



# Community Engagement and Volunteering Plan

July 2023

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## Introduction

The Community Engagement and Volunteering Plan sets out how the Council proposes to support the overarching Haringey Parks and Greenspaces Strategy priorities of inclusion, climate change and service quality. It is informed by the views and ideas of residents, community groups and stakeholders, captured through the strategy consultation process.

Haringey's parks are used by many different communities and are a major source of social interaction and cohesion. You can get a good idea about the diversity of the people who live in Haringey by spending time in one of our bigger parks, such as Finsbury Park or Lordship Recreation Ground.

However, not all communities have the same level of access to parks and some communities may feel that parks are neither welcoming nor meet their needs.

The Covid-19 enforced lockdown highlighted the importance of parks for health and wellbeing, whilst also highlighting the importance of ensuring that they meet the needs of all communities, particularly those most affected by Covid such as people from BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic) communities, people with disabilities and older people.

The health benefits of parks include lower rates of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and overall improved mental health and wellbeing.

Haringey has a proud and positive history of working with Friends of Parks groups and other volunteers. A good example of this is the support for the recently completed NESTA project [Parks Community UK \(https://parkscommunity.org.uk/\)](https://parkscommunity.org.uk/) based at Lordship Recreation Ground, to develop and share good practice for Community Empowerment and Co-Management in UK greenspaces between Friends groups and local authorities.

There are currently an estimated 65 Friends groups in Haringey generating over £600,000 per year in added value for Haringey Parks and communities, through practical volunteering, events and activities, and by providing opportunities for local people to get involved.

The worldwide outbreak of Covid in 2019 and the re-emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement in response to serious racist incidents in western countries have highlighted the importance of parks as communal social spaces for everyone to benefit from.

The Council wants to extend usage and involvement in parks through working in a co-productive way with residents, particularly people from BAME communities, disabled people, older people, women and girls, young people, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI+) community whose needs have rarely been sought out previously.

As part of this Plan, the Council also wants to work with residents to develop new opportunities to look after smaller and more local spaces and features, such as street planters and street tree planting.

There is considerable expertise already between the Council, Friends groups, stakeholders, and partners, both existing and emerging, for volunteering in our parks and greenspaces. The Council will be seeking to build on the excellent foundations this expertise offers.

Haringey is a relatively green borough with over 148 parks and greenspaces creating 382.87 hectares of open space, representing 12.8% of the total area of the borough. Many of these spaces are supported by community organisations such as Friends of Parks groups, residents associations, or special interest groups like Tottenham Trees and the Haringey Rivers Forum.

This Plan is one of several plans and policies supporting the overall Parks and Greenspaces Strategy (PGSS).

It will:

- Provide information and direction for how the Council will seek to work with stakeholders, including seldom heard communities and Friends of Parks groups, for the next 15 years in order to maximise the benefits for our local communities and provide the highest possible quality of greenspaces.
- Identify which policies support this plan, including those that inform the wider Parks and Greenspaces Strategy and those that are part of the wider policy framework.
- Look at the benefits resulting from community engagement and volunteering.
- Identify issues and challenges which impact community engagement and volunteering and propose how these might be overcome.
- Identify the agencies and organisations involved and their roles, including the different Parks Service teams.
- Provide an action plan to inform the future approach towards community engagement and volunteering.
- Provide information about current parks and greenspace volunteering, and links to key supporting and reference documents.

## Aims

The Aims are taken from the overall Parks and Greenspaces Strategy.

**Inclusion and Wellbeing:** Providing inclusive parks and greenspaces that all communities in Haringey can benefit from so that usage and enjoyment of our parks and greenspaces reflects the communities living in Haringey and contributes to improved wellbeing.

**Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability:** Supporting the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency by reducing the carbon footprint of parks and greenspaces, protecting and promoting biodiversity, and helping educate everyone in Haringey about contributing towards saving the planet.

**A Quality Service:** Securing investment, improving standards, partnerships, communications, and outcomes.

## Objectives

### **Inclusion and Wellbeing**

- To create a framework that will help the Council to engage and work cooperatively with all park users and stakeholders, including targeted engagement with seldom heard communities to support their increased usage and involvement.
- To better understand, appreciate and celebrate the role of Friends groups and other key stakeholders.
- To work with partners to identify and reduce areas of possible conflict in parks and greenspaces e.g. between cyclists and walkers.
- To develop a Plan with identified actions and targets to support community engagement and volunteering in parks, greenspaces and street planting.
- To expand on the range of groups that contribute to the design, management, marketing and usage of parks and greenspaces, by developing regular and ongoing engagement with BAME, faith, female, younger, older, disabled and LGBTQI+ communities.
- Supporting the development of more active, independent community groups in parks and greenspaces.
- Engaging more diverse groups of people in volunteering in parks and greenspaces, and in street-based volunteering.

### **Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainability**

- Improving access to nature for BAME and other seldom heard communities.
- Offering skills and knowledge training for volunteers to enable them to better contribute towards meeting biodiversity/nature recovery targets.

### **A Quality Service**

- To develop more opportunities for corporate volunteering and similar schemes which provide social benefit.
- To celebrate the achievements of the parks and greenspace sector.
- To improve communications between key stakeholders, to enable better partnership working for the benefit of Haringey's parks and greenspace users.

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## Benefits

Engaged, informed, and supported communities have a greater sense of ownership of their parks and greenspaces. This sense of ownership improves the facilities and wider park environment as conversations between groups, communities and the Parks Service are open and based on trust. This results in the outcomes being more likely

to be mutually agreed and beneficial for all, encouraging greater use by a wider range of people.

Many studies have looked at the social, health and environmental benefits of volunteering in parks and greenspace. This was shown in the Space to Thrive report conducted by researchers from Sheffield Hallam University and The University of Sheffield (*Space to thrive: A rapid evidence review of the benefits of parks and green spaces for people and communities 2019, see Additional References no. 1*).

A major benefit of engaging in volunteering is that communities feel empowered and develop a sense of ownership of their public spaces, which in turn helps to build resilience within the parks sector, an area of public service that has had to deal with budget cuts and resulting resource shortages.

People have their own reasons for wanting to volunteer. Some see it as a way to give back to their communities using skills they already have. For others it is an opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people. Other volunteers want to get more physically active, to help improve their mental health, or just have fun! Although reasons for volunteering may be different, generally people who give their time want to make a positive impact in their local park, feel a sense of reward for their efforts, and have fun and engaging projects and activities to take part in.

## Benefits from community engagement

Parks can be one of the best and most effective areas available to us for building a sense of community and improving quality of life. They provide spaces that inspire us to connect and interact over a shared passion and can channel positive community participation by getting diverse people to work together in support of a shared vision.

As a free to use community resource, parks are a great leveller and users from all socio-economic backgrounds can enjoy them and make use of the facilities. Our estimated 65 Friends of Parks groups in Haringey involve and engage thousands of residents and are amongst the strongest voluntary groups in the borough. Their activity helps build community resilience and empowerment.

## Social benefits

Haringey parks and greenspaces offer a great opportunity for residents from our diverse communities to come together and enjoy a shared community space, helping to break down barriers and to aid learning from each other.

