



Kneller Gardens Management Plan

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.

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 in the form of the Friends of Kneller Gardens will be consulted on any proposed changes or improvements to facilities.

We actively encourage suggestions both regarding the management and maintenance of the park and ideas about changes or possible improvements to elements of the park's infrastructure or its facilities.

While 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 a 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 Veolia 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 Veolia, 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.

Central to our determination to maintain and if possible improve the facilities and infrastructure of parks and open spaces across the borough is the ongoing review of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

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 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 part of the larger Crane Valley Park which is part of the Mayor of London's 'Help a London Park' scheme to improve 10 parks in London. This scheme aims to bring together currently fragmented open spaces along the River Crane, while retaining the identity of individual spaces.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Management Plan for Kneller Gardens provides guidance for the management and any relevant development of the Gardens over the next five years. 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

The Plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Following this Introduction the Management Plan is set out in the following sections:

Section 2: Outlining the National Context.

Section 3: Describes the plan's relationship to the Council's aims and objectives.

Section 4: Site Description and audit of facilities

Section 5: Vision and objectives for the site.

Section 6: Management principles and practices and includes the Action Plan.

2.0 The National context

2.1 Parks are managed areas of the green environment which provide 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:

- In 1988 the Audit Commission estimated that local authorities in England and Wales maintained approximately 120,000 hectares of parks and open spaces - an area approximately the size of Berkshire.
- In 2000, the Heritage Lottery Fund estimated that there were approximately 30,000 urban green spaces in the UK, of which 5,000 are urban parks.

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 can be summarised as follows:

Social

- providing safe outdoor areas that are available to 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

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

3.0 **Relationship to Council's Aims and Objectives**

The London Borough of Richmond recognises that its parks and open spaces contribute to:

- To the overall Vision and Priorities of the Council
- To the quality of life of local people
- To the physical, social and economic regeneration of the borough
- To the 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**

All Council's are now required to develop a Community Plan as part of their commitment to delivering more 'sustainable communities'. The Community Plan is a top tier strategy that sets out how the Council will target, manage and monitor its services for the benefit of all local people. The Community Plan has been created in partnership with residents and key local stakeholders and is reviewed on a regular basis. The vision of the plan is:

- Inclusive
- Puts protection of the environment at the core of its services and community life
- Delivers quality public services that truly reflect the needs of all its local people
- Addresses its challenges by harnessing the capacity of all its partners in the public, private, voluntary and community sector.

3.1.2 **Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2003**

Vision

- 'to provide access to an exciting range of open space experiences for all'

Key Principles

- **Stewardship**
 - Protect visual and physical access to open land
 - Protect, enhance and promote the characteristic features of the Borough particularly the riverside, historic landscapes and features
 - Improve the maintenance infrastructure
- **Management and Use**
 - Plan to provide for the needs of the community and visitors

- Make the best use of public and private resources and maximise external funding
- Work in partnership with the community and other local landscape agencies
- Promote the use of open land for all
- Reduce the fear of crime by providing healthy, safe environments and promoting activity
- **Environmental Protection**
 - Maintain and enhance the Borough's biodiversity
 - Provide high quality, sustainably managed open spaces

This strategy is currently under review.

3.1.3 **Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Richmond**

The main aims of the Plan are:

