greasby site although there is a greater density of material on the surface.

3.2 Biological

3.2.1 Biological Communities

Woodland

a) Coniferous and mixed coniferous/broad-leaved:

The conifer and mixed woodland are a major feature of Royden Park. Much of this woodland consists of Corsican (Pine *Pinus nigra var. maritima*), Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), mixed with Silver and Downy Birch (*Betula pendula* and *pubescens* some Beech *Fagus sylvatica*), Pedunculate and Sessile Oak (*Quercus robur* and *petraea*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*).

Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) dominates as an understory shrub throughout much of woodland. Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) dominates in patches with a mix of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus niger*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Dog rose (*Rosa canina*) scattered throughout.

b) Broad-leaved:

Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Oak (*Quercus robur* and *petraea*) are mixed in with the above woodland with Birch (*Betula pubescens* and *pendula*) and Oak (*Quercus robur* and *petraea*) woodland dominating on the south side of Royden Park adjacent to Thurstaston Common Heathland.

Willow *Salix sp* surrounds Frankby Mere. This is cut on a coppice rotation every five to ten years.

Heathland: - National Vegetation Classification

NVC type H4a Dry Heath – *Calluna* – *Ulex gallii* heath.

NVC type H9e Dry Heath – *Calluna* – *Deschampsia flexuosa* heath.

NVC type M16 Wet Heath – *Erica tetralix* – *Sphagnum compactum* heath

Grassland:

A wide area of acid grassland exists to the southwest of Hillbark House (private) which has been divided up into sections. Each section is cut on a different cutting rotation. This is presently every three, four and five years.

The Irby Quarry meadows have been neglected for several years and bramble and Bracken have taken over, with the aid of local grants obtained through the volunteer group these grasslands will once again thrive as flora rich habitats.

The picnic site, campsite and Events field is cut regularly throughout the growing season.

Mere / Wetland:

One permanent mere, Roodee Mere exists with open water and stocked with fish by A.W.A.C. the mere is now managed by Wirral council. The public are permitted to fish at the mere as long as they have a rod licence from the Environment Agency. The second mere, Frankby Mere only holds seasonal water and dries up in the summer. A wetland/marsh habitat surrounds the area.

Other small ponds exist within Royden Park. These ponds were surveyed in 2019 by a representative from the Wirral Reptile and Amphibian group. The survey revealed there are species of Newt within the park. A management plan has thus been developed to try and restore these ponds to try and maintain the newt population within the park.

Gorse scrubland, bracken, and heathers:

On part of the western boundary of Royden Park adjacent to Montgomery Hill Road there is an area dominated by Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*). There are also some patches of heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) with Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*) in some of the open spaces. An area of bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) exists between the Gorse and coniferous woodland. This is cut and raked in the growing season.

3.2.2 Flora and fauna:

Notable species:

Flora:

- Common spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsia*)
- Southern marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*)
- Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*)
- Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*)

- Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*)
- Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*)
- Field Mouse-ear (*Cerastium arvense*) - Very rare in Cheshire
- Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*)
- Corn salad (*Valerianella locusta*) - Rare in Cheshire
- Bog Pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*)
- Wild arum (*Arum maculatum*) - Rare in Wirral
- Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) - Indicator species of undisturbed grassland/woodland
- Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) - Rare in Wirral
- Lesser spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*) - Uncommon in Wirral
- Birds foot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*) - Uncommon in Wirral
- Pillsedge (*Carex pilulifera*) - Uncommon in Wirral

Fauna:

- Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)
- Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis* L)
- Greater Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major* L)
- Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)
- Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)
- Badger (*Meles meles*)
- Pigmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus* L)
- Pipistrelle Bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)
- Noctule Bat (*Nyctalus noctula* Schreber)
- Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)
- Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)
- Land bug (*Alydus calcaratus*)
- Green Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela campestris*)
- Damselfly (*Lestes sponsa*)
- Oak eggar moth (*Lasiocampa quercus*)
- Heathland Spiders:
 - *Atypus affinis*
 - *Euophrys frontalis*
 - *Oxyptila atomaria*
 - *Phrurolithus festivus*

3.3 Physical:

3.3.1 Climate:

The sea influences climate. Tends to be milder than inland areas. Meteorological records are available from the Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory at Bidston. Average annual rainfall is 740mm.

3.3.2 Geology:

Triassic sandstones of the Bunter and Keuper Divisions dominate solid geology. Underlying geology is predominantly Upper Mottled Sandstone of the Bunter Division of the Trias, which outcrops at Thurstaston Hill and forms a plateau dipping gently to the northeast.

Hard siliceous veins rise in low ridges.

A hard but shallow bed of coarse-grained sandstone extends northwards for some 500 meters from the summit of the hill, giving rise to a prominent escarpment above a broad valley to the west. This is the lowest of the Keuper basements beds now known as the Helsby Sandstone Formation (Johnson 1985).

The drift geology is a product of successive glacial episodes. Deposition of tills by the Devensian ice sheets has left a partial thin covering on the plateau, whilst a much deeper covering is found beneath the coastal lowlands at Thurstaston and beneath the present Dee Estuary, (Brenchley 1968).

3.3.3 Geomorphology and Hydrology:

a). Geomorphology:

The highest point within Royden Park and Thurstaston Common countryside area is the sandstone escarpment of Thurstaston Hill that rises to 90 meters (295 feet) above OD 0.75 kilometres inland from the Dee coastline. The hill represents the northern extreme of a NW-SE escarpment running parallel to the coast and extending as far as Shotwick in South Wirral. The escarpment runs northwards from the summit of Thurstaston Hill and a broad valley, approximately 0.5 kilometres wide and over 50 meters deep, separates the hill from Caldy Hill to the west. Brenchley (1968) considers this to have been caused by glacial action. To the east of the ridge, four dry valleys, drain eastwards dissecting the dip slope before joining a SE-NW dry valley which in turn sweeps westwards toward the escarpment. The point at which the drainage channel crosses the sandstone ridge gives rise to a feature of geomorphologic interest. Here the band of hard Keuper sandstone is reduced to less than one metre thick and water falling over the scarp edge has caused undercutting of the beds of softer Bunter sandstone that lie draining immediately under the Keuper. An example of headward erosion.