“Many report social benefits from their volunteering. Almost nine in ten volunteers say they have met new people. Young people aged 18–24 (77%) and 25–34 (76%) are the age groups most likely to say their volunteering helped them feel less isolated.” (*Time Well Spent: NCVO national survey on volunteering, January 2019, see Additional References no. 2*)

## Health benefits

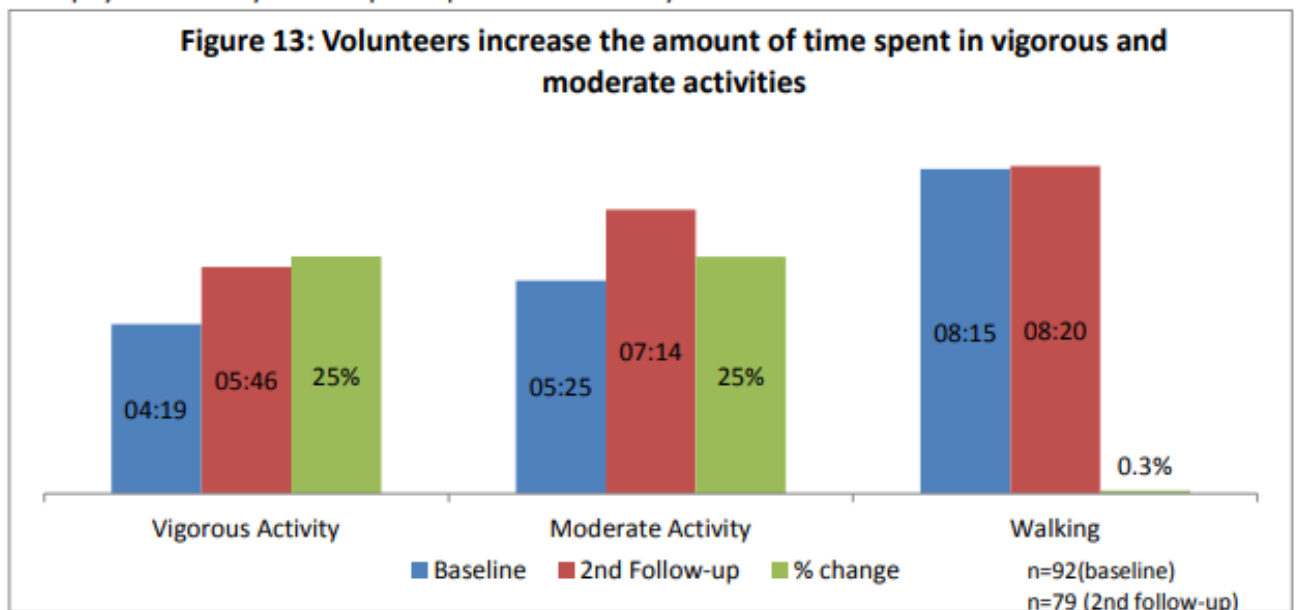
Haringey’s Annual Public Health Report 2019 details the health inequalities and inequities across the borough, some of which can be improved by “having easy access

to safe and enjoyable outdoor spaces...and doing some physical activities” (Haringey’s Public Health Report 2019: Tackling health inequalities for a healthier and fairer Haringey, p.3- Environment, see Additional References no. 3)

There is a wealth of research that supports the health benefits of volunteering. The overall findings recognise that, along with the social benefits of meeting others in your community, that mental and physical health benefits can be substantial if the volunteering activities are rewarding, challenging and well supported.

“Over three-quarters (77%) of volunteers agreed that volunteering had improved their mental health and wellbeing. This compares with just over half (53%) who agreed their physical health had improved” (Time Well Spent: NCVO national survey on volunteering, January 2019, see Additional References no. 2)

On average, volunteers spent 50% more time engaged in vigorous and moderate activities over a week at the end of the three month study period when compared with the time spent at the start of the study period. Volunteers were spending a little more time walking too. Nine out of ten attribute their physical activity level to participation in Green Gym.



The Conservation Volunteers: Green Gym National Evaluation, 2016, p 21 (See Additional References no. 4)

## Environmental Benefits

Parks and greenspaces are vital to supporting biodiversity. The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for parks and greenspaces will provide details of how improvements can be made to help support existing, and develop more, habitats and species.

Volunteers, especially from Friends groups and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), play an important role in ensuring that biodiversity is supported. Many activities are

centred around the creation of new habitats, such as bird and bat boxes, planting, caring for native species and campaigning for wild areas.

TCV are a major delivery partner in this area, supporting the Council to develop nature conservation volunteering opportunities across a variety of parks and greenspaces in Haringey.

## Empowering Communities

Parks and greenspaces are key community resources. They are available for a wide variety of volunteer and community activities, from litter picking with a handful of volunteers, to more involved activities such as community events with dozens of volunteers and more intricate planning.

The Council supports communities and groups to expand their reach and volunteering opportunities through providing facilities, resources and buildings, to use as hubs and bases, in parks and greenspaces. This helps to raise the profile of these communities and groups, and the role of volunteering as part of the parks and greenspace experience. Moving forward, we will seek to support other opportunities to engage residents in volunteering in the community, including adopting street trees and the installation of community planters in suitable locations on the public highway.

Better support of the volunteering process from the Council will help to further the existing relationships with groups, as well as open up the opportunity to volunteer for others.

## Building resilience

Identifying the assets, opportunities and strengths within the community will help the Council to focus resources on enabling park users to achieve and decide their own outcomes, seeing people as the answer rather than trying to fix everything for them. Engaged and empowered park users can feel a greater sense of ownership of their local parks and greenspaces, and a stronger connection to their community.

A Community & Partnerships Engagement Officer will help to facilitate this community development, giving a voice to seldom heard groups and current park groups, supporting them as active users rather than as passive consumers. This approach will ensure that the Council focusses on the quality of its Parks Service, as it will support improvements agreed through collaborative working with park groups and communities who have grassroots knowledge, vital to achieving the things that people know their places need.

Continuing to identify Council assets, such as buildings in parks, that can be used by third sector groups and organisations to support their work, will help to build their resilience and volunteer base. Empowering grassroots organisations, making them more visible and accessible in parks and greenspaces, will enable communities to engage directly in making their neighbourhoods better places to live.



# Current engagement in Haringey's parks and greenspaces

In previous years, the development of Haringey's Community Engagement Framework gave guidance on best practice with the 'You said, we did' approach and the principles still hold true:

- Work in partnership to join up our engagement activities.
- Engage when it will make a difference.
- Be clear about what we are asking.
- Be inclusive and aim to engage with all communities.
- Communicate the results of engagement activity.
- Build capacity of communities to take part in engagement activities.

The Parks Service currently engages and consults with key stakeholders, including Friends of Parks groups, residents associations and internal colleagues, when planning or proposing improvements to parks and greenspaces.

Spotlight meetings are an interactive way that the Parks Service engages with stakeholders. These take place while a Park's Zonal Officer carries out an inspection of the park and gives stakeholders an opportunity to raise questions about planned repairs, improvements and concerns as the inspection takes place.

Bi-monthly meetings of the Haringey Friends of Parks Forum are also attended by Parks Service officers, usually senior managers, giving the Forum a platform to speak directly to the service and hear first-hand about improvements and changes to the service.

The Council also supports the activities of voluntary groups through provision of resources that support their own community engagement activities, such as: litter pickers, waste bags, waste collection, woodchip, access to notice boards, waiving event fees for small community events and rental for banner space on park railings.

Another example of how the Parks Service is engaging with communities is through the provision of parks buildings with community leases for third sector organisations and charities such as:

- Wolves Lane Centre, N22. Home to the Wolves Lane Consortium, offering training and volunteering across a range of horticultural disciplines through social enterprise. <https://www.wolveslane.org/>
- Lordship Rec Eco-Hub (Lordship Hub), Lordship Recreation Ground, N17. The base for the Friends of Lordship Rec and the Lordship Rec Eco-Hub Co-op. They manage the award-winning Passive Haus building which also has a community café and rooms for hiring. It is run by volunteers and paid staff. <https://lordshiphub.org.uk/>
- Edible Landscapes London, Finsbury Park, N4. This organisation manages a space to show how sustainable permaculture techniques can be used to grow fruit and vegetables. <https://ediblelandscapeslondon.org.uk/>

Most recently, we have begun to develop new stakeholder groups to help inform projects and policies such as the Accessibility Steering Group for the Changing Places toilet in Finsbury Park, which comprises of representatives from disability action groups in Haringey: The SEND Parents Group, Haringey Wheelchair Users Group, Haringey over 50's Forum and accessible activity group Pedal Power, along with internal colleagues from Adult Services and Council Members.

We are also exploring the use of Manor Lodge in Finsbury Park to be used by the Museum of Homelessness as a base for their programme of activities to tackle homelessness and housing inequality through research, events, workshops, campaigns, and exhibitions. <https://museumofhomelessness.org/>



*Finsbury Park Changing Place Toilet being opened by users and Councillor Hearn*

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## Current volunteering in Haringey's parks and greenspaces

The 2019 survey of Friends groups with Haringey Friends of Parks Forum (Appendix 1) shows the important role that Friends groups play, and the benefits of working with and supporting them. This is backed up by the minuted discussions with Council officers at the bi-monthly Friends Forum meeting. Although every site and every group have their own character, there are some common activities. Friends groups main activities which help to achieve the aims identified in this plan include:

### **Litter picking**

- Taking an active and, sometimes, leading role in tackling litter and helping raise awareness about the effects of litter on biodiversity and natural areas.
- Promoting recycling to help combat the climate emergency.