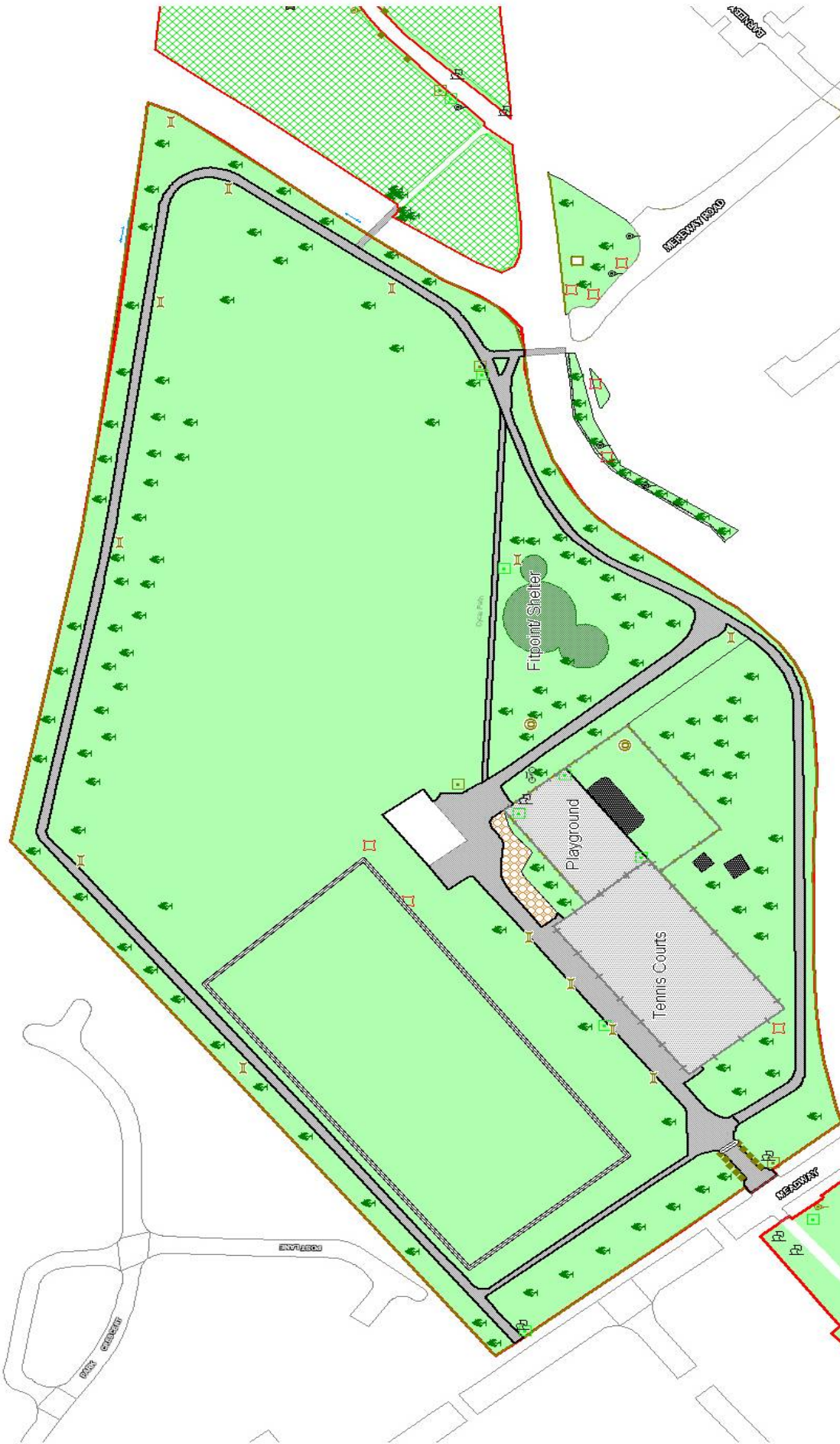
- To conserve and where possible enhance Richmond's variety of habitats and species, in particular those which are of international or national importance, are in decline locally, are characteristic to Richmond or have particular public appeal, which can raise the profile of biodiversity.
- To ensure 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.

3.1.4 **Other relevant council policies**

The following policy documents can be found at www.richmond.gov.uk. Printed versions of these policies are available on request:

- Community Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Plan
- Unitary Development Plan
- Local Agenda 21
- Cultural Strategy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Parks Byelaws
- Customer Service Standards
- Dog Control Orders
- Tree Strategy
- Events Policy

Kneller Gardens



Graphic Key and Quantity

	Site Boundary	48,520m ²		Bow Top Fence	137m
	Shrubs	170m ²		Bar Gate	1
	Natural Play	80m ²		Wood Post	10
	Grass	31,500m ²		Cycle Rack	3
	Tarmac	3710m ²		Picnic Bench	3
	Painted Tarmac (tennis Courts)	1950m ²		Bench	12
	Safety Surface	138m ²		Tree	119
	Recycle Bin	3		Hard Edging	2300m
	Litter Bin	7		Chain Link Fence	182m
	Sign Post	3			



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4.0 **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.

Enabling Acts: Local Government Act 1963,
Parks and Open Spaces Order 1971
Open Spaces Act 1906
Town and Country Planning Act (S. 32)
Commons Registration Act

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.

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 as in one football pitch

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, changing rooms, a room for the park attendant, and a kiosk for the sale of refreshments.
- A playground
- Football pitch
- Tennis courts
- Two basketball hoops within the tennis courts area and an additional one in the area of the pavilion.
-
- A youth shelter

- A Fit-Point
- 2 Picnic tables
- 12 benches
- Cycle stands
- A Playbuilder-scheme play area
- Recycling on-site

5.0 **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

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 PPG 17.

