



Kneller Gardens

January 2022 – December 2023

Kneller Gardens Management Plan 2022-23: Foreword

Kneller Gardens are a vitally important asset for local people and visitors to the borough. The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames will aspire to maintain and manage the Gardens to the highest standards in accordance with our strategic principles and policies.

This management plan is based on the use of an audit of the Gardens following central government guidance known as PPG 17. This is explained within this document but the approach is based on common sense. We believe that it is important to get the simple things right. Is the green space clean and tidy? Is the grass cut? Are the trees and shrubs well maintained? Is the graffiti removed effectively and quickly?

Working with local communities to deliver the highest quality of service is top priority and it is hoped that this document will provide a framework for continuing and improving dialogue. The site will be maintained appropriately, and the local community will be consulted on any proposed changes or improvements to facilities and infrastructure. In particular, the borough works closely with the Friends of Kneller Gardens who assist in the management of the site. We actively encourage suggestions about all aspects of the park. This plan will be subject to public consultation before the Council determines whether to adopt some or all of its proposals, some of which will then also be subject to planning consent.

Whilst the Council is open to the changing needs of the local community with regards to facilities within any of the borough's parks, the Gardens are long established and are well maintained. Further changes to the Gardens or its facilities are not envisaged. There have been major renovations that are detailed below: these include a major renovation of the pavilion building and the installation of a new playground.

Parks Officers, working closely with colleagues in Continental Landscapes and using a partnership approach, regularly monitor Kneller Gardens. Members of the local community are also encouraged to let us know their impressions about the level of maintenance as well as their ideas for improving the facilities. It is hoped that the resulting observations and ideas will result in continually improving management and maintenance practises, as well as careful consideration of ideas to improve and maintain the Gardens.

The current financial situation will inevitably have a detrimental affect on the resources available to improve and maintain the borough's parks and open spaces. The tightening of available budgets seems likely for the foreseeable future. The borough will continue to work closely with its partners, in this case Continental Landscapes and Friends of Kneller Gardens, to maintain standards. In addition we will need to look for additional ways of funding to maintain and improve the boroughs parks, one of our most valuable assets.

Kneller Gardens lies on the West London Green Chain – a green wildlife corridor of some 30 kilometres in length that extends from Harrow in north London, along Yeading Brook, Duke of Northumberland's Rivers and the Crane, to meet the Thames at Isleworth. This is one of the major green corridors of London and is of great value for wildlife movement as well as a public amenity resource. Its importance as a wildlife corridor was first recognised in planning terms by the West Middlesex Regional Plan in 1924 and it is considered to be one of the major wildlife corridors of London. From 2021 The Crane catchment has been selected as the urban pilot for Thames Water's Smarter Water

Catchments (SWC) initiative. The initiative seeks to add value by encouraging a wide range of partners to collectively deliver solutions to water and open space management issues that yield multiple benefits across a range of themes. Kneller Gardens has been identified as an important node in this initiative.

Kneller Gardens is also close to an area which has been identified as deficient in open space. Analysis shows that Twickenham has a 39% deficiency in district open space because residents are more than 1.2km from a district park. A number of barriers which result in pedestrian severance were identified and these include the A316 and railway lines. The park therefore serves a population of Twickenham, Whitton, and Heathfield. There is also anecdotal evidence that park users come from further afield – Hanworth, St Margaret’s, Sunbury, Teddington, Hounslow, Ashford, Hampton, Isleworth and Feltham.

Kneller Gardens is one of 5 Friendly Parks for All in the borough designed to encourage accesses for people who face barriers to spending time in parks and open spaces. https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/explore_richmonds_parks_and_open_spaces/friendly_parks_for_all

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1 Introduction

1.1 This Management Plan for Kneller Gardens provides guidance for the management and any relevant development of the Gardens. It utilises the methodology outlined in the Government’s Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG 17) in order to audit the state of provision of features and facilities in the Gardens.

The Plan includes an Action Plan, which we aim to achieve within the remit of current budgets. The Plan has been drafted for a broad audience interested in the development of the gardens namely:

- The Friends of Kneller Gardens and borough residents;
- The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE);
- The Parks and Open Spaces Service;
- Other services and departments within the London Borough of Richmond;
- Elected members, ward councillors and portfolio holders;
- National agencies;
- Local businesses;
- Partners and contractors

1.2 The Plan will run from January 2022 to December 2023. An interim progress update will be undertaken in January 2023.

2 National Context

2.1 Parks are managed areas of the green environment providing opportunities for a range of formal and informal leisure, passive and active sport, recreation and play.

2.2 The significance of parks, open space and countryside provision is clear:

- There are an estimated 27,000 public parks in Britain, visited an estimated 2.6bn times each year (Common Select Committee, 2016).
- There is an estimated 85,847 hectares of Publicly accessible green space in Great Britain, 73,400 in England. (*Natural capital accounts containing information about green spaces in urban areas*, Office for National Statistics, August 2019)
- 17.99% of Greater London is designated Public Open Space; with 3.5% Local Parks and Open Spaces & 5.2% Metropolitan Parks (GiGL, 2019).

2.3 It is widely recognised that the provision of high quality ‘public realm’ facilities such as parks can assist in making an area as an attractive place to live and work, and can result in a number of benefits in terms of economic development and regeneration. A local park can also play a big part in promoting healthy living as a place for people to exercise.

2.4 The benefits of safe and accessible parks and open spaces:

Social

- providing safe outdoor areas for all members of the local population
- providing opportunities for community events, voluntary activities and charitable fund raising
- providing easily accessible recreation as an alternative to other more chargeable leisure pursuits
- providing opportunities to improve health and take part in a range of outdoor sports and activities
- providing an educational resource or outdoor classroom for lifelong outdoor learning, within the formal system as well as informally.
- providing a place to cool off and relax during hot summer days
- providing opportunities to engage, participate and even lead for CYP and all ages, and thus reduce risky behaviours and promote positive contributions to society

Economic

- adding value to surrounding property, both commercial and residential, thus increasing local tax revenues for public services
- contributing to attracting visitors, including using parks as venues for events

- encouraging tourism into the area
- helping to create an attractive local image
- helping to reduce social exclusion and its associated costs to society

Environmental

- providing habitats for wildlife as an aid to local biodiversity
- helping to stabilise urban temperatures and humidity
- absorbing pollutants in the air and ground water
- providing opportunities for the recycling of organic materials
- providing opportunities to reduce transport use through the provision of local facilities, and by providing walking and cycling routes through urban areas
- Promoting the 'Slower' ethos of sustainability, local, organic, working together, environmental and responsible.

