



Crane Park Management Plan

January 2022 – December 2023



Crane Park Ground Management Plan 2022-23: Foreword

Crane Park is an important space for local people and visitors. The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames will maintain and manage the park 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 park 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 any graffiti removed effectively and quickly?

Crane Park spans into both the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Richmond Upon Thames, this management plan for Crane Park will only address the 20 hectares of land in the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.

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 the River Crane Environment (FORCE). We actively encourage suggestions about all aspects of the park.

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

Whilst the Council is open to the changing needs of the local community with regards to facilities within any of the borough's parks, Crane Park is a long established local green space that is well maintained. Major changes to the park or its facilities are not envisaged. The action plan at the end of this document reflects this perspective.

The current financial situation will inevitably have a detrimental effect on the resources available to improve and maintain the borough's parks and open spaces. The borough will continue to work closely with its partners 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.

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Management Plan for Crane Park provides guidance for the management and any relevant development of the park. 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 on the site.

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 park namely:

- The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) and borough residents;
- 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; and
- 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.

1.3 The extent of Crane Park is defined below;
14 hectares lie within the London Borough of Hounslow
20 hectares lie within the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

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 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:

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

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. Relationship to Council 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

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 centers 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:

The strategic principles are as follows:

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 Open 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

The River Crane begins in Harrow and runs through Hillingdon as the Yeading Brook, changing its name to the River Crane at the Grand Union Canal in Hayes and eventually meeting the Thames at Isleworth. The artificial Duke of Northumberland's River links the Crane Valley to the Colne Valley.

The landscape of the lower Crane valley today reflects its history and past use. This can be seen in some of the place names surrounding the park - for example farms have given their names to the *Butts Farm Estate*; and old industries are represented by *Powder Mill Lane*. There are links with European monarchs who settled here. The landscape also shows evidence of previous use; for example the blast absorption mounds linked to the manufacture of gunpowder and the mill channels created to provide a regular water supply to power riverside mills.

Crane Park forms part of the Archeological priority area for the Crane Valley defined by English Heritage. Maps of the site Archaeology are available on request.

From the late C18th to 1926 Hounslow Gunpowder Mills operated from the land east of the Hanworth Road, covering 150 acres and creating new wide leats and a mill pond – now the site of Crane Park Island. The less vulnerable mill buildings were concentrated to the north of this pond with the more dangerous mill houses spread out along the waterways. The location was selected due to its isolated position, the supply of water power and abundance of willow and alder trees for making charcoal. Some evidence of the mills remain; blast mounds, scattered grinding wheels, sluice gates, engine beds and the Shot Tower, now a listed building. The waterwheel pits, millstones and foundations of the former mills can still be seen in the park. London Wildlife Trust has been working on a community archaeology project funded by the Heritage Lottery fund for the last 2 years, investigating the heritage of the gunpowder industry. Members of Hounslow and Twickenham local history societies are also undertaking research.

There have been a number of major explosions at the gunpowder mills and records of over 100 deaths attributed to mill workings have been collated. In 1927 the license to manufacture gunpowder was cancelled and the site was bought by a Twickenham Councillor, Frank Yates who tried to sell the mills as a going concern. However a growing population in the area made it less suitable as a site for gunpowder production and eventually he sold part of the site for housing and part to Twickenham Council who turned it into a park in 1935.

There are other areas of historic interest in the park.