These are:

- provision of accessible, high quality park space for sport and recreation that meet the 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
- Management
- Educational value

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

- Access for the disabled

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 by fencing which has recently been replaced by Network Rail. 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 also parking on Mereway Road. Kneller Gardens is predominantly a

local park for local people and it is believed that the available local parking is adequate.

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; they also have a web page on Richmond Environment Network's website www.richenvironmentnet.org.uk. There is also some information about Kneller Gardens on the FORCE website www.force.org.uk

As part of the Priority Parks scheme new signage will be introduced into the park over the next couple of years.

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 Section and the Parks Patrol on awareness campaigns around dog fouling, and by encouraging a positive behaviour in park users, for example by picking up other peoples dog mess. Recycling bins have recently been installed in the park. The old pedestrian bridge was repainted by the Community Payback scheme during 2010. Since this time graffiti on the bridge has not been an issue.

The Friends of Kneller Gardens also work very closely with the local community police, for example by attending their Community liaison meetings.

Parks request that Sports Bookings remind clubs using the Park to use the 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 overgrown shrubs. Both of these areas are addressed in the Action Plan below. Following consultation with the Friends of Kneller Gardens the plants in shrubbery between the pavilion and the playground have been removed, and the retaining wall replaced. This will be replanted as a joint project with the Friends of Kneller Gardens, to include flowering shrubs and plants. This project is in response to consultation undertaken by the Friends in which older people said that they would like more flowers in the park throughout the year.

The Friends have recently applied for funding to include a piece of sculpture in this bed that will support plants and retain some interest during the winter months. This work will be carried out by a metalworker local 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 small bed near the Mereway entrance has recently been planted with summer flowering bulbs by the Friends of Kneller Gardens.

The Friends have an ongoing project to plant a native mixed hedge along the boundary with the railway line. The hedge is being planted in association with local schools, there was a planting day with Bishop Perrin School in November 2010, and a further day is planned for 2011 with another school.

5.3.8 Scenic Quality

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

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 of good condition in the Gardens. This 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 a 'youth shelter' and a FitPoint were installed in 2008. These are in a good condition and are well used. The Playbuilders scheme

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

Richmond Youth Partnership regularly offers activities such as skateboarding and BMX activities in the park. The Play rangers are in the park every Friday with additional activities during the school holidays.

5.3.13 Buildings, including toilets

There is one building in the Gardens. This pavilion contains changing rooms, a café/kiosk and a room for the park attendant.

The refurbishment of the pavilion was completed in 2010, with a summer opening ceremony gathering a fair crowd. Richmond Youth Partnership has taken on the running of the kiosk, supplying refreshments to the park's users.

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.

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 with the LBRUT. 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 lie 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. Water voles have also recently been sighted on the River Crane by Kneller Gardens. 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, 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. This model is currently being tested in Crane Park by the Friends of Kneller Gardens, who dug 6 wetland scrapes in November 2010, and planted them up with marginal plants from a site upstream on the River Crane See Action Plan below for details along with other proposal for enhancing the biodiversity of the site.

5.3.16 Access for the Disabled

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. The Friends of Kneller Gardens has installed a series of benches around the perimeter fence so that those less able have frequent resting places. In addition the new picnic tables were chosen by the Friends because they provide wheel chair access.

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.

5.3.17 Educational Value

The educational value of Kneller Gardens lies principally in its ecological interest. The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) are currently undertaking a schools project based both at Kneller Gardens and Mereway Nature Park, which is situated on the opposite bank of the Duke of Northumberland's River from the park. The project aims to create an outdoor class room and cross curricular pool of resources that can be used by teachers, youth leaders or interested visitors to the site. The resources are aimed at 5 to 11 year olds. FORCE held a number of workshops in the park this year for local teachers using these resources. As a consequence this year 3 schools visited the site and the hope is that additional schools will make use of the site over the next few years as the resources grow.

FORCE has a project to promote local green spaces through a photographic exhibition. This exhibition includes images of the ecology, places and history of the Crane Valley. It has toured various community venues, including Kneller Gardens. In association with this FORCE held a photographic workshop in Kneller Gardens with a local school.

Trafalgar infants and junior schools make regular use of the sports fields in the park for PE activities.