3 Relationship to Council's Aims and Objectives

The Council recognises that its parks and open spaces contribute to the:

- overall vision and priorities of the Council
- quality of life of local people
- physical, social and economic regeneration of the borough
- greening, attractiveness and biodiversity of the area

Accordingly, this Management Plan and the Parks and Open Spaces Service are guided by and are in agreement with the aims, objectives and principles of the following plans and strategies. These can be found at: www.richmond.gov.uk.

3.1 Richmond's Community Plan 2016-2020

The Community Plan describes the Council's vision for the borough and outlines the steps that will be taken, through partnership working, to achieve this vision. The vision is for a borough where:

- local people are engaged and involved in their communities.
- a vibrant and sustainable community and voluntary sector helps residents play a full role in community life.
- the local character of the environment is protected and development is high quality and compatible with local character.
- our towns and local centres are attractive, viable for businesses and contribute positively to the quality of life of residents and visitors.
- people can live as independently as possible in the local community with good health and wellbeing.

For further details of the Community Plan please visit: www.richmond.gov.uk

3.2 Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2011

Our borough has the largest area of public open space per head of population of any London borough. We have a local and national reputation for quality and leadership in the delivery of excellent parks. To ensure the quality of our parks and open spaces remains at a high level, following public consultation, we developed a series of strategic principles by which the parks will be managed:

1. Parks and open spaces will be a sustainable legacy for future generations.

2. Parks and open spaces will continue to define our borough.
3. Parks and opens spaces will enrich the life, health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.
4. The Council will lead in the delivery of excellent Parks and open spaces services.
5. Parks and open spaces will offer positive experiences to all visitors.
6. Through innovation, the future development of Parks and open spaces services will be ensured.
7. Increased community participation in Parks and open spaces will be encouraged and supported.
8. Parks and open spaces will be celebrated as centres of excellence.

3.3 Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Richmond

The main aims of the plan are:

- To conserve and where possible enhance Richmond’s variety of habitats and species, in particular those which are of international or national importance, are in decline locally, are characteristic to Richmond or have particular public appeal, which can raise the profile of biodiversity
- To ensure that Richmond residents become aware of, and are given the opportunity to become involved in conserving and enhancing the biodiversity around them
- To raise awareness and increase stakeholder involvement in maintaining and where possible, enhancing species and habitats of importance

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan can be found online here: https://habitatsandheritage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Biodiversity-Action-Plan-Richmond_compressed.pdf

3.4 Parks Improvements

The Council have a commitment to continued improvement in our Parks and Open Spaces by improving existing infrastructure and developing and installing new facilities. The Council continues to have a cyclical investment programme to ensure that parks and playgrounds are up to standards, this includes £300k a year for park improvements and £150k for play. One aim of the management plan is to maintain the gains that we have achieved in previous years.

The Council list all major improvement projects on our webpage, which can be found here:

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/parks_improvements_and_conservation/latest_parks_updates

4 Site Description

4.1 Outline History of Kneller Gardens

Kneller Gardens is on land previously owned by the Jubilee Farm Estate. Included in the area of the park is the site of a river bathing place operated by the Borough of Twickenham from 1895 to 1931. In 1911 there were 62,655 male bathers and 9,680 female bathers in addition it was used for school swimming galas.

The original proposals for the park were outlined in the minutes of the Council’s Lighting and Pleasure Grounds Committee. (8th July 1930 agenda item 4). This Committee refers to the development of a “recreation ground” to serve the needs of the new developing housing estates, with the objective of “providing the children of the district a large amount of healthy recreation.” Proposals included “a children’s playground, cricket or football pitch, four hard tennis courts, a riverside walk, and other necessary paths, planting of trees and shrubs etc., together with pavilion, conveniences, etc”. There was also a suggestion that further tennis courts and a putting green could be added at a later date. Kneller Gardens was the first open space in the borough of Twickenham to be equipped with a children’s playground. At the opening ceremony the Mayor of the borough referred proudly to the opening of “another lung for Twickenham”.

4.2 General Information

4.2.1 Land Tenure

The site is owned by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and is managed by the Parks and Open Spaces Service.

The enabling acts which confer the specified powers to the Council to administer and maintain the land are listed below:

- Open Spaces Act 1906;
- Local Government Act 1972; and
- Local Government, Planning & Land Act 1980.

4.2.2 Location

Kneller Gardens is located about a mile and a half from the centre of Twickenham. It lies off the Meadway Road which links the A316 to the Staines Road and off Mereway Road situated in the residential area on the borders of West/South Twickenham. The park is adjacent to and an extension of Crane Park, a linear riverside park which extends for 3km.

4.2.3 Access

As a free and open facility Kneller Gardens has the potential to provide fully inclusive access to local residents and visitors to the area. Pedestrians and those arriving by train and bus and car can currently access the site.

Kneller Gardens is one of 5 Friendly Parks for All parks in the borough. The project aims to improve the impact, reach and quality of access to parks and open spaces in the borough to residents who experience barriers to access.

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/explore_richmonds_parks_and_open_spaces/friendly_parks_for_all

As part of the project an access guide to the park was prepared and is available on the council website

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/20898/kneller_gardens_accessibility_guide.pdf

4.2.4 Local Transport

Train: Twickenham Station is situated within 30mins walk from the Gardens. Trains for this station run into central London (Waterloo Station via Clapham junction) and west with trains running to Reading and Windsor and all stations in between. Whitton Station is within 15mins walk from the park with trains to Waterloo and Windsor. Access to this station is currently via an underpass under the A316. Strawberry Hill station is a similar distance and is served by trains to Waterloo via Teddington / Wimbledon and Richmond / Putney.

Bus: Twickenham is well served by buses, with routes to all areas of the borough, neighbouring boroughs and the centre of town.

The Gardens are served by the following bus routes: 490, H22, 110 from the Staines Road

Kneller Gardens and Crane Park are part of the Greenways Cycle network, and include a shared use path for cyclists and pedestrians. This network is used as a recreation route and commuter route.