- There is a formalised stretch of the river Crane with a late C18th bridge carrying the driveway to Cranford House and the parish church.
- There was a Mill, known in 1753 as New Mill, which stood where Mill Road crosses the south stream of the River Crane. In the early years its owners lived in the adjacent Fulwell Lodge. It may originally have been used as a cooper mill, but by 1767 the mill was being used to crush linseed to make linseed oil cake for cattle. In 1845 the mill was converted to make paper and did so until it burnt down in 1878.
- The area around Mill Road is shown on Moses Glover’s map of 1635 as the grounds of Fulwell Lodge. This house was later home to ex-King Manoel II of Portugal who lived here from 1913-1932 with his wife the German Princess Victoria Augusta of Hohenzolern. After his death in 1932 the estate was purchased by Wates who developed the estate with housing. The royal association was commemorated in the naming of many of the adjoining street names. The millstream and island were given to the London Borough of Twickenham to form the southern edge of Crane Park.
- *The Butts and Glebe Farms*, comprising nearly 200 acres, were bought in 1891 by William Whiteley, who owned a large department store in Westbourne Grove, Bayswater. William Whiteley created a single model farm, which also included *The Rookeries* from 1894, known as The Hanworth Farms. It was apparently never profitable. He grew an extensive range of fruit and vegetables and reared pigs, cows, bees, dogs, and rabbits. He also manufactured jams, potted meats, squashes, confectionary, and dishes for invalids, pickles, and sauces. All preparation and packaging took place on site and all produce was taken to market by cart. The extensive buildings also had dormitories for the workers, as well as cottages and villas for the managers. After Whiteley’s death in 1907 the sites continued to be farmed, eventually sold to Beach’s Jam Company of Brentford. From 1933 the farm land was gradually sold off for house building, and in the 1950’s the Borough of Twickenham bought land to build the Butts Farm council estate and add to Crane Park.
- In 1990 Crane Park Island was made a Statutory Local Nature Reserve and named Crane Park Island LNR. It is managed as a nature reserve by the London Wildlife Trust on lease from the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

4.2 General Information

4.2.1 Land Tenure

The site is owned by the London Borough of Richmond 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

Crane Park is a linear park which falls within the lower third of the River Crane corridor across the boundary of Hounslow and Richmond boroughs. It lies within the West Twickenham, Whitton and Heathfield wards of LBRuT and Hanworth and Hanworth Park wards of LBH. The boundaries of the park are mainly adjacent to residential developments within these areas.

4.2.3 Access

Crane Park is a free and open facility and has potential to provide fully inclusive access to local residents and visitors to the area. Pedestrians and those arriving by train, bus, car and foot can currently access the site.

4.2.4 Local Transport

Within Richmond (LBRuT) the main entrance is on Meadway, Twickenham and off the A316, Twickenham/Whitton. We recommend using postcode TW2 6DF as a central reference.

There is a network of surfaced and unsurfaced paths throughout the park, with good directional signage.

Pedestrians and cyclists and those arriving by train and bus and car can currently access the site by:

Bus:

- Staines Road (A315,) - 116, 117, 235, 237 and H23
- Hanworth Road – 111, and 110
- Butts Farm Estate (Churchfield Avenue) – H25
- Meadway entrance – 110, 490 and H22
- A316/Hospital Bridge Road entrances – 110, 481, and H22

Underground: Hounslow Central

Mainline Rail: Feltham, Twickenham and Whitton.

Pedestrian / cycle routes:

- Crane Park is part of the London Loop walking route.

- Crane Park is part of the Greenways cycle network which provides high quality of road cycling. The park is well connected to London Cycle Network routes to Twickenham, Hanworth and Hounslow.
- Main routes within the park and on Crane Park Island are suitable for disabled access.

4.2.5 Landscape & Topography

Crane Park is classified as part of the River Crane Corridor Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation and is linked by the river to SINCS sites upstream such as Pevensey Road Nature Reserve, Feltham Marshalling Yards and Hounslow Heath. As such it assumes great significance within the Hounslow and Richmond’s Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP). It also contains a large proportion of the wet woodland within Hounslow. Crane Park Island nature reserve is a small island within Crane Park managed by London Wildlife Trust.

Hydrology

The River Crane is one of the main Thames tributaries in Greater London, rising in Harrow, north London as the Yeading Brook and flowing through five west London boroughs – Harrow, Hillingdon, Ealing, Hounslow and Richmond – before flowing back into Hounslow and out into the Thames at Isleworth.

The River Crane corridor forms the greater part of the West London Green Chain, a largely unbroken green wildlife and amenity corridor of some 30 kilometres length. 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.