Youth work

Richmond Youth Partnership has a base in Kneller Gardens at the refurbished pavilion. They use the park as a base for youth activities and manage the kiosk. Young people receive work experience and training by working in the kiosk.

The play rangers attend the site every Friday afternoon as well as during the school holidays. They offer a range of activities to 8-14 year olds.

6.0 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 The key objectives for the Gardens are to:

- 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 promote the educational value of the site and to encourage local schools to use the Gardens for a variety of educational purposes
- To encourage and promote community involvement in the implementation of the proposals and in the on-going management of the Gardens

7.0 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.

Management needs to deliver high standards of maintenance of all aspects of the soft and hard landscaping of the gardens within existing revenue budgets. Any developments have been funded by a major borough wide capital investment programme that began in 2005 and was completed in 2010.

The parks section is headed up by the Head of Parks. It is made up of three sections.

- The Operations team is responsible for liaising with contractors and monitoring the parks. The team includes an ecology officer and a GIS mapping officer.
- The Service Development team which is responsible for consultation and the planning and initiation of projects.
- The Arboricultural team is responsible for all street trees and arboricultural work in council managed parks and open spaces.

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

The Council works and consults with The Friends of Kneller Gardens. This assists the Council to work in harmony with users' and residents' views.

The Council works in partnership with Veolia Environmental Services in a contract that began in 2003 and will end in 2013. In broad terms maintenance will be carried out by the contractor's operatives who have the necessary skills to achieve high and consistent standards.

Veolia Environmental Services has a contracts manager in overall control of the service. It is made up of grass cutting teams and mobile maintenance gangs who are managed by supervisors who monitor the work. The Parks Patrol Service is managed by Veolia Environmental Services. They play a community safety role patrolling the parks and also inspecting playgrounds on a daily basis. The patrol will attend incidents involving anti-social behaviour and liaise directly with Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Site based staff. Kneller Gardens has a site based member of staff who is responsible for keeping the site clear of litter. Friendly and approachable, he is highly valued by the Friends and park users.

Grounds Maintenance Staff - Health and Safety

All staff complete a company induction before they commence their employment. The induction includes relevant Health & Safety legislation and responsibilities along with environmental awareness training.

An assessment is carried out on each employee to ascertain their skill and competence levels. This includes manual handling training and driver assessment where applicable.

Following a 6 month probationary period for new employees, the new employee will complete a one to one personal development plan with their line manager which will set key targets for development and training needs. The information will be entered on the staff training matrix and is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Throughout the year, a refresher programme of tool-box talks, including Health & Safety issues, new legislation and machinery training, is given to all employees.

All employees have the opportunity to raise any Health & Safety concerns at monthly meetings through their nominated Health & Safety representative who is invited to all contract Health & Safety meetings.

The maintenance works will be monitored effectively and regularly by parks officers who understand the nature and purpose of the works being carried out. Any points and actions arising from monitoring will be communicated to the parks contractors and officers will ensure that any necessary work is completed.

Client / Contractor jointly inspect 25 sites a month on a random basis. Comments are made at the time and the client will advise the contractor of any items below specification that need to be put right, before the site is passed. The inspections are recorded and are scored to provide a % satisfaction figure for that particular month.

The Client / contractor site inspections for Green Flag sites (and those parks that have received major investment) also include comments and proposals to protect the investment of both hard and soft landscaping

The following management processes and regimes are listed below under the Green Flag standards listed in 5.2.2. Any new initiatives in the following sections will also be included in the action plan that follows.

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 site will be inspected daily for any evidence of 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 Councils Street Scene Contractor Continental Landscapes to manage the removal of all graffiti within five working days. Where the graffiti is racist or offensive it will be removed within one working day of notification.

7.2.2 Signage

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

7.2.3 Pathways

All paths will be inspected annually. 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 operatives working at Kneller Gardens undertake an important role in terms of a visible staff presence in the Gardens and structure their maintenance work accordingly. All staff are uniformed and wear highly visible clothing. The current Parks Patrol personnel have worked in the Gardens for a number of years. They are consequently well known by park users.

A site attendant is based at Kneller Gardens. His duties include the general overviewing of the site as well traditional park-keeping duties e.g. litter-picking.

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 fouling

The Mobile Litter gang, Parks Patrol and the Parks Service make efforts to educate dog owners to be responsible, particularly close to areas where people are liable to be eating or children playing. Signage clearly indicates that dog mess should be picked up and disposed of by those walking their pets.