4.2.5 Landscape & Topography

The Gardens are laid out in the manner of a recreation ground with a pavilion building located towards the centre of the park. Tennis courts and a playground are located near to the pavilion. Tennis coaching and a children's holiday programme is provided by Will to Win: <http://www.willtowin.co.uk/>

The land is generally flat although it does slope down to the Duke of Northumberland and Crane rivers which diverge forming the southerly and south eastern borders of the Gardens.

The Gardens have a path that runs around its perimeter and also leads up to the pavilion and other facilities. Mature trees grow along this pathway perimeter

4.2.6 Listed Historic Buildings

There are no listed historical buildings on the site

4.2.7 Facilities

Kneller Gardens contain the following facilities:

- A pavilion building with public toilets and disabled toilets, an indoor café and community room for the sale of refreshments with outdoor seating. There is a small changing area/office
- A playground

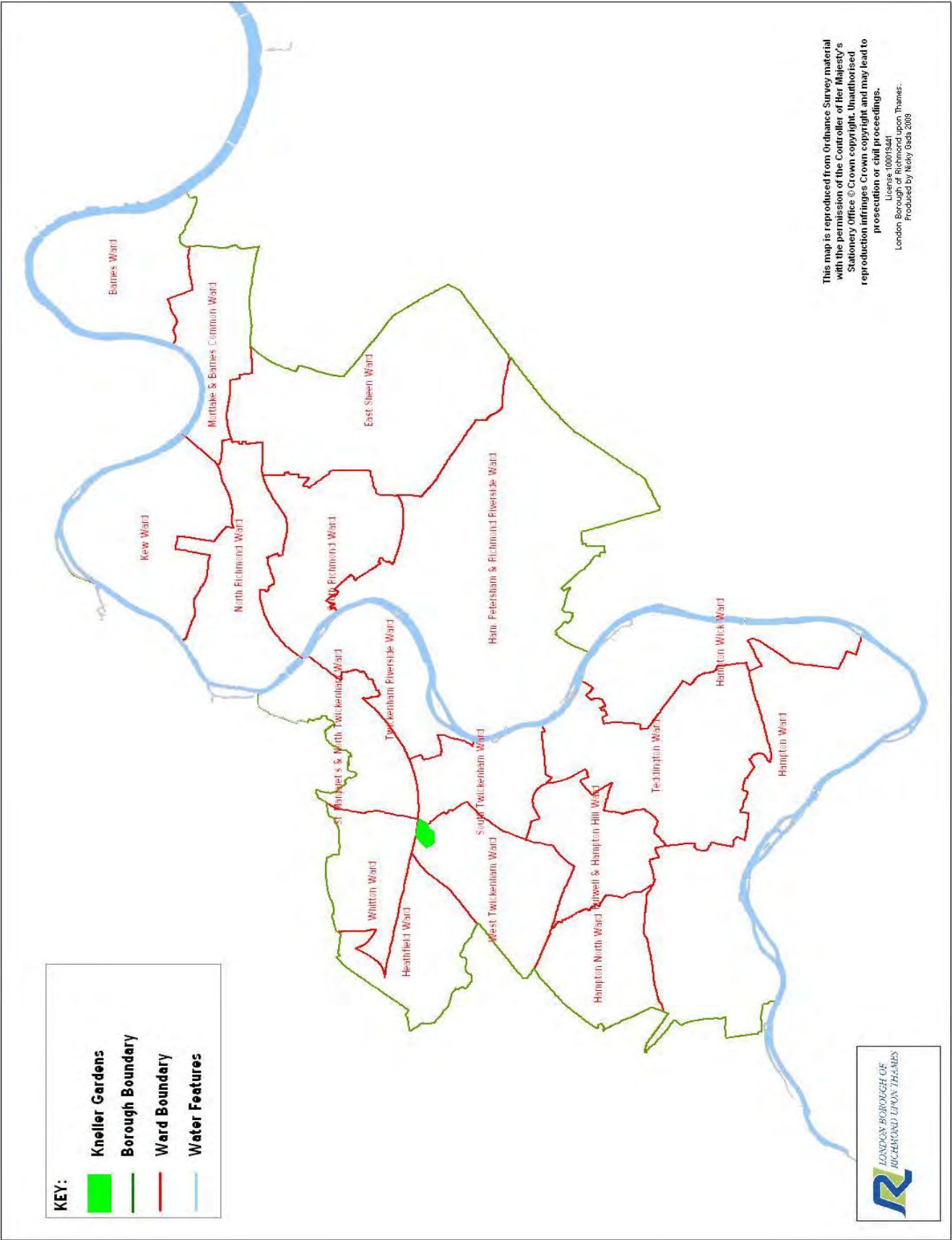
- Football pitch
- Tennis courts
- Two basketball hoops within the tennis courts area.