### **Community Events**

- Grassroots events promoting awareness of an issue effecting the park (e.g. wildlife, youth sports, rivers and water bodies), or supporting and encouraging the cultural diversity within the immediate community through music, arts and food.

### **Planting**

- Increasing, managing, and maintaining the biodiversity in parks and greenspaces.

### **Promotion and news**

- Managing parks notice boards, e-lists, websites and social media.

### **Development**

- Discussing and proposing ideas and projects to improve a site and develop a vision for its future.

### **Liaison**

- Liaising with staff and managers regarding maintenance and repairs, anti-social behaviour etc.
- Linking up with local stakeholders e.g. sports teams, adjacent schools, site café, nearby residents association

### **Fundraising**

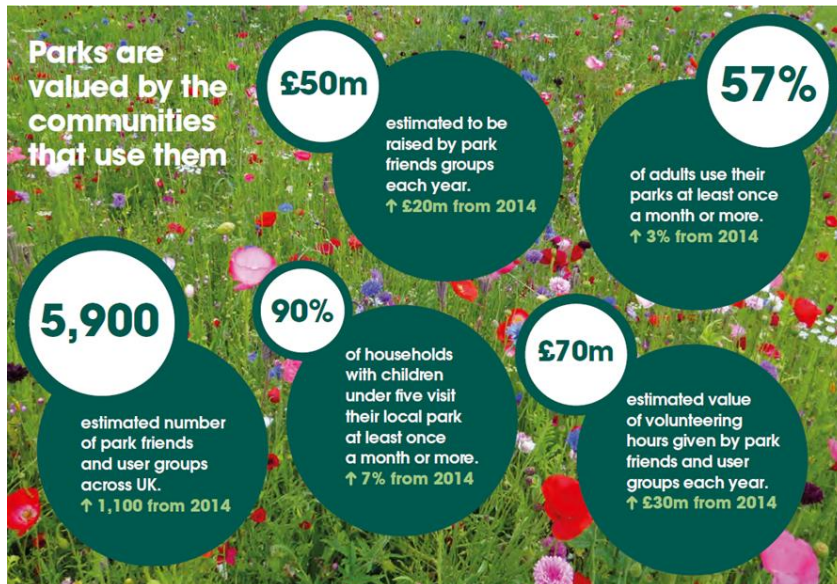
- Applying for funding from the Council and a range of other grant giving organisations that make it possible for Friends to carry out many of the above activities.

Within the Friends 2019 survey, the groups identified that they would like more Council resource to support them with their administration and fundraising capacity, as well as better and more direct communications with the Parks Service. In response to this the Parks Service introduced two new posts to support engagement and volunteering in parks and greenspaces.

Haringey has a very strong and well-established Friends network that has played a significant role in helping to establish the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, the umbrella organisation for the 7,000 local Friends groups throughout the UK.

The Friends of Lordship Recreation Ground (FLR) have also established the Parks Community UK platform (*see Additional References no. 5*) as a subsidiary of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces. Parks Community UK received NESTA Lottery funding to develop and share good practice, case studies and advice guides for Community Empowerment and Co-Management of greenspace between Friends groups and local authorities. This was based upon the successful working

relationship they developed with the Council for the regeneration of Lordship Recreation Ground, completed in 2012. One of the outputs from the NESTA project was a 'Ladder of Involvement' to help Friends groups identify their current relationship with their local authority's Parks Service (see *Additional References no. 8*).



The State of UK  
Parks: Heritage  
Lottery Fund  
report 2016

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## Parks and Leisure Service teams

The Parks and Leisure Service comprises of a number of teams and each has a role in supporting community engagement and volunteering:

### Parks Development Team

The Parks Development Team is made up of a Project Team and Zonal Team. The Project Team are responsible for project management associated with developing and delivering capital projects, such as the instillation of new play areas and sports courts. The Zonal Team are the primary contact to liaise with key stakeholders about plans and concerns, and they ensure management plans are prepared, submitted and adhered to. The Zonal Team are also responsible for ensuring hard assets in parks, such as paths, fences, bins and benches, are regularly inspected and repaired.

### Park Operations Team

The Park Operations Team deals with the day-to-day horticultural maintenance of all our parks and greenspaces. They also manage and organise all the litter and waste clearance. They are the front-line staff and are often approached by members of the public and members of the Friends of Parks groups for support. They are key to providing on the ground support when working with large corporate volunteer groups or waste collections after volunteer led litter picks and horticulture sessions.

## Active Communities Team

The Active Communities Team oversee and develop partnerships with physical activity and sports provider organisations and produce a framework for physical activity, sports and play improvements based on evaluated need. Their aim is to find ways to encourage people to lead more active lives, particularly those from seldom heard groups. They regularly work closely with small local physical activity and sports providers to support the work they are doing and organise a programme of holiday activities for young people.

## Events and Partnerships Team

The Events and Partnerships team are responsible for managing the booking of parks for all types of events, from the small community led ones to the large music and performance events. They also coordinate the Green Flag inspections with Keep Britain Tidy and liaise regularly with Friends groups and stakeholders on the usage of parks and greenspaces. This team also manages the People Need Parks small grants, which funds individuals and groups can apply to deliver a range of events and activities. This may include community planting and cultural events.

The Community & Partnerships Engagement Officer and the Parks & Greenspace Volunteering Officer are part of this team. The Community & Partnerships Engagement Officer is responsible for carrying out innovative and inclusive engagement which builds capacity and fosters long-term engagement in the parks and leisure programme. The Parks & Greenspace Volunteering Officer coordinates the development and delivery of an inclusive borough-wide volunteering programme, helping to shape, create and maintain parks and greenspaces to meet the needs of all communities.

## Arboriculture and Nature Conservation

The Arboriculture and Nature Conservation team are responsible for all the trees in the borough, with a focus on trees in parks and greenspaces, highways and schools. This includes managing inspections, maintenance, felling, planting and care. They are looking at furthering the volunteer involvement of residents in the planting, maintenance and care of street trees.

Part of their team focuses on nature conservation, which includes increasing and managing biodiversity across the borough and supporting the work of Friends of Parks groups and stakeholders to do the same. The development of the Biodiversity Action Plan is part of their remit as is managing the partnership with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV). TCV work with us to create a programme of volunteer opportunities within nature reserves and natural areas across the borough, they also offer training, education and technical input.

# Haringey's policies and plans

## Building a fairer, greener borough – Haringey Labour Manifesto 2022-26

At the local elections in May 2022, the Council's ambition and priorities were based on putting residents at the heart of everything the Council does. Subsequently, the Council worked with residents to develop the Haringey Local Deal. Through the Haringey Local Deal, the Council will seek to empower communities to make change, putting local people at the forefront of decision-making. The Community Engagement and Volunteering Plan will support the delivery of the Haringey Local Deal and in turn the manifesto commitments.

The Parks and Greenspaces Strategy and its supporting plans, policies and standards will support the Corporate Delivery Plan in the following ways:-

Theme 1: Resident experience, collaboration, and participation

High Level Outcome 1 - Positive Resident experience

High Level Outcome 2 – Inclusive Public Participation

High Level Outcome 3 – Enabling Community Collaboration

High Level Outcome 4 – Developing Young Voice

Theme 2: Responding to the Climate Emergency

High Level Outcome 1 – A greener and climate resilient Haringey

High Level Outcome 2 – A just transition

High Level Outcome 3 – A low carbon place

High Level Outcome 4 – Growing the Circular Economy and Making Better Use of Resources

Theme 3: Children and young people

High Level Outcome 2 – Happy Childhoods

Theme 4: Adults, health & welfare

High Level Outcome 1 – Healthy and Fulfilling Lives

Theme 6: Safer borough

High Level Outcome 1 – A Safer Borough - A borough where all residents and visitors feel safe and are safe.

Theme 7: Culturally rich borough

High Level Outcome 1 – Haringey will be a place where arts, culture and heritage is fostered, celebrated, and valued, and is woven through everything the council does.

Theme 8: Placemaking and economy

High Level Outcome 4 - Leveraging Social Value

High Level Outcome 5 - Placemaking

Other plans within the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy also support these objectives:

- **The Parks and Greenspaces Water Course and Flood Risk Plan** provides details of opportunities for engaging with park communities on supporting the care and maintenance of local rivers and bodies of water.
- **Biodiversity Action Plan** gives guidance regarding the needs of our local environment and how the Council can help, both as a service but also as a community. It includes opportunities for engaging communities in increasing biodiversity, reducing our carbon footprint, and tackling the climate crisis.
- **Tree and Woodland Management Plan** details the role trees have in shaping our landscape, the positive impact of trees on carbon emissions and scope that communities can engage in boroughwide tree planting.