Dog bins are emptied on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and more if required. Richmond has adopted the new dog control orders.

7.4 Clean and Well Maintained

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

7.4.1 Grass Maintenance

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 15 and 25mm 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 Tree Management

The trees on the site have been managed on a reactive basis since the Gardens were first opened in the early 1930's. They are a prominent feature in both the local and wider landscape, and characterise the Gardens.

Many of the trees within the grounds are particularly noted for their diversity and taxonomic interest, with several rare trees present of both native and exotic origin.

New trees and shrubs have been planted over the years to continue to increase and diversify the magnificent tree stock, in liaison with the local friends group, who also raised funds for 10 new trees planted in 2009.

Current Management:

The trees are all currently inspected on an annual basis and following periods of high wind, following which any dangerous trees or limbs are removed/pruned. Any removed trees are subsequently replaced with new specimens of the same species in the next planting season.

Future Management

The trees will continue to be inspected on an annual basis and following periods of abnormal weather. The site is currently at its maximum tree density, when considering other site features, however we will continue to re-stock new sites as and when they become available.

7.4.4 Cleansing

The collection of litter is extremely important in maintaining the appearance of the Park and in the consequent respect with which people will treat and use it. Litter is collected on a daily basis with a litter pick of the park being carried out before 10.30am each day.

A site based member of staff carries out litter picking, emptying of litterbins and the sweeping/blowing of paths. The zone applies to all surfaces, paths lawns and beds. The present staff member is much valued by park users and the Friends.

To prevent bins overflowing on days when the park has high numbers of visitors, Veolia will carry out additional emptying with the litter bags being 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.

7.4.5 Park Furniture and Fittings

The Parks Patrol ensure that all park 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 Patrol on a Defect Report and repairs will be carried out promptly. Any single replacement or repair will match the existing furniture so that the style of the seat remains consistent.

7.4.6 Hard Surfaces

Hard surfaces will be kept clean, with litter swept from surfaces regularly by the mobile litter staff.

Paths will be kept in a good state of repair, all paths being inspected annually and any repairs carried out as promptly as possible.

Drains and gulleys will be inspected regularly by the Mobile Litter gang and Parks Patrol. Kerb edges are swept twice a week and cleared of all litter.

7.4.7 Sports Facility Maintenance

The only sports facilities within the gardens is the football pitch, tennis courts and basket ball hoops. Running tracks are marked out in the summer for school use.

Football Pitch

- The general public books the football pitches from September to April.
- During the playing season they are over-marked weekly and spiked and chain harrowed monthly.
- At the end of the playing season the posts are removed and sockets covered. The pitches are over seeded with a rye grass mixture.

Verti-draining of the football playing area to relieve compaction has been delayed due to works by EDF onsite.

Tennis courts

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

The tennis court markings were repainted in 2010.

7.5 **Environmental Sustainability**

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

7.5.1 **Recycling green waste**

From a number of points of view, sustainability, environmental considerations and to comply with Local Agenda 21, efforts should be made to recycle green waste. In doing so it is essential to ensure that the recycled waste only includes acceptable material, i.e.

- Grass clippings – these are left in situ in the park
- Grass edgings – reused to fill hollows and dips in the park
- Soft herbaceous cuttings (not woody)
- Broken turfs (after lifting and turfing operations)
- Shredded shrub pruning's – chipped along with tree waste

Wood chippings from Kneller Gardens are taken to the compound within Hatherop Park and left there for approx 1.5 years to mulch down. The mulch is then used on the flowerbeds around the borough as both compost and a weed control.

7.6.1 **Pesticides**

The use of pesticides in the Gardens will be minimised as much as possible in the interests of nature conservation and ecology.

7.7 **Community Involvement**

Engagement with the local community is carried out by working together with the long established Friends of Kneller Gardens. 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, Richmond Youth Partnership, local schools, Lincoln Avenue Residents Association, Richmond Environment Network, London Wildlife Trust, local councillors, the local police safer neighbourhood team, the probation service Community Payback Scheme. The group also attended the inaugural meeting of the London Friends Green Spaces Network in October 2009, and continue their involvement with this group.

7.7.1 **Parks Events**

In relation to Kneller Gardens the policy of the Council 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 fun dog show 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. This is held in conjunction with the Friends of the River Crane Environment and has involved the community payback scheme in the past.