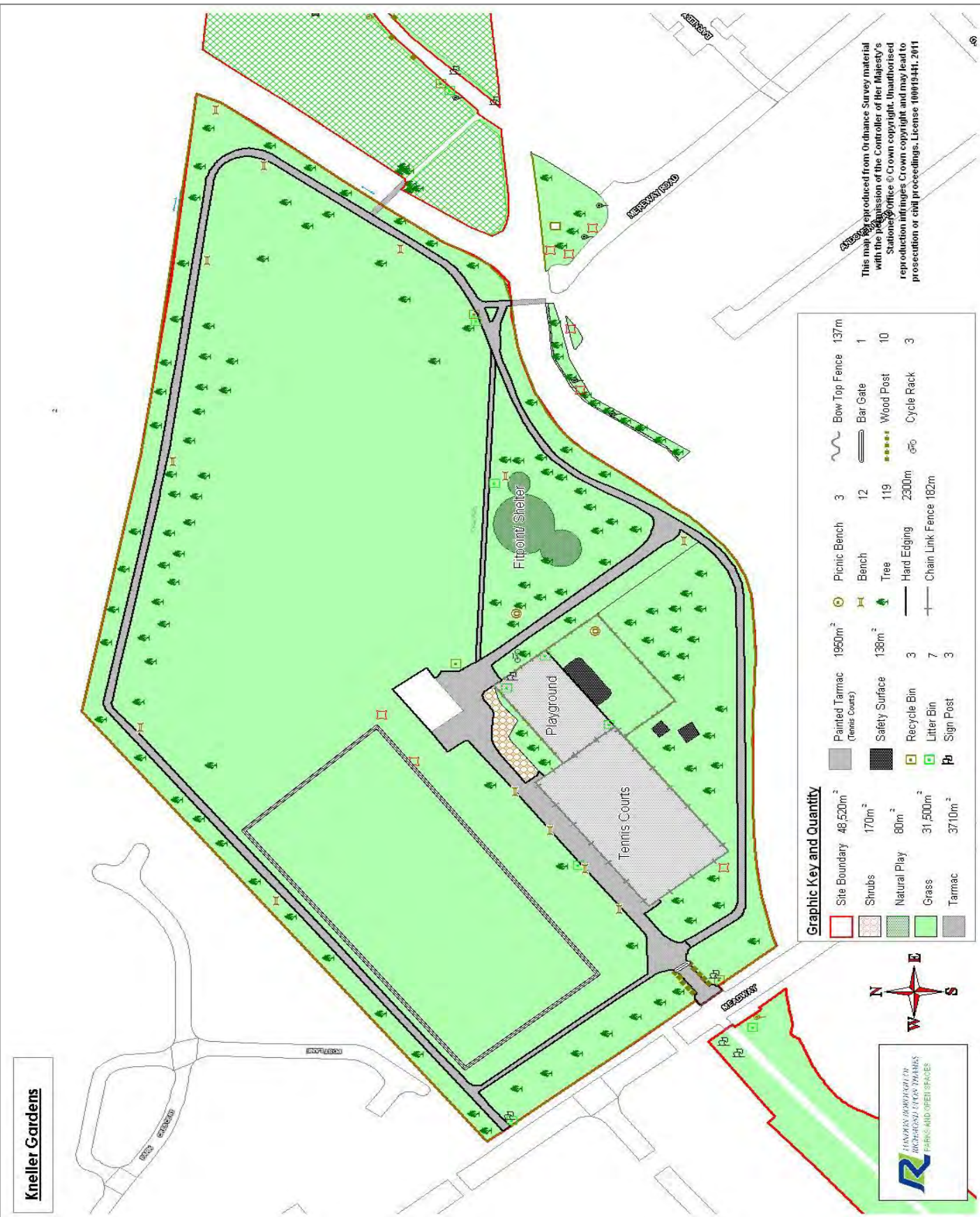
- An outdoor gym area
- 2 wheel chair accessible Picnic tables
- 13 benches. including one higher for people with limited mobility and two with wheelchair spaces beside them.
- Cycle stands
- A Playbuilder-scheme play area
- Recycling on-site

4.2.8 Maps and Plans

On the following pages, please find:

- Location map of Kneller Gardens within the borough
- Plan map of Kneller Gardens
- Aerial photo of Kneller Gardens







5 Audit of facilities

5.1 The main reasons for undertaking a Local Assessment are:

- to plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to ensure, as much as possible, that there are appropriate types of parks and open spaces required
- to work towards ensuring an adequate provision of high quality, accessible green space to meet the needs of community
- to identify the gap between current and desired levels of need and demand, quality and quantity of provision
- to assist in achieving standards such as the Green Flag Award and London in Bloom

5.2. Desirable Outcomes of the Local Assessment

A local assessment of green space will enable planning to be effective and achieve key outcomes required by the National Planning Policy Framework.

These are:

- provision of accessible, high quality park space for sport and recreation that meet the identified needs of residents and visitors
- provision of a park that is ‘fit for purpose’ – the right type in the right place
- to provide an appropriate balance between new provision and enhancement of existing provision
- setting locally derived provision standards

5.2.1 It is intended that this management plan helps to achieve these outcomes in terms of providing an analysis of existing provision and a plan to effectively maintain and, where appropriate, develop the facilities and infrastructure of the Gardens.

5.2.2 In addition, it produces a series of actions which will help to achieve the standards laid down for Green Flag Award parks:

- A welcoming place;
- Healthy, safe and secure;
- Clean and well maintained;
- Sustainability;
- Conservation and heritage;
- Community involvement;
- Marketing; and
- Management.

5.3 Methodology

The methodology used was prescribed in the Government’s Planning Policy Guideline note 17 (PPG17) for the provision of public open space. This consisted of a review of the following key areas of provision:

- Main entrance;
- Boundaries;
- Roads, paths, cycleways and access;
- Parking;
- Information;
- Planted areas;
- Grass areas;
- Cleanliness;
- Provision of litter bins;
- Seating;
- Children’s play space;
- Buildings including toilets;
- Health and safety;
- Nature conservation value; and
- Access for people with disabilities

5.3.1 Main Entrance

There are four entrances into Kneller Gardens. Two are situated on the Meadway Road. The main entrance at the south-west corner of the park allows vehicle access to the pavilion. Access is only permitted for contractors’ vehicles and vehicles are restricted by bollards. The entrances are welcoming. Sight lines are clear. They are well maintained with appropriate signage.

There are two additional entrances into the park: both of these are across bridges that span the Crane and Duke of Northumberland rivers and lead to the Mereway Road. One is a long established pedestrian bridge. The other, Kingfisher Bridge, completed in 2009 is part of the Greenways Network funded by Transport for London.

5.3.2 Boundaries

The Duke of Northumberland's River, a hand dug 16th Century mill leat and the River Crane which diverge here, run the length of the southern boundary of the park. Both rivers are in a good condition and regularly fished for recreation.

The other two sides of the park are fenced. Beyond the fencing to the north-east lies the railway line. Beyond the boundary to the northwest is private housing. The remaining boundary beyond the wall is marked by the Meadway.

5.3.3 Roads, Paths, Cycleways and Access

The majority of the tarmac pathways are in good condition having been renovated between 2008 and 2010. They are even and do not present any trip hazards. The edges are well defined.

In 2009 a new joint use path for pedestrians and cyclists was installed as part of the Greenways network. It takes a route across the park following an old "desire line". This work followed extensive consultation with the Friends of Kneller Gardens who had significant concerns over the potential for conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.

The realignment of part of the path near the Meadway entrance; the improvement of sight lines and the installation of a raised table and double yellow lines near the park entrance in Meadway, were all completed during 2010.

5.3.4 Parking

There is no public parking within the Gardens. The nearest public parking is on the Meadway along the westerly boundary of the park and in adjoining roads. There is a disabled parking bay close to the park entrance. There is also parking on Mereway Road.