## Wider policy context

### Haringey

- The Local Plan (in development): <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/local-plan>  
Haringey's dedicated plan for land use policy including parks and greenspaces.
- Equalities Profile for Haringey: <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/local-democracy/about-council/equalities-haringey> These documents present a summary of the characteristics of the borough's population against the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. Along with the Borough Plan Equality Impact Statement (*see Additional References no. 6*), they help the Parks Service to understand the wider context of the inequalities and specific challenges that are faced by people from these protected communities, and their impact on health outcomes across communities and areas of Haringey.
- The Climate Change Action Plan: <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/environment-and-waste/going-green/net-zero-carbon-haringey> This plan covers the approach that the Council intends to take to become a Net Zero Carbon borough by 2041. It received significant community interest and engagement during its development. The document details the impact of higher emissions on our ecosystems and some of the actions the Council can take to reduce these impacts, such as encouraging sustainable travel and offsetting carbon output with street greening and sustainable planting in Parks and Greenspaces.
- The Health and Wellbeing Strategy: <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/health-and-wellbeing-strategy> This document is in draft form at the time of writing, but looks at the facilities that are already available to residents to help improve their health and wellbeing, including being more active.

### Regional

- The London Plan 2021: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan> The London Plan 2021 is the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. It sets out a framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years and the Mayor's vision for Good Growth. While Parks and Greenspaces

feature within the plan in chapter 8 - Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment, it also sets out the vision for building strong and inclusive communities as one of the main principles of the plan. Haringey's Borough Plan is informed by the vision of the London Plan

- Good Parks for London 2020: <https://parksforlondon.org.uk/resource/good-parks-for-london/> This document assesses each London Borough's Parks Service against ten criteria to enable comparison between them. It is a marker for what is working well, helping to improve performance across London's Parks Services.

## National

- Heritage Lottery: The State of our parks: <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/insight/research/state-uk-public-parks-2016>  
This is the second report from Heritage Lottery. It shows a growing deficit between the rising use of parks and the declining resources available to manage them. It is vital that reports like this are considered when planning community engagement as it will help to support requests for additional resources and broaden the understanding of the relationship between the condition of parks and how people use them.
- Improving Access to Greenspace: A new review for 2020: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904439/Improving\\_access\\_to\\_green\\_space\\_2020\\_review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904439/Improving_access_to_green_space_2020_review.pdf)  
This document was produced by Public Health England and looks at the benefits of green space and the associated health outcomes. It also identifies the barriers that some communities face when accessing greenspace and the work they are doing to combat this.

## Advice Guides for Friends Groups - from Parks Community UK

Setting up a Friends group:

<https://parkscommunity.org.uk/starting-a-friends-group/lets-be-friends/>

Making our groups stronger and more diverse:

<https://parkscommunity.org.uk/community-involvement/making-our-groups-stronger-and-more-diverse/>

Improving relationships among user groups sharing a green space:

<https://parkscommunity.org.uk/community-involvement/how-to-user-groups/>

Partnership working between Friends groups and landowners and managers:

<https://parkscommunity.org.uk/park-green-space-management/partnership-working-with-landowners-and-managers/>

What is community empowerment, and how can we make it happen?

<https://parkscommunity.org.uk/community-involvement/what-is-community-empowerment-and-how-can-we-make-it-happen/>

'Better Friends' Strength Checker

<https://parkscommunity.org.uk/betterfriends>



## Key issues and challenges

This section identifies key issues and challenges to be addressed in order to develop community engagement and volunteering in parks and greenspaces. These issues and challenges have been identified from engagement undertaken to help inform this plan and the wider PGSS, as well as by drawing on the wider policy context. The action plan will reflect how we aim to approach these.

### Community engagement issues and challenges

#### **Enablement**

Widespread community engagement and volunteering depends on having a supportive, enablement infrastructure in place at site level and across the borough.

This includes a dedicated community or Friends group at each site committed to generating appropriate and effective volunteering initiatives and opportunities in the long term.

To get the most from their involvement, such groups need an effective and ongoing support infrastructure. This includes:

- peer-to-peer communication, encouragement and sharing of good practice, as provided by the Haringey Friends of Parks Forum.
- regular communication and liaison with the relevant operational, project and management staff through a supportive Parks Service.
- additional expert and capacity support from Parks Service officers and partners such as The Conservation Volunteers (TCV).

#### **Inclusion and diversity**

As mentioned previously, Haringey is a culturally diverse borough, and this can be seen in the usage of our parks and greenspaces. However, there is little targeted engagement with seldom heard communities to understand how they use parks if at all, the barriers they face and what improvements, or what activities might help them to increase their use and engagement in the development of parks and greenspaces.

Research indicates that BAME communities are generally under-represented as users of parks, including in more natural and wilder spaces, and that many greenspaces most often reflect the requirements and preferences of the white community in their design and management, whilst not providing so well for those with different ideals or social needs (*Green Spaces, or White? Weeds, Wildflowers and Whiteness - Dr Bridget Snaith 2016, see Additional References no. 7*).

The Council has historically had infrequent engagement with many local seldom heard communities about them engaging as stakeholders in parks and greenspaces. Parks can be potentially contested spaces, with the demands on their resources coming from several different groups. Often those with the loudest voice or most obvious interest can be heard above others.

The Parks Service is building capacity to support the sort of targeted engagement required to ensure that seldom heard communities are meaningfully included in park development and improvement conversations as key stakeholders.

Our current and main form of engagement is through key stakeholders such as Friends of Parks groups, but the Council acknowledge that these groups, and indeed our own Parks staff, could be more representative of our diverse communities, in terms of factors such as age, ethnicity and socio-economic background.

Many Friends groups try hard to attract a representative membership, such as through the development of social media and building relationships with local stakeholder and user groups, but can be challenged by a lack of time and capacity to target seldom heard communities as they are voluntary groups themselves. Nevertheless, both within Haringey and at a regional and national level, Friends groups are now increasingly exploring how to involve a wider profile of people in their group.

Currently, the Council does not have a clear and meaningful plan detailing our approach to targeted, active engagement with park users and seldom heard from communities. This will be developed as a key action.

### **Budgets and resources**

Each of the Friends groups have an identified officer from the Parks Development Team who they have direct contact with. They are also invited to spotlight inspections with officers to engage with the programme of repairs and improvements.

The introduction of the two new roles, a Community Engagement & Partnerships Officer and a Parks & Greenspace Volunteering Officer, enables the Council to focus resources on engaging with seldom heard groups. This will help the Council to better understand the needs of those communities within our parks and greenspaces, to propose changes in the design, management and activation of our parks, and to create a toolbox of resources to help strengthen existing and support emerging groups and partnerships. Additional resources are needed to provide further targeted activities, aimed at seldom heard groups and those most in need of improving their health outcomes, and supporting the continued growth of stakeholder groups interested in increasing biodiversity, natural areas and community food growing projects.

### **Culture Change**

It will be important to provide a programme of training on inclusion and engagement, for staff and stakeholders, to start the behaviour change needed to ensure the changes made to the service are fundamental and long lasting. The new posts will also enable investigation and application for matched funding to support targeted engagement.

### **How parks are used and by whom**

The usage of parks is changing. A factor that has impacted significantly on this change has been Covid 19 and the subsequent lockdowns which resulted in the usage, public profile and appreciation of parks greatly increasing. Resources during lockdown were focused on keeping parks and greenspaces safe and open for daily exercise and

socialising. This highlighted the importance of better investigating, understanding and providing for the needs of seldom heard communities. The Council does not currently have reliable and consistent parks usage data. This is something that will be developed.

Parks can sometimes be contested spaces. The use and behaviour of different groups can be off putting or unappreciated by other users. Feedback from our online survey mentions usage associated with the consumption of drugs and alcohol, riding bikes and scooters, the presence of large groups, people playing music and dogs in parks as usages that are enjoyed by some users and off-putting for others. Tackling these potential conflicts can be very challenging and require engagement with and support from a range of stakeholders including Friends of Parks groups, Parks Service staff, seldom heard groups and from the Council's Communications and Enforcement services.