Another landform of local interest is Thor's Stone, an upstanding outcrop of Bunter sandstone about 250 metres north of the summit of Thurstaston Hill. Situated between two dry valleys and completely isolated from the surrounding sandstone plateau by a moat – like depression seasonally filled with water.

A significant fault running N-S along the east side of Thurstaston Common would appear to control the valley along which the Greasby Brook flows in a northerly direction.

b). Hydrology:

All the land area to the north of the summit of Thurstaston Hill drains in a northerly direction to join the Birket drainage basin, which joins the Fender basin and flows into the Mersey at Wallasey Pool. Only the southern, and part of the southwestern slope of Thurstaston Common drain into the Dee Basin.

Human activity has highly modified the hydrology. Drainage ditches lead from the eastern side of Benty Farm to the Greasby Brook, and they probably accelerate drainage of small blocks of wet heath on the eastern side of the Common.

3.3.4 Soils:

Siliceous soils of the Bridge North Association have developed over the Bunter sandstone. Soils are generally heavily leached and acidic with a thin layer of partly

decomposed humid material developed from the litter of heather's, gorse, and heath grasses.

Boulder clay deposits underlay Benty Farm. Perched water tables exist above the boulder clay and seasonal flushing with surface water has resulted in the development of peaty podzolic soils.

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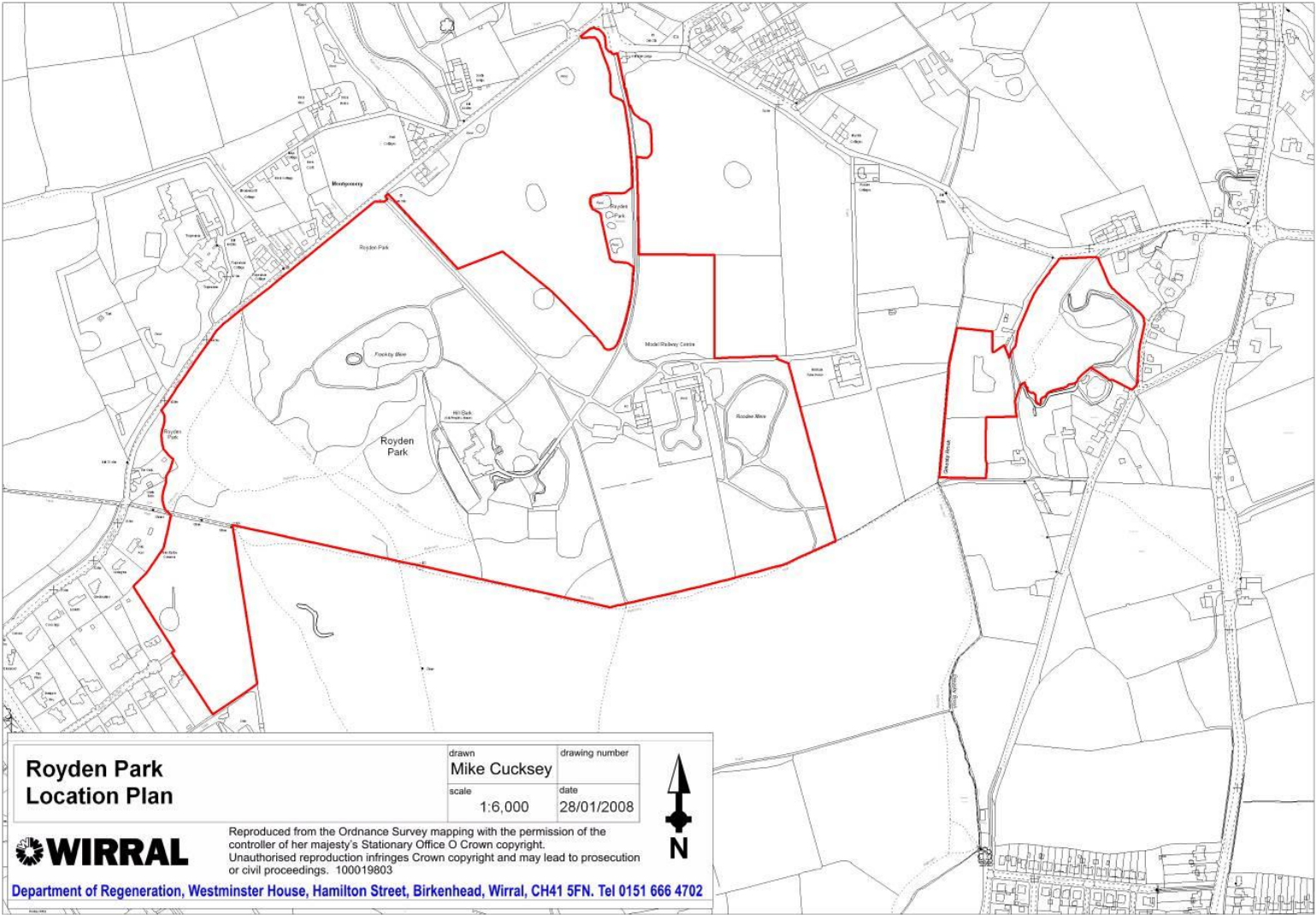
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Appendix 4: Location Plan



Appendix 5: Aerial Photograph