There are well used cycle stands in the park for those who arrive on bike. These were installed in 2009.

5.3.5 Information

Information relating to Kneller Gardens is available on the parks section of the council's website: www.richmond.gov.uk

The parks signage is attractive and durable giving appropriate contact details. It uses easily understandable symbols to deter users from inappropriate and anti-social behaviour.

The Friends of Kneller Gardens regularly display newsletters and events information on the notice board;

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Friendsofknellergardens/>

There is also some information about Kneller Gardens on the FORCE website: <http://e-voice.org.uk/force/history/kneller-gardens/>

Email: friendsofkneller.gardens@gmail.com

5.3.6 Cleanliness

The Gardens are kept clear of litter and graffiti. Dog fouling is not a major problem, although in the past the Friends of Kneller Gardens have worked closely with the Parks Team on awareness campaigns around dog fouling, and by encouraging a positive behaviour in park users, for example by picking up other people's dog

mess. Recycling bins were installed in the park a few years ago and have proved very effective. The old pedestrian bridge was repainted by the Community Payback scheme during 2010.

The Friends of Kneller Gardens also work very closely with the local community police, for example by attending their Community liaison meetings. Local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) surgeries are regularly held in the pavilion area of the park.

Parks request that sports bookings remind clubs using the Gardens to use the waste and recycling bins provided, or preferably take their rubbish away with them to recycle at home.

5.3.7 Planted Areas

The boundary wall that separates the Gardens from the Meadway is lined with shrubs. There is a central shrub area. There are plans to thin the planting and manage this bed. The area includes a sculpture which resulted from a project with the Friends and Richmond upon Thames College art department to install a sculpture for the centre of the bed. The sculpture was fabricated by a metalworker with a business very close to the park.

The Friends of Kneller Gardens hold an annual planting event. In the past they have planted native hedging and spring bulbs. The plants are funded through the proceeds of their Annual Dog Show.

The Friends have an ongoing project to plant and maintain a native mixed hedge along the boundary with the railway line. The hedge was planted in association with local schools and layed using traditional skills by Richmond Green Gym.

5.3.8 Scenic Quality

The scenic quality of the gardens is enhanced by the River Crane and the Duke of Northumberland River. The park also has a large number of mature trees growing around its perimeter which pre-date the park.

5.3.9 Grass Areas

The amenity turf throughout the Gardens is appropriately cut and maintained. The edges are well defined. The Friends of Kneller Gardens, working closely with the Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) and the Parks Department, have sought to establish a mowing regime which includes areas of longer grass around the fringes of the park. This regime has been established as an improvement to the biodiversity of the park.

5.3.10 Provision of Litter Bins

There are enough litter bins throughout the Gardens and these are generally in a good condition. Recycling bins were installed in 2010.

5.3.11 Seating

There is no shortage of seating in the gardens. Benches are in a good condition and are spaced throughout the area offering scenic spots for people to sit. There are also two picnic benches in the Gardens.

5.3.12 Children’s Play Space

There is modern playground in the Gardens. This is in good condition and was installed in 2006 following consultation with a local school. As with all playgrounds now installed in the borough there are fully accessible pieces of play equipment.

Adjacent to the playground, and a selection of individual pieces of outdoor fitness equipment. For more information on equipment:

http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/services/parks_and_open_spaces/organise_park_event/fitness_activities_in_parks/fitness_equipment_in_parks.htm

The Playbuilders scheme installed further new equipment in the park in early 2010 following extensive consultation with the local community.

5.3.13 Buildings, including toilets

There is one building in the Gardens. The pavilion contains a café and community room and a changing space with office

The pavilion was refurbished in 2021/2 following a long campaign by the Friends of Kneller Gardens to develop a community space using funding from Richmond Community Fund, match funding from the parks budget and a community crowdfunding campaign. The café is managed by Young People’s Enterprises who work with autistic students from Richmond College and other local young people to give them some supervised work experience in a safe environment. For more information please see:

<https://www.facebook.com/KnellerGardensCafe/>

5.3.14 Health and Safety

The paths are in good condition and present no trip hazards. The open rivers bordering the park do present potential danger but they are shallow and are not fast flowing. The pathway is set back some distance from the edge of the riverbank.

A number of changes were made following consultation with a group of blind/visually impaired park users:

Bollard tops were painted white, one picnic table was realigned, park equipment was marked with reflective stripes, steps were marked and toilets have an embossed/braille marker included.

5.3.15 Nature Conservation Value

A preliminary ecological assessment has been completed to identify the habitats present and assess the potential for protected, notable or rare species on all Green flag sites within the borough. The assessment has included the identification of features with potential nature conservation interest within each site and will provide a basis for current and future plans for ecological enhancement to maximise benefits for biodiversity.

In the case of Kneller Gardens, the principal ecological value lies in the woodland habitats nearest the river. These stand out from those sections immediately up and downstream. Bird surveys of Kneller Gardens have shown that the bulk of bird activity, including song thrush, is present in the mature woodland habitats nearest the river. Sparrow on boundary with Post Lane. Water voles were recorded on the River Crane by Kneller Gardens, but subject to predation by mink, there is a monitoring project to manage further incursions and revival of the water vole colony

from upstream.. Plans to include a dog friendly access point to the river are in response to the need to limit the area in water vole territories. Other work to enhance watervole habitat are planned for 2023/3

The action plan reflects the need of this woodland and river embankments to be sympathetically managed.

Its position next the Crane and Duke of Northumberland River. The gentle sweep of relatively slow flowing water through Kneller Gardens provides a river habitat that is different from the up and downstream sections, with more yellow water lilies in this stretch, breeding moorhens, mandarin ducks and a pair of mute swans that has attempted breeding there in recent years. The river junction is a good bat location, and trees in this area need to be managed sympathetically with this in mind. The large old oak was sympathetically managed in 2010 & 2012, in part because of its ecological value. The tree has a basal fungal infection which will need ongoing management.

Kneller Gardens lies on the West London Green Chain– a green wildlife corridor of some 30 kilometres in length that extends from Harrow in north London, along Yeading Brook and the Crane, to meet the Thames at Isleworth. This is one of the major green corridors of London and is of great value for wildlife movement as well as a public amenity resource. Its importance as a wildlife corridor was first recognised in planning terms by the West Middlesex Regional Plan in 1924 and it is considered to be one of the major wildlife corridors of London. Kneller Gardens lies on a strategic point of this green chain where it is at its narrowest point due to pressure from urbanisation.