In addition, some engagement activities may not be suitable for all sites, such as Nature Reserves and SINC's. It is important that our community engagement and volunteering opportunities take this into account.

## Volunteering issues and challenges

Volunteering plays an important role in the improvement and development of parks and greenspaces. A 2019 survey of the Haringey's Friends of Parks Forum (*Appendix 1*) revealed that an estimated 45,000 volunteer hours were spent improving parks and greenspaces, which convert to the equivalent of approximately £600,000 in-kind value. The same survey revealed several issues and challenges to volunteering for these groups and on a wider scale. Other than this survey in 2019, there is currently no regular method for collecting this type of information from Haringey Friends of Parks groups on a regular basis.

TCV collect data from the sessions that they lead across the borough. For the period between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020:

- 206 conservation volunteering sessions were run by TCV Haringey
- 1,789 volunteers attended those sessions.
- 90 school sessions were run by TCV Haringey.

In addition, many Friends groups fundraise and apply for grants for improvements to park features and facilities, or for activities. This brings in much needed extra resources that the Council is unable to access or manage. National Heritage Lottery Fund research in 2016 estimated that Friends groups nationally raised over £70m per year this way, around £12,000 per group at that time – which would equate to around £600,000 per year in Haringey. This community volunteering effort needs to be encouraged, supported, and celebrated.

Many groups find getting started to be one of the barriers to engaging in parks and greenspaces. Creating a clear route to get involved in a park or greenspace will help ensure that groups start with the good understanding of roles and responsibilities, as well as setting out aims and objectives. More established groups need an

understanding of their needs to support their growth, along with clear communication routes.

Another barrier to engagement can be socio-economic inequality, which impacts on access to childcare and capacity to engage in unpaid activity. While volunteers cannot be paid, identifying incentives could potentially help in overcoming some of these barriers. This could include providing knowledge and skill development, and signposting to formal training and paid work opportunities.

Time limitations are a further barrier to engagement; people will have different times and days they are available (such as retired vs full-time employed people), and people will have differing amounts of time they can commit to volunteering (some will prefer one-off volunteering to longer term commitments). The Council will need to be mindful of this when planning their activities.

Friends groups often draw participants from a fairly narrow range of residents who tend to be older and from the white community. Groups, and the National Federation of Parks and Greenspaces, are increasingly prioritising how to include a wider profile of people.

Recently, NFGPS added this study, Ethnic Minority Inclusion and Participation in Urban Greenspace: Good Practices of UK Friends Groups, to their list of resources as a tool to help support groups in broadening their membership. [Ethnic Minority Inclusion and Participation in Urban Greenspace: Good Practices of UK Friends Groups | Birmingham Open Spaces Forum \(bosf.org.uk\)](#).

Within Haringey, the Friends of parks Forum has established a local group to help develop inclusion amongst groups.

## **Communication**

While the current Parks Development Officer roles have helped to create clearer communication routes for Friends groups and other interested parties, there remains some misunderstanding and confusion about which team in the Parks Service deals with which issues. This leads to delays in replying or taking action, and subsequently the relationship between the voluntary group and the Parks Service can become strained.

There is no formal agreement or understanding with the Park Service. This adds to the pressures on the service to accommodate the needs of the groups and for the groups to understand their role within the parks. The development of a Memorandum of Understanding (*see draft version in Appendix 3*) is intended to help to define the roles and responsibilities of the Council and voluntary organisations.

## **Developing Corporate Volunteering**

The Council does not currently have the resources in the Parks Service to support regular Corporate Volunteering, which usually brings funding and groups of people that can take on larger projects such as tree planting, mulching, and watering. This means the Council misses out on providing impactful improvements and potentially a source of income.

Corporate volunteer groups are also sometimes able to offer specialist support and training, which could upskill Friends or other voluntary groups.

A strong Friends of Parks group may be able to support working with corporate volunteers. For example, the Friends of Lordship Rec have a 5-year Memorandum of Understanding agreement with Trees for Cities (TfC) to hold corporate volunteering sessions in the park. The Friends get some payment from TfC for preparing and being present during each session, but TfC undertake the supervision of the extra volunteers.

Dedicated resource is needed to pursue and build relationships with potential corporate volunteers. Projects will need to be identified and costed to incorporate any resource needed to support the organisation and logistics. The costing should be included in the offer to corporate volunteers to ensure the projects have a positive financial outcome for the Parks Service.

## **Resources**

Without a clear idea of the type and amount of volunteering opportunities in parks and greenspaces, or the support systems needed for them to be completed, it will be increasingly difficult to engage any communities, including seldom heard groups, in a meaningful and long-term way.

Further investigation and the development of a tool kit to enable groups to record and report back on the work that they are doing, as well as their aspirations for future development, will help to build a clearer picture of the resources and support needed from the Council. Friends of Parks groups are autonomous stakeholders. The Council seeks to facilitate a positive dialogue so that groups can bring their own ideas forward. Where park Management Plans exist, these are the best mechanism to highlight the tasks and works that are needed in parks and greenspaces, including those that could be carried out by volunteers.

## **Opportunities**

The challenges that the Council faces can be met by identifying the opportunities to make real and lasting changes, such as:

- engaging Haringey's diverse communities in park activities by raising awareness of activities, including volunteer opportunities, and producing marketing material (online and printed) which represents the diverse communities of Haringey.
- developing a system for capturing and sharing volunteer input data between the Council, partners, stakeholders and park groups.
- developing a structured programme of engagement with residents, organisations, and community groups including young people, older people, faith groups, disabled people, schools and colleges, and Friends of Parks groups. There will be a specific focus and priority on seldom heard groups and those that rarely use parks.
- expanding the role of TCV so they can provide greater opportunities for volunteering, training and education, and the management of nature reserves and wild areas, to support the need for better managed and increased biodiversity.

- developing a training offer to volunteer groups to help them to expand their base, increase their output and reach, and to identify funding streams to support the work they do.
- expanding the offer of doorstep volunteering through working with partners to offer more opportunities for parklets, street planting and greening projects.
- investment in resources that will help to supply colleagues, partners and groups with plants and trees for greening projects, such as the nursery at Finsbury Park
- developing a programme of meaningful engagement activities focused on seldom heard groups.
- supporting the emergence of greenspace champions from seldom heard communities.
- organising events that celebrate the role of volunteers in parks and greenspaces, including those that focus on inclusion from seldom heard groups and engage with both park users and non-users.
- Nurturing existing networks, and developing new networks and partnerships, that provide a range of innovative and creative engagement opportunities.
- identifying funding streams and opportunities to increase income through partnership working e.g., Public Health programmes, Corporate Volunteering, facility hire etc.
- increasing investment across the Parks and Leisure Teams so they are better resourced to fulfil the demand for green, safe, and accessible parks and greenspaces.

These opportunities have been informed by consultation with residents.

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## Partners

The Council already has several formal partnerships with organisations which support volunteering in Haringey. The Council also work with other Council departments to provide volunteering opportunities to their customers and clients. The Council want to build on these relationships and use these informal agreements to work with Friends groups and continue enhancing parks and greenspaces.

The Council have also identified new potential partnerships which will help to achieve the aims and objectives set out in this plan.

### Current partners

#### **Friends of Parks Groups**

An estimated 65 voluntary groups that have formed to support and champion parks and greenspaces across Haringey are currently active, from large district parks such as Finsbury Park, Lordship Recreation Ground and Queens Wood, to smaller local parks and gardens such as Nightingale Gardens, Palace Gates planters and Albany

Crescent. The groups and Council representatives meet bi-monthly through the Haringey Friends of Parks Forum.

### **The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)**

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) Haringey are based at Railway Fields in Harringay Ward. They are the local branch of a national charity that has been working with volunteers for over 60 years. They have an inclusive approach to their volunteering activities and work with children and adults from all backgrounds. They have a formal agreement with the Council to manage and maintain areas of nature conservation in the borough and to support some Friends groups in their parks.

They run sessions in various parks and greenspaces across the borough, including The Woodland and Spinney at Lordship Rec, Tunnel Gardens, Queens Wood, The Paddock, The Parkland Walk, Palace Gates Embankment and Railway Fields. Volunteers can join for a few hours and be supported to take part in a manual session, helping to improve an area of special interest for nature conservation. Full details are on their website.