Richmond Youth Partnership has held regular sessions in the park in 2009, in support of the aims of the Friends to encourage the use of the park by young people. It is envisaged that these events will become a regular occurrence now that it has been confirmed that the Richmond Youth Partnership will be involved in the management of the Pavilion kiosk.

7.7.2 Marketing

Promotion and marketing of Kneller Gardens is carried out by means of a range of measures to ensure that local people and visitors to the borough are aware of the facility.

Entrance Signage

A new corporate style of signage for Richmond's parks and open spaces was launched in 2007. Kneller Gardens has had these attractive and informative signs installed. There is also an older Crane Riverside walk sign.

New signage linked to the Priority Parks scheme is also planned for the park.

Internet

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

General Promotion

In order to create community awareness for all of its facilities the Parks Service regularly and systematically produces articles and press releases about activities and facility development.

8.0 Achievements and Action Plan

8.1 Achievements

Changes and improvements made to Kneller Gardens over the last five years are listed below:

- Basketball hoops were installed in the tennis court area in 2005
- A playground was extensively refurbished in 2006
- 7 New Benches 2007 funded by Friends
- A Youth shelter and 'FitPoint' were installed in 2008
- The pathway system was extensively renovated in 2008 to 2010.
- Borough wide parks signage was installed in 2008
- With support from Transport for London a bridge and path, intended for use by cyclists and pedestrians was built across the Duke of Northumberland River, linking the park with the Mereway Road. This bridge is part of a wider Greenways network
- 2 new picnic tables 2009 one funded by Friends and Lincoln Avenue Residents Association and the other TfL
- New cycle racks 2009 funded by TfL
- Pavilion restoration 2009/10
- Major consultation exercise by Friends and Richmond Youth Partnership 2009 involving park users and young people
- Major consultation over Playbuilders scheme 2009
- The pedestrian entrance from the Meadway has been made wheelchair accessible as well as steps replaced with a ramp onto tennis courts.
- The Playbuilders scheme went into action with a completed playsite being ready in 2010.
- The refurbished pavilion, replete with changing rooms and a kiosk (managed by RYP) was opened to the public in a public launch event in July 2010.
- Paths within the park were improved in 2010.
- New trees planted in 2010/11.
- Benches were replaced and new recycling bins installed in 2010.
- The road entrance to Kneller Gardens was refurbished in 2010.
- In consultation with the Friends the overgrown bed in front of the pavilion was redesigned with a new wooden retaining wall. Planting scheme devised with the Friends Group.

The following action plan is divided into three sections:

8.2.1 Development and renewal

As indicated previously, while the section 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. As detailed above the Gardens have had significant renovations and additions made to them over the last five years. 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.

The following are actions planned for 2011

- The overgrown shrub bed located between the pavilion and playground will be replanted in consultation with the Friends Group.
- The shrubs lining the boundary wall on the Meadway will be reduced to improve the view into the Gardens
- Consideration will be given to planting up riverside areas with wetland species to enhance biodiversity
- Bird nesting boxes are being installed on trees
- Bug boxes are being installed on walls
- We hope that we will be able to negotiate with EDF mitigation for their works, the removal of the old pipe bridge & any turf reinstatement required.

Green Flag Priorities:

1. Promote onsite educational activities for schools. This is in progress – the FORCE outdoor classroom resources are to be launched March 2011, with promotion and school visits over the summer of 2011 – 9 local primary schools have shown an interest.

2. Complete landscaping improvements.

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.

An annual customer satisfaction survey was carried out across the borough parks and open spaces during September 2010. In Kneller Gardens this consultation was carried out by the Friends, and revealed strong levels of satisfaction.

In October the Friends carried out a Youth Project User Survey. This reported high levels of satisfaction with recent developments in the park, and the work done with RYP.

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 15mm & 25mm	Cut approximately every 10 days during the growing season

Tree maintenance	Inspection Replacing and expanding variety and stock	Annual As required
Shrub Maintenance	Kept weed free Mulching to minimise weed growth Pruning	As required Annual As required, dependent on species
Litter collection	Litter picking Emptying of bins	Daily Daily
Graffiti	Removal of obscene/offensive Removal of other	Within 24 hours Within 5 working days
Parks furniture	Clean and paint Repair/replace	Annual As required
Monitoring of contract	Monitoring	Weekly inspection with contractors
Infrastructure inspection	Inspection	Annual

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. This Management Plan will be reviewed annually.