It is intended to prioritise and enhance the grass fringes of the park, including the riverside margins, by building on the mowing regime currently in place. Possible enhancement of the area could also include the planting of areas with wetland species and access to the river in the corner with the railway and DNR
See Action Plan below for details along with other proposal for enhancing the biodiversity of the site.

5.3.16 Access for people with disabilities

This factor has been included not only to ensure maximum accessibility for those in wheelchairs and for the elderly and the less able-bodied, but also to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

The park is well used by those with reduced mobility. There are several park users who visit the park in electric mobility scooters.

Access for people with disabilities is generally good. A level pathway runs from the main entrance around the site and to the facilities in the centre of the park.

There is an accessibility guide for the park :
https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/20898/kneller_gardens_accessibility_guide.pdf

The park is one of the council Friendly Parks for All and includes: 2 raised benches for people with limited mobility 2 wheelchair accessible picnic tables, and 2 benches with wheelchair parking to the side.

There is a monthly Accessible Walk to the park as part of the Friendly Parks for All project and a monthly dementia inclusive Litter pick Challenge

There is a group of disabled park users working with the Friendly Parks for All team to improve access for people who are blind and visually impaired.

6 Vision and Objectives for the Gardens

6.1 The overall vision for the Gardens:

To work with the community (particularly the Friends of Kneller Gardens) to protect, improve and manage the park, in order to create a safe and enjoyable green open space for use by local residents and the wider community.

The Council is committed to maintaining and improving the Gardens to a high standard and in a sympathetic manner.

6.2 Aims and Objectives for the Management of the Gardens

- To ensure that the management of the Gardens protects and enhances the biodiversity of the site;
- To ensure that all landscape improvement works are supported by a commitment to maintenance of the same;
- To ensure that the Gardens are managed in order to provide a high quality service;
- To meet the demands and expectations of the local community primarily as a place of quiet enjoyment;
- To ensure that the park is as inclusive as possible for the local community including those who face barriers to access
- To encourage and promote community involvement in the implementation of the proposals and in the on-going management of the Gardens.

7 Management of Kneller Gardens

7.1 Introduction

This section sets out guidelines and general principles to be followed in delivering the vision and objectives outlined above.

7.1.1 The Council’s Parks and Open Spaces Service

The Parks Service is headed up by the Head of Parks, assisted by the Parks Service Manager. It is made up of three teams:

- The Operations team is responsible for liaising with contractors and monitoring the parks. The team includes a parks operations manager, a parks officer, an ecology officer and a support officer.
- The Development team which is responsible for consultation and the planning and initiation of projects. The team consists of a group of local expert consultants coordinated by the Service Manager and assisted by the parks officer.
- The Arboricultural team is responsible for all street trees and arboricultural work in council-managed parks and open spaces, as well as assisting with planning issues. The team consists of a manager, four tree officers and a support officer.

We value diversity and are committed to delivering a service that puts equality of opportunity as a priority.

Management of the park needs to deliver high standards of maintenance of all aspects of the soft and hard landscaping of the park within existing revenue budgets. Developments have been funded by major borough-wide capital investment Parks Improvement Programmes between 2005 and 2010 and 2012 and 2018.

7.1.2 Delivery partners

The Council works and consults with The Friends of Kneller Gardens. This assists the Council to work in harmony with users’ and residents’ views and ensure direct local input into the management of the park.

For parks maintenance, a new approach was introduced from April 2013, with services split into separate lots. The current contract started in February 2018 and is split into seven lots. In broad terms maintenance will be carried out by the contractors’ operatives who are specialist in the relevant areas, thus achieving high and consistent standards. It was extended for another four years in 2021. As a framework, the contracts will also be available for other authorities and organisations in London and the south-east of England.

Parks Framework contract: February 2018 – February 2021

Following an open and thorough procurement process that began in spring 2017, contractors were appointed to seven service areas to start 36 month contracts in February 2018 (now renewed to 2025). Evaluation was on an 80% cost and 20% quality basis.

1 Amenity Landscape Management	5 Parks Patrol
2 Arboriculture Management	6 Events Management
3 Oak Processionary Moth management	7 External Planting
4 Play Inspection & Maintenance	

Procurement was written in an output style with built-in quality measures and performance indicators and asking qualifying contractors to design excellent services using their knowledge and experience.

Relevance to Kneller Gardens

Continental Landscapes are the main grounds contractor, undertaking amenity management (grass cutting, shrubs, hedges, sports bookings and pitch maintenance), small works (hard landscaping, infrastructure and furniture installation, etc.) gate locking operations, plus undertaking play inspection and maintenance. They also undertake parks cleansing alongside existing street cleansing and graffiti removal to create a joined-up operation.

KPS are the arboricultural contractor, working closely with the Council’s tree team who undertake inspections and specify works, with Bartlett Tree Experts undertaking Oak Processionary Moth management.

Events in parks are managed by The Event Umbrella, a company who specialise in managing outdoor events in the public sector.

Park patrols are undertaken by Parkguard, a company specialising in education, support services and enforcement in parks and open spaces.

7.2 A Welcoming Place

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that Kneller Gardens continues to be a welcoming area.

7.2.1 Graffiti removal

As a part of our aim to make the Borough safe, green and clean we are committed to reducing and removing graffiti. The Green will be inspected daily for graffiti. The full details of the borough’s commitment to the prompt removal of graffiti can be viewed at: www.richmond.gov.uk

There is an agreement with the Council’s street cleansing contractor, Continental Landscapes Ltd, to manage the removal of all graffiti within five working days. Where the graffiti is offensive it will be removed within one working day of notification.

Signage

Signage will be kept clean and will be regularly inspected. Any necessary repairs will be carried out promptly.

4.2.6 Pathways

All paths will be inspected annually with regular monitoring throughout the year. Any necessary repairs will be carried out as promptly as possible.

7.3 Healthy, Safe and Secure

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that Kneller Gardens continues to be a healthy, safe and secure place.

7.3.1 Community Safety

All contractors working in Kneller Gardens undertake an important role in terms of a visible staff presence and structure their maintenance work accordingly. All contractors are uniformed and wear highly visible clothing.