TCV work with local schools and offer site visits to their conservation site at Railway Fields, where the children can enjoy a practical experience in a natural environment.

TCV also provide specialist training and advice to Friends groups.

### **Youth Offending Team- Reparation (YOS)**

The Youth Offending team is a multidisciplinary team of people who are responsible for the supervision of young people in custody and in the community, from police officers to outreach workers to parents. They aim to stop young people reoffending and the reparation programme helps with this aim. Reparation is similar to Community Payback, but the session may only see one or two young people engaged at a time.

Currently the team have regular sessions at four parks throughout the week: Bruce Castle Park, Downhills Park, Chapmans Green and Wood Green Crown Court. They coordinate with the Park Operations staff to agree a range of work and access to tools and resources.

On speaking with the Youth Offending team, they would like to have access to more opportunities across the borough and have a direct line of communication with the Park Development Team to enable them to widen their offer to the young people they work with.

## **Emerging partners**

### **Parks Accessibility Steering Group**

This group has come together primarily to discuss and guide the installation of Changing Places facilities in some of our district parks. Members include parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), the Haringey Wheelchair Users Forum, Pedal Power (an accessible bike organisation) and

Disability Action Haringey. They have provided invaluable expertise and insight about the needs of disabled people.

### **Public Health**

Over the past year, the Parks Service has been working with colleagues in the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and in Adult Services and Public Health, on the “Parks and Ageing Well” Pilot. The Pilot is aimed at finding out and understanding the barriers that older people face when thinking about facilities in parks that support their physical and mental wellbeing. This initial work has shown that there is significant interdependence across the services, in terms of needing to improve reach into the seldom heard communities and understanding their needs.

### **Bridge Renewal Trust**

The Bridge Renewal Trust is a charity based in Chestnuts Community Centre, Tottenham. Their mission is to deliver programmes and projects which enable people to live healthier, long and fulfilling lives, thus playing a part in working towards reducing health inequalities and building stronger communities.

They welcome the partnership approach adopted in the Borough Plan and are committed to working collaboratively to improve the health and wellbeing of Haringey residents through the delivery of the following services:

- Strategic Partner Services (Community Impact Haringey) - a vibrant, inclusive, viable and self-sufficient voluntary and community sector well placed to meet the needs of local people.
- Volunteer Centre Haringey - promoting good volunteering practice and matching volunteers and organisations together.

Bridge Renewal also organise an annual expo to bring together voluntary organisations and showcase their work. It includes a Haringey Community Impacts Award ceremony with various categories to celebrate and recognise inspiring people, projects and initiatives from the community. There is currently no award category specific to Friends of Parks or other volunteer groups in parks and greenspaces.

The Bridge Renewal Trust welcome the opportunity to support Friends groups and the Friends Forum with volunteering activities in parks and greenspaces, and can offer informed support about governance, administration, and information regarding funding applications and finance management for groups.

### **Trees for Streets**

Trees for Streets is a not-for-profit enterprise, set up by the charity Trees for Cities and the civic innovator Start with Local. It's supported by the Mayor of London and funded by the City Bridge Trust. In Haringey, Trees for Streets works with the Council to support residents to sponsor street trees and celebration trees in parks. Trees for Streets have an ambition to plant ¼ million street trees over the next ten years. A new online portal for sponsorship has been launched to make it easier for residents to sponsor a tree. Sponsors are encouraged to help maintain the tree by watering it



regularly for a reduced sponsorship cost. Trees for Streets are also able to directly fund some tree planting in the borough through national funding agreements.

### **Probation Services - Community Payback (PSCP)**

Community Payback is a facility used by the Probation Services for offenders to complete the hours they have been given as part of their sentence. It gives them the opportunity to contribute to their communities in a constructive way, for example they may pick litter, remove graffiti, redecorate public spaces and buildings, or clear waste land. They will always be supervised by a member of the Probation Services. The Probation Services can provide some of their own tools or equipment to undertake these tasks.

### **Tree Wardens**

The Tree Warden initiative is something that the Council will revisit as it was previously successful in engaging and supporting resident led groups, such as residents associations and Neighbourhood Watch schemes, to take on some responsibilities for tree identification, inspection and care.

### **Street Planters and Highways**

Street planting is something that has seen a surge across London, and the Council have also seen instances across Haringey. The Highways Team have identified opportunities for engaging with communities and have a draft plan for taking this forward. They have been working with the Regeneration Teams on several projects supported through GLA funding, such as the Gladstone Avenue pocket park and the Mayes Road Linear Park. There are many Residents Associations throughout Haringey who are supportive of improving their local street scene. They can be contacted through the Haringey Federation of Residents Associations.



# Action Plan

The following Action Plan uses the three aims from the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy to inform how best these can be achieved.

Aim	Objective	Issue/Challenge	Action	Resource
<b>Inclusion</b>	To work cooperatively with all park users and stakeholders, with targeted engagement with seldom heard communities.	Identify and engage with communities, including Friends groups and seldom heard communities.	Identify groups and organisations to partner with which already have relationships with seldom heard communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community &amp; Partnerships Engagement Officer</li> <li>- Parks &amp; Greenspace Volunteering Officer</li> <li>- Zonal Officers</li> <li>- Park Development Team</li> <li>- Operational Team</li> </ul>
			Identify the barriers communities most commonly face when attempting to engage.	
			Develop a framework setting out our approach for proactive and purposeful engagement.	
			Develop a plan with identified actions and targets to support community engagement and volunteering in parks and greenspaces, and development of green links.	
		Formalise the relationship between Friends of Parks / volunteer groups and the Parks Service.	Co-produce a Memorandum of Understanding, or similar guiding document, to bring together the already supportive relationship.	

Aim	Objective	Issue/Challenge	Action	Resource
		Identify and reduce areas of potential concern and conflict between different user groups in parks and greenspaces.	Work with partners to develop a programme of activity to encourage behaviour change and buy in from internal and external stakeholders.	
<b>Inclusion</b>	Expand on the range of groups that contribute to the design, management, marketing, usage and volunteering in parks and greenspaces by developing regular and ongoing engagement with BAME, faith, younger, older, disabled, women and girls, and LGBT communities.	Build on present understanding of Haringey's diverse groups and communities, including their needs and barriers to engagement.	<p>Identify seldom heard groups and communities and reach out to listen and learn.</p> <p>Support the emergence of greenspace champions from seldom heard communities.</p> <p>Nurture existing networks and develop new networks, partnerships and reference groups which provide a range of innovative and creative engagement opportunities and improve co-productive working with seldom heard groups.</p> <p>Continue to identify Council assets, such as buildings in parks, that can be used by grassroots organisations,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community &amp; Partnerships Engagement Officer</li> <li>- Parks &amp; Greenspace Volunteering Officer</li> <li>- Zonal Officers</li> <li>- Operational Team</li> </ul>

Aim	Objective	Issue/Challenge	Action	Resource
			making them more visible and accessible in parks and greenspaces.	
		Actively widen our engagement with seldom heard communities and champion volunteering.	Develop a program of events and activities which celebrate volunteering, including a focus on reaching seldom heard communities.	
<b>Inclusion</b>	To build the resilience and capacity of new and existing groups to meet the needs of the wider community and park users.	Partners, stakeholders and community groups may struggle to be sustainable, for example through; increasing and diversifying their membership, fundraising, promoting their activities and maintaining and developing their skills sets.	<p>Signpost to fundraising and capacity-building support.</p> <p>Develop a Volunteer Toolkit.</p> <p>Building and strengthening partnerships between groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community &amp; Partnerships Engagement Officer</li> <li>- Parks &amp; Greenspace Volunteering Officer</li> <li>- Parks and Leisure</li> <li>- Communications and Marketing Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Service Quality</b>	Improve communications with and between key stakeholders to enable better partnership working for the benefit of Haringey's parks and	Working together to improve communication with the public about our parks, including plans and activities.	Provide more information in parks, and via Council and Friends of Parks group's websites and social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community &amp; Partnerships Engagement Officer</li> <li>- Events &amp; Partnership Team</li> </ul>

Aim	Objective	Issue/Challenge	Action	Resource
	greenspace users.	Working together to improve communication with the public to support behaviour change.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parks Development Team</li> <li>- Projects Team</li> <li>- Leisure Team</li> <li>- Operations Team</li> <li>- Communications and Marketing Officer</li> </ul>
Supporting staff to fully understand the role of Friends groups and how better communications and partnership working supports the Parks and Greenspaces Strategy.		Develop in-house training on improving communications and a shared understanding of the role of Friends Groups.		
Bringing together and disseminating relevant information from across various teams in the Park Service to key partners and the public.		Consult with key partners and seldom heard groups to identify an effective means of sharing updates on Haringey's parks and greenspaces.		
<b>Service Quality</b>	Understand and benchmark current use of Haringey parks	Getting a comprehensive understanding of who does and doesn't use our parks and greenspaces, how people engage, their satisfaction levels and their barriers to access.	Create and disseminate an annual survey which monitors usage, engagement and satisfaction with parks and greenspaces in the borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community and Partnerships Engagement Officer</li> <li>- Parks &amp; Greenspace Volunteering Officer</li> </ul>

Aim	Objective	Issue/Challenge	Action	Resource
<b>Service Quality</b>	Celebrate the achievements of the parks and greenspaces sector.	Friends of Parks groups and other volunteer groups and partners feeling appreciated and valued.	Plan and organise a calendar of events, including an annual Parks Summit, which promotes and celebrates community involvement and activity in parks, and recognises achievements across the parks and greenspaces sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parks &amp; Greenspace Volunteering Officer</li> <li>- Community &amp; Partnerships Engagement Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Service Quality</b>	To develop more opportunities for community engagement and volunteering including corporate volunteering and similar schemes which provide social benefit.	Building resilience and capacity of existing groups to meet the needs of the wider community and park users.	Work with Friends of Parks groups, and other volunteering partners and community groups, to develop an improved volunteering and engagement offer through training and other support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community &amp; Partnerships Engagement Officer</li> <li>- Parks &amp; Greenspace Volunteering Officer</li> <li>- Events &amp; Partnership Manager</li> </ul>
			Enable TCV to provide more opportunities for volunteering, engagement, training and education.	
		Finding alternative sources of income and funding to support engagement and volunteering in parks.	Signpost funding opportunities and fundraising support to Friends of Parks groups and other volunteer and community groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community &amp; Partnerships Engagement Officer</li> <li>- Parks &amp; Greenspace</li> </ul>

Aim	Objective	Issue/Challenge	Action	Resource
			Building opportunities to incorporate community engagement and volunteering into Parks and Leisure funding bids.	Volunteering Officer
		Developing the capacity and resources within the Parks and Leisure service to directly deliver community engagement and volunteering opportunities.	Grow, develop and train staff	Workforce Plan
		Recruiting a more diverse operational workforce.	Advertise and promote role opportunities via Friends of Parks groups, other stakeholders, and at recruitment and community events.	
<b>Climate Change</b>	Increasing awareness, engagement, education of Haringey residents, including seldom heard groups, on environmental issues linked with parks and greenspaces.	Needing to develop a better understanding of the barriers people face in engaging with environmental issues.	Identify the barriers communities most commonly face in engaging with environmental issues linked with parks and greenspaces.	- Community & Partnerships Engagement Officer  - Parks & Greenspace Volunteering Officer
			Develop a programme of activities and events which increase access to the natural environment and promote environmental awareness and action.	

Aim	Objective	Issue/Challenge	Action	Resource
<b>Climate Change</b>	Providing information for volunteers to enable them to better contribute towards delivering against Haringey Council's Climate Change Action Plan.	The need for additional support and information about climate change issues, challenges and the means to mitigate them.	To provide more information in parks and via Council and Friends of Parks groups' websites/media which supports the Strategy's priority of mitigating climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community &amp; Partnerships Engagement Officer</li> <li>- Communications and Marketing Officer</li> </ul>



## Additional References

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7. Green Spaces, or White? Weeds, Wildflowers and Whiteness – a slide presentation video at Haringey Parks Summit 2022, by Dr Bridget Snaith -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0sYSi5\\_laI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0sYSi5_laI)
8. Ladder of Involvement for Friends groups from Parks Community UK -  
[Are you a key part of the decision-making process for your green space? Parks Community UK](#)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1.

### Volunteering in Parks

#### **The picture of volunteering in Haringey Parks and Green Spaces**

As part of the information gathering for this plan a survey was sent out to the Haringey Friends of Parks Forum. There were fifteen questions which covered governance, membership, offer and need. Twenty-one groups filled in the survey, of that twenty-one, twelve were groups from a park or green space with a Green Flag. The results of the survey are reproduced as an appendix.

The majority of groups are constituted, which helps to give a clear message that they have a mandate to represent parks users and apply for external funding.

Three quarters of the groups have a website and most use Facebook and /or Twitter as additional forms of communication to members and the wider community. Four groups also use WhatsApp and Instagram. But under half regularly update social media platforms.

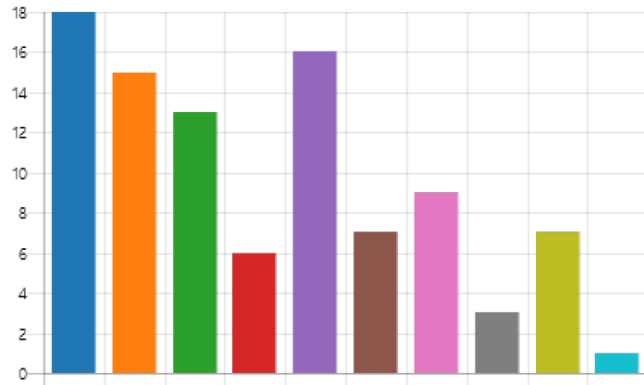
Eleven of the groups have action plans.

Seventeen of the groups have a membership between 1-200, the majority of those have between 1-50 members. The remaining four groups have 200 - 500, or a greater number. The membership results contrast greatly when looking at the number of active members within the groups. Eight groups have 1-10 active members, twelve groups have 11-30 active members, with only one group reporting that they have more than 30 active members.

The following charts are reproduced here as the information they contain is easier to discuss with the results present. These questions had the option to select multiple answers.

*What types of volunteering activity does your group focus on?*

Litter picking	18
Planting	15
Increasing natural/wildlife areas	13
Ponds/Waterways	6
Community Events	16
Group Administration	7
Fundraising	9
Sports/Physical Activities	3
Other	7
Other	1



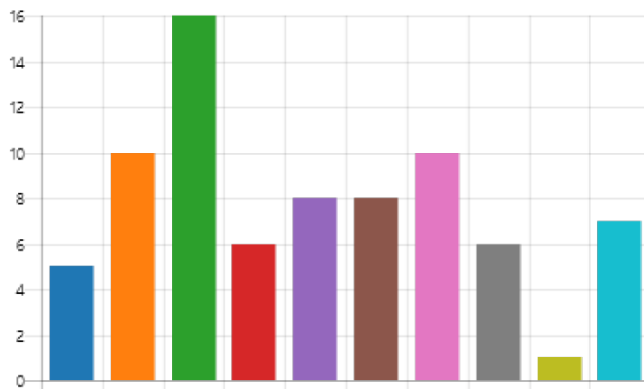
The majority of groups organise litter picking, community events, planting and increasing natural/wildlife areas. Half the groups fundraise and slightly less than half do a considerable amount of administration.

Six groups have pond/waterways that they use to offer volunteering and three take part in sports/physical activities as part of their volunteering.

The option of “other” had additional comments including Promotion, raising awareness of a space, liaising with the Council, therapeutic gardening, working with local schools and colleagues, community food growing, bee keeping, art projects.

*What type of volunteering activities would your group like to develop?*

Litter picking	5
Planting	10
Increasing natural/wildlife areas	16
Ponds/Waterways	6
Community Events	8
Group Administration	8
Fundraising	10
Sports/Physical Activities	6
None of the above	1
Other	7



In comparison to the current offer of volunteering in parks and green spaces the results above show significant increases in the Friends groups desire to do more to increase natural/wildlife areas, planting, and fundraising.

“Other” activities that groups identified they would like to increase are indicated below:

*Protect both green spaces and increase biodiversity.*

*More liaison with community groups in the area. Promoting safe streets project. Education and training.*

*Increased use of the Church Tower and increased awareness of the existence of both Tower and Churchyard*

*Turning bowls pavilion into a community hub*

*More activities for families introducing them to the natural environment and wildlife in the park.*

*Improving footpaths*

*Community food growing, Bee keeping, Eco Arts, Cycling, walking, environmental cafe and campaigns up cycling and reuse, books, paint wood and clothes.*

Groups were asked to estimate how many hours volunteering they believe their group does in a 12-month period. Over half the groups estimate they volunteer between 1-500 hours a year, six groups volunteer between 501-1500 hours, with the remaining three groups estimating volunteer hours between 1500 to over 2000.