In addition as part of the Twickenham Safer Neighbourhood initiative, the Police Neighbourhood team regularly patrol the Gardens on foot. The Friends of Kneller Gardens have regular update meetings with the police Safer Neighbourhood Team, and attend the quarterly local police liaison meeting. The police attend the Friends annual community event and have worked with the Friends to establish a “Dogwatch” scheme in the park and the wider area.

7.3.2 Dog

The Council and their contractors make efforts to educate dog owners to be responsible for their dog’s waste as the dangers of humans coming into contact with dog faeces are well known and the site is intended for children’s play. Dogs are allowed off lead and the Rec is popular with dog walkers as it is well fenced and relatively safe. The social interaction of dog walkers is also important to their wellbeing.

Signage clearly indicates that dog mess should be picked up and disposed of by those walking their pets. All general waste bins can be used to dispose of dog waste.

The Council has a Public Spaces Protection Order in place to regulate dog control. With regard to Vine Road Rec these prohibit fouling, limit an individual to walking a maximum of four dogs (unless in possession of a licence or permit issued separately) and require dog walkers to ensure their dog is under proper control at all times.

The children’s playground / paddling pool area and the community growing areas are fenced and gated to prevent dog access. All buildings are dog-free (except for guide dogs).

The work plan includes dog-friendly access to the DNR.

7.4 Clean and Well Maintained

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the Gardens are clean and well maintained.

7.4.1 Horticulture

Grass surfaces within the Gardens are mainly classed as amenity grass. Amenity turf is those areas used for general recreation and formal and informal sports and can include wide-open spaces or those areas planted with trees and shrubs. The height of this grass is kept between 20 and 60mm throughout the year.

The level of maintenance will depend on the level of use, with increased repairs, fertilising, and scarifying of those areas subject to heavy wear. Most repair works to turf will be carried out in the autumn or spring, with areas either re-turfed or seeded.

Grass edges, whether they are against paths, fences or walls will be cut at the same time as the rest of the grass using strimmers in most areas.

The mowing regime includes areas of longer grass around the fringes of the park. This regime has been established as an improvement to the biodiversity of the park.

7.4.2 Trees

Trees within parks are subject to inspection by suitably qualified and experienced Arboriculturalists, this is in order to identify and remedy any unacceptable risks to people using the sites, an example of this is the prophylactic treatment of oak processionary moth or the removal of trees that are extensively decayed compromising their structural integrity.

Tree pruning is only carried out where necessary for risk management purposes or where formative pruning is necessary; this approach allows Richmond's parks to retain a natural landscape with well-formed specimens. Where there is a particular characteristic by way of species composition, size or natural distribution the Council seeks to maintain this through selecting appropriate replacement and new trees.

Richmond Council encourages the Friends of Kneller Gardens to consider the tree population within parks and to communicate with the parks and open spaces team in order to make improvements and ensure that there is continuity in the way that the trees are managed.

Kneller Gardens contains over 500 trees. Many are perimeter plantings which line the paths surrounding the site. More recent planting has been carried out in partnership with the friends of Kneller Gardens and this has included swamp cypress, the native scots pine and the reintroduction of the rare black poplar (*Populus nigra* subsp *betulifolia*). Mature oak and plane can be found close to the site entrances to the south and south west. These trees are the oldest specimens within the site and would possibly have been in situ before the site was opened up for bathing at the end of the nineteenth century. The trees in Kneller Gardens help to provide continuity of landscape when transitioning between Crane Park and the

more urban landscape, of particular note is the golden willow avenue leading from the pavilion to the river.

7.4.3 Cleansing

The collection of litter is extremely important in maintaining the appearance of the park and has a direct effect upon how people treat and respect the site. Litter is collected on a daily basis by the park cleansing contractors.

The contractors carry out litter picking, emptying of litterbins and the sweeping / blowing of paths. This applies to all surfaces, paths, lawns and beds.

When the park has high numbers of visitors, and large amounts of litter are expected, the cleansing contractors will carry out additional visits to empty the bins and /or increase bin capacity with temporary ‘events’ wheelie bins. The full litter bags will be collected and removed from the site on the same day. In addition, the bins are cleaned and disinfected quarterly to avoid an unsightly accumulation of dirt.

7.4.4 Park Furniture and Fittings

The grounds maintenance contractors ensure that all furniture is clean and will check benches, notice boards and bins on a regular basis. Items will be cleaned on a monthly basis or more frequently when heavily used. Repairs will be requested by contractors on a Defect Report and carried out promptly. Any single replacement or repair will match the existing furniture so that the style of the seat remains consistent.

Playgrounds are inspected twice a week by the grounds maintenance contractor and any hazards identified are dealt with accordingly. In addition there is an annual inspection to ensure that the playground meets ROSPA standards.

7.4.5 Hard Surfaces

Hard surfaces will be kept clean with litter swept from surfaces regularly by the grounds maintenance contractor.

Hard surfaces will be maintained in a weed free state (with spot treatment weed spraying only where absolutely needed between March and November). Paths will be kept in a good state of repair, all paths being inspected annually and any repairs ordered to be carried out between March and November.

Drains and gulleys are inspected regularly by staff and contractors on site.

7.4.6 Sports Facility Maintenance

The only sports facilities within the gardens are the tennis courts and basket ball hoops. Running tracks are marked out in the summer for school use. British Cycling runs a series of grass track events. These are marked out especially for this event.

Football Pitch

- The public are able to book the football pitches from September to April.

- During the playing season, they are over-marked weekly, and spiked, chain harrowed and goal mouths forked / sanded monthly.
- Portable goalposts are used, which are stored by the pavilion when the pitches are not in use.
- The pitches are over seeded with a sports grass mixture, ensuring worn areas are cultivated to a friable tilth.

Tennis courts

- Recently refurbished
- The courts are jet washed annually to remove moss and debris from the playing surface.
- Nets are replaced when required.

7.5 Environmental Sustainability

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the Gardens are managed in a sustainable way.

7.5.1 Recycling

We have recycling bins available in the Gardens for visitors to use.

7.5.2 Recycling green waste

The Council’s ground maintenance contractor takes all green waste to Townsmead recycling centre.

7.5.3 Pesticides

The use of pesticides in the Gardens will be minimised as much as possible in the interests of nature conservation and ecology. An Integrated Weed Management policy has been developed to assist decision-making.