The groups weren't asked if they keep accurate records of all the volunteering that they do, but if the list of current volunteering, the hours spent and active members are compared, there is a discrepancy that suggests the groups have underestimated their volunteering hours in the main. Further analysis of the results, in discussion with the Friends of Parks groups, are needed to understand if this is the case.

The total economic value of these volunteer hours is estimated to be just under £600,000 for an estimated 45000 hours over the year.

The calculation used in this instance was based on the assumption that half of the hours would be used fulfilling basic manual work in the park or green space and half would be used for either skilled manual or skilled administration work. The current London Living Wage was used to calculate the basic manual wage total and a higher figure of fifteen pounds was used to calculate the skilled manual and administration.

45000 hours divided by 2 equals 22500 hours.

22500 hours multiplied by £10.95 per hour = £224,375 basic manual work

22500 hours multiplied by £15 per hour = £337,500 skilled manual and administration work

Giving an estimated total of £583,875 worth of work in our parks and green spaces.

On the question of funding over half the groups accessed the Small Parks Grant available through the Council. The next largest source of income for the groups is through community events that they organise. Only four groups accessed external

funding listed, with one group receiving funding from four different sources. Six groups did not make any funding applications.

Other sources of funding were from the Tottenham Grammar School Foundation, a local developer, Veolia, subscriptions, and crowdfunding.

The final section of the survey asks questions about further support, what the groups would like support with and other organisations that they would like to or would consider working with.

### **Would you like more information and support from the Council for any of the following areas?**

As can be seen majority of groups would like further information and support on fundraising, increasing natural/wildlife areas and planting, organising community events. The results here basically reflect the answers to the previous question about areas the groups would like to develop.

“Other” answers include:

*Support to develop the pavilion.*

*More information and support from the Council in every area of parks maintenance*

*Training*

*Capturing rainwater for use in the park and toilet access*

*Art*

*Council collaboration is essential.*

*Safety of trees*

*Lights and security, installation of notice boards, cycle path and bike racks for locking bikes, public seating area*

A further question allowing groups to expand on their needs revealed that training, attracting, and retaining volunteers, support with administration and promotion and procuring new facilities were important to many groups. Having a strong connection and commitment from parks staff, particularly the nature conservation officer, was also a common theme.

The following question gave groups the opportunity to give a longer written answer. These can be seen in full in the appendix.

### **What could the Council do to improve the relationship with your group?**

The common theme to these replies was about the level of communication with the Council both at a project officer level and within different departments. Groups recognise there are resource and capacity issues but would like to see more consistent and proactive communications. Many want parks to receive more investment, both in the park and at officer level.

The final three questions were regarding working with outside organisations to deliver projects or for one off volunteer sessions in their park or green space.

Twelve of the groups had worked with organisation like Trees for Cities and Probation services in their park, nine groups had not worked with any other organisations in their park or green space. All twelve groups found working with other organisations to be a positive experience.

Those groups that hadn't worked with other organisations in their park or green space were asked if they would be interested in developing additional support for their space, 8 groups said they would be interested in developing those relationships and seven replied 'maybe'.

### **Next Steps**

The answers to the survey will help to inform the actions for this plan and the action plans for the individual parks. They will also help officers to understand the needs of the Friends groups and how they can best support the growth and resilience of the group, through the provision good communication and opportunities for the group to grow.

### **Communication**

- Clear point of contact- Project Officer roles have helped with this, but there should be a liaison/support officer for the forum.
- Open, honest communication
- More awareness about the role of Friends groups in parks within other departments
- Proactive Councillors and Cabinet members
- Championing the work of the Friends: Improving parks/green spaces, fundraising, community events etc.
- Regular meetings with all Friends groups, not just those with Green Flags
- Management Plans for all parks and green spaces, not just Green Flag parks

### **Needs**

Support with:

- Training and capacity building: admin, funding, safeguarding, risk assessing, project planning. Perhaps through workshops
- Recruiting and retaining new members e.g., young people
- Working with other organisations: corporate groups, schools, TCV
- Finding experts and professional presence e.g., youth service, probation service, school sessions

Other needs:

- Memorandum of Understanding with the Council
- Understanding and visiting other parks and locations to see what is possible.
- Understanding how to work with local schools.
- Codify the priorities for Friends of Parks groups.

### **Appendix 2.**

## Draft Expression of Interest – Shared Spaces Scheme

### Supported/Shared Spaces

### Expression of Interest

Thank you for contacting Haringey Council's Parks Team regarding our Shared Spaces programme.

The Council are hoping to empower residents to take ownership of areas or facilities within parks and greenspaces, with the view that by working together we can have a truly positive impact on our environment.

So, let's get started!

	Name/Description	Nearest postcode
Park Name or location description if not a park		

	Group Name and contact information	Your position in the group
Your group details		

Does your group have a constitution?	Yes	No
Does your group have insurance for the activities that you would like to carry out?	Yes	No

(tick as appropriate)

Tell us about your idea and plans for the park or green space

--

Please send the completed form to [parkprojects@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:parkprojects@haringey.gov.uk) with the subject line Shared Spaces and one of our officers will be in touch soon with information on the next step.

We look forward to working closely with you on this journey!

### Appendix 3.

## Memorandum of Understanding

Between XXXXXXXXXXXX and Haringey Council for the area known as XXXXXXXXXXXX

### **Purpose**

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU) forms the basis of the agreement between XXXXXXXXXXXX and Haringey Council.

The MoU is not a contractual agreement and does not impose any legal obligations on any party. The relationship between the XXXXXXXX and Haringey Council is based on mutual consent and understanding that this is based on a voluntary arrangement.

### **Aim**

This document is designed to enable and empower Friends of Parks groups, Residents Associations and site-specific groups to take on shared responsibility of a park, area within a park or other green space with the Council.

### **Outcome**

To build resilience in the volunteer communities within our parks and green spaces in order to secure their future, increase biodiversity and potentially positively impact on the health and wellbeing of residents using and visiting the spaces.

### **Responsibilities**

XXXXXXXXXX will be responsible for:

1. Providing designs and plans for any proposed work. These can be in the form of a simple sketch, or for more intricate works more detailed designs may be required.
2. Providing an annual action plan of maintenance for the space
3. Providing an annual update regarding the activities of the group/association in the space, including numbers of volunteer hours
4. Having a constitution
5. Ensuring the group has the correct insurance for carrying out the activities planned.
6. Ensuring risk assessments are completed for activities.

XXXXXXXXXX will not be responsible for:



1. Any works that continue to be the remit of the Park Operations team within the park or green space such as: grass cutting, litter, play equipment, paths, furniture, tree felling, hedge trimming, weed maintenance, unless it forms part of the agreed action plan.

Haringey Council will be responsible for:

1. Working collectively with the Friends Group/Residents Association/site specific Group to support the action plan and maintenance of the space.
2. Providing support and guidance to the group when completing risk assessment and other compulsory obligations
3. Providing support to any funding applications the group may make for assistance in developing and/or maintaining the space.
4. Maintaining a clear line of communication including providing the relevant information, conducting joint site visits and/or attending meetings as required
5. Maintaining all areas around and outside of the 'Shared Space' as well as any areas within the space that remain under their remit of work such as: grass cutting, tree felling, hedge trimming, weed maintenance etc.
6. Requiring that any works within the space are within health and safety regulation and do not pose a danger to the general public that will also be using the space and raising any concerns with the group, giving them an opportunity and clear timeline for making any changes or improvements.

Haringey Council will not be responsible for:

1. Maintaining any additional features within the Shared Space unless agreed, or they pose a risk to the Health and Safety of the general public.
2. Providing insurance cover for the activities of the group

### **Communication**

Both parties agree to communicate openly and with the best interests of the 'Shared Space' at heart. They also agree to have open and transparent communications with other key stakeholders that may have a vested interest in the wider park or green space.

### **Ending the MoU**

The MoU may be ended by any party giving a two-month notice period. Notice must be given in writing, including the reasons for the termination.

Signed on behalf of XXXXXXXX \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block capitals \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date    /    /

Signed on behalf of Haringey Council \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block capitals \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date    /    /