7.6 Community Involvement

Engagement with the local community is carried out by working together with the long established Friends of Kneller Gardens, who are 16 years old this year. There are regular meetings with members of this group to discuss their concerns and to consult with them on maintenance issues and improvement projects. The views of this group are given serious consideration in the planning of maintenance and improvements.

In addition to working closely with a number of Council Departments the Friends have close working relationships with a number of community organisations including: Friends of the River Crane Environment, local schools, Lincoln Avenue Residents Association, London Wildlife Trust, local councillors, the local police safer neighbourhood team,. The group also attended the meetings of the London Friends Green Spaces Network.

7.6.1 Parks Events

The Council's policy in relation to Kneller Gardens is to encourage the hire of parts of the Gardens to appropriate organisations or groups. The layout and location of the Gardens obviously dictates the kind of events that would be suitable.

Local ward councillors and the Friends are consulted before permission is granted for any new event. An evaluation process is held after each event.

Events are held in accordance with the Parks and Open Spaces Events Policy which can be found at: www.richmond.gov.uk

The Friends hold two events annually: a community day held in September in conjunction with FORCE's annual Open Day on sites along the Crane, and an annual planting day usually held in late autumn.

Something about FPFA and other activities

Other regular events include an active junior football club, a walking football club for older people, INS Nordic walking, green gym and a variety of fitness clubs. For more information on the fitness activities available, please visit: http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/services/parks_and_open_spaces/organise_park_event/fitness_activities_in_parks/fitness_training_in_parks.htm

7.6.2 Marketing

Promotion and marketing of Kneller Gardens is carried out by using a range of measures, including the Council's website, publicity literature and the Gardens' noticeboard, to ensure that local people and visitors to the borough are aware of the facility.

7.7.1 Entrance Signage

A corporate style of signage for Richmond's parks and open spaces was launched in 2007. Kneller Gardens has these attractive and informative signs.

7.7.2 Internet

Kneller Gardens features on the council's website and can be accessed from the Parks and Open Spaces link: www.richmond.gov.uk

Information on the Friends of Kneller Gardens can be found at: Facebook as above and email FriendsofKneller.Gardens@gmail.com

7.7.3 General Promotion

In order to create community awareness for all its facilities, the Parks Service regularly produces articles and press releases about activities and facility development. A noticeboard at the main entrance is also used to promote upcoming events and works planned for the park so residents are kept up to date.

8 Achievements and Action Plan

8.1 Achievements

Changes and improvements made to Kneller Gardens during 2020/21 were:

- Refurbished pavilion funded through Community Fund/parks budget/crowdfunding with park users
- Refurbished tennis courts
- Sensory trail/tree trail and app
- Friendly Parks for All work and engagement with disabled park users
- Successful competition to design a sculpture for blind and vi park users. Comminssioned and awaiting delivery
- Installation of a Fish pass at Mereway weir
- Native hedge layed using traditional techniques

8.2 Action Plan

Item of work and location	Year		Timing	Resources
	2022	2023		
Enhancements to water vole habitat and dog friendly access to river	Y	Y	Ongoing	Parks Team & Friends Group
Enhancements to old wild flower meadow area	Y		Autumn 2022	Parks Team, Friends Group and Continental Landscapes
New grass verge regime along river path			Spring/Summer 2022	Parks Team & Continental Landscapes
Installation of sculpture	Y		Spring 2022	Parks Team Friendly Parks for All & Friends Group
Spoken word app for blind/VI park users which allow them to explore local green spaces and KG	Y		Spring/summer 2022	Parks team - Friendly parks for All project
Monthly Dementia inclusive litter pick	Y		Trial – February to July 2022	Parks team -Friendly Parks for All project
Friends develop weekly activities for community using new facilities as base	Y	Y	Ongoing	Friends of Kneller Gardens
Installation of safe crossing at Meadway	Y	Y	Ongoing	Highways, Parks Team & Friends Group

Friends register as charity	Y		Summer 2022	Friends of Kneller Gardens
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8.2.1 Development and renewal

As indicated previously, while the Parks and Open Space Team is open to the changing demands from the local community with regards to facilities within any of the borough’s parks, major changes to or developments of the Gardens facilities are not envisaged. The Gardens have had significant renovations and additions made to them over the past decade. The major challenge is to maintain high standards of maintenance and to plan for effective repair and renewal of the major elements of a park’s hard landscaping or infrastructure e.g. path system.

8.2.2 Community Engagement

The parks section intends to continue to work with the Friends of Kneller Gardens. We are committed to being receptive to concerns and suggestions voiced individually or through community groups.

A customer satisfaction survey is carried out every two years across the boroughs parks and open spaces. as carried out across the borough parks and open spaces.

8.3 Operational Commitments

This is presented in tabular form and includes the most important elements of the day to day maintenance of the Gardens, grass cutting, trees and shrubs, litter collection and maintenance of parks furniture. Monitoring and inspection duties are included. Biodiversity management and initiatives are also included in this section.

Element	Action	Frequency
Grass Maintenance	Kept to a height of between 20mm & 60mm Designated long grass areas are to be unmown and left long all year.	As required to maintain length; average 16-18 cuts per year
Tree maintenance	Inspection Replanting	Every three years minimum As necessary
Shrub Maintenance	Kept weed free Mulching Pruning	Monthly Annual As required, dependent on species
Litter collection	Collection and emptying	Daily
Cleansing	Cleaning of public toilets and drinking fountain	Daily
Graffiti	Removal of obscene/offensive Removal of other	Within 24 hours

		Within 5 working days
Parks furniture	Clean and paint Repair/replace	When necessary When necessary
Monitoring of contract	Monitoring	Every three months
Playground inspection	Visual inspection Detailed inspection ROSPA standard	Fortnightly as with ROSPA guidelines Monthly Annual
Infrastructure	Inspection Clearance of paths	Annual When necessary
Biodiversity opportunities and actions	Installing bulbs, shrubs, plants, deadwood piles	Ongoing

8.4 Conclusion

This Management Plan is not 'set in stone'. It provides a framework and guidelines that enable the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames to manage the site to a high standard in a sustainable way. The Council is open to the changing needs of local communities and will continue to work closely with the Friends of Kneller Gardens. The Plan will run from January 2022 to December 2023, with an interim progress update in January 2023.