Part of the site is within the River Crane floodplain. This floods regularly in winter months and is identified as one of the primary flood areas within this part of the Crane corridor. The river is divided into the main channel and one or more millstreams. These channels differ significantly in character within the area of the park. The main channel typically receives much of the river flow whereas the mill streams can be slow moving back waters.

Topography

The site is low lying adjacent to the river and predominantly flat rising slowly to the southern boundary some 2 to 3 metres above the river level. The character changes at the western end of the site immediately adjacent the Hanworth Road where there is a square parcel of land of some 0.5 hectares which is raised some 3 to 4 metres above the floodplain. This is made ground, probably from previous historic use of the site for industrial purposes.

Soils and geology

Crane Park is underlain by Taplow Terrace gravels which are covered by alluvial silts. These soils are supplemented close to Hanworth Road by woodland soils created from man-made importation of substrates sometime in the early 20th and late 19th century.

4.2.6 **Listed Historic Buildings**

There is one listed historic building in Crane Park, this is the Brick Tower. It was built in the Late C18 or early C19. It is a tapering brick tower in English bond, built like a tower mill. Roofed with lead. Door and lower windows have painted arches with weatherboarded spandrels and stone keystone. Stands in the middle of trees, which have grown up all round, beside one of the streams into which the River Crane is here divided by dams and sluices. This one belonged to the old Hounslow Powder Mills and is the only surviving building. (The mills were in all probability the first gunpowder mills in England, dating from the time of the Battle of Crecy, 1315.)

4.2.7 **Ecology**

The semi-natural deciduous woodland in Crane Park is relatively undisturbed with numerous fallen trees and branches and areas of dense scrub and undergrowth. The range of tree ages is good and there are saplings, mature and veteran trees present. There are trees with areas of deadwood and holes good for bat roosts and hole nesting birds such as nuthatch and titmice. The most common trees are sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*, pendunculate oak *Quercus robur* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. Occasional English elm *Ulmus procera*, alder *Alnus glutinosa*, grey poplar *Populusx canescens*, butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii*, elder *Sambucus nigra* are also present.

The field layer is dominated by common tall herbs including nettle *Urtica dioica*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, cocks foot *Dactylis glomerata* and false-oat grass *Arrhenatherum eliatum* with large areas of bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg.* and ivy *Hedera helix*. Other species present include a mixture of shade tolerant and woodland plants such as ground elder *Aegopodium podagraria*, ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, wood avens *Geum urbanum* and upright hedge parsley *Torilis japonica* with grassland and open ground species such as creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, greater plantain *Plantago major* and docks *Rumex sp.*

The river channel is a mixture of heavily modified stretches and areas that are now becoming more diverse with riffles, deep pools and islands forming around man made and natural obstructions. The bed is predominantly gravel but is silt dominated upstream of Crane Park Island where debris from past industrial river side use has fallen instream. Toe boarding has been removed upstream of Crane Park island and 60% of the banks are now natural. Great Yellow Cress, Common Reed, Yellow Flag and Branched Bur Reed are the predominant emergent species on the islands and mud banks in channel. Common Water-crowsfoot is the predominant aquatic species in stream. Kingfisher, water vole and grey wagtail are all found along this stretch of the River Crane.

The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) have planted a reedbed on the flood bank in the area of Hospital Bridge Road and managing it by removing willow and removing trees to ensure that there is sufficient light.

There was a back water channel dug in order to protect the reed bed and fauna which is found there. This has become necessary because the bank closest to the reeds has begun to silt up. The project ensured that the river flows through the reeds nearest the bank. The back channel will provide additional burrowing habitat for

water voles as well as a degree of protection from dogs, in support of the BAP Water Vole Species Action Plan.

There are existing patches of wet and boggy ground in the grassed areas in the park between Hospital Bridge Road and Mill Road. Scrapes have been created here planted using wetland species transferred from upstream at Green Lanes site in Hounslow. Plants included in the scrapes are: Common spike rush *Eleocharis palustris*, Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris*, Burr marigold (*Bidens tripartite*, Great willow herb *Epilobium hirsutum* Water Dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*, Purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, Primrose *Primula vulgaris*, Gypsywort *Lycopus europaeus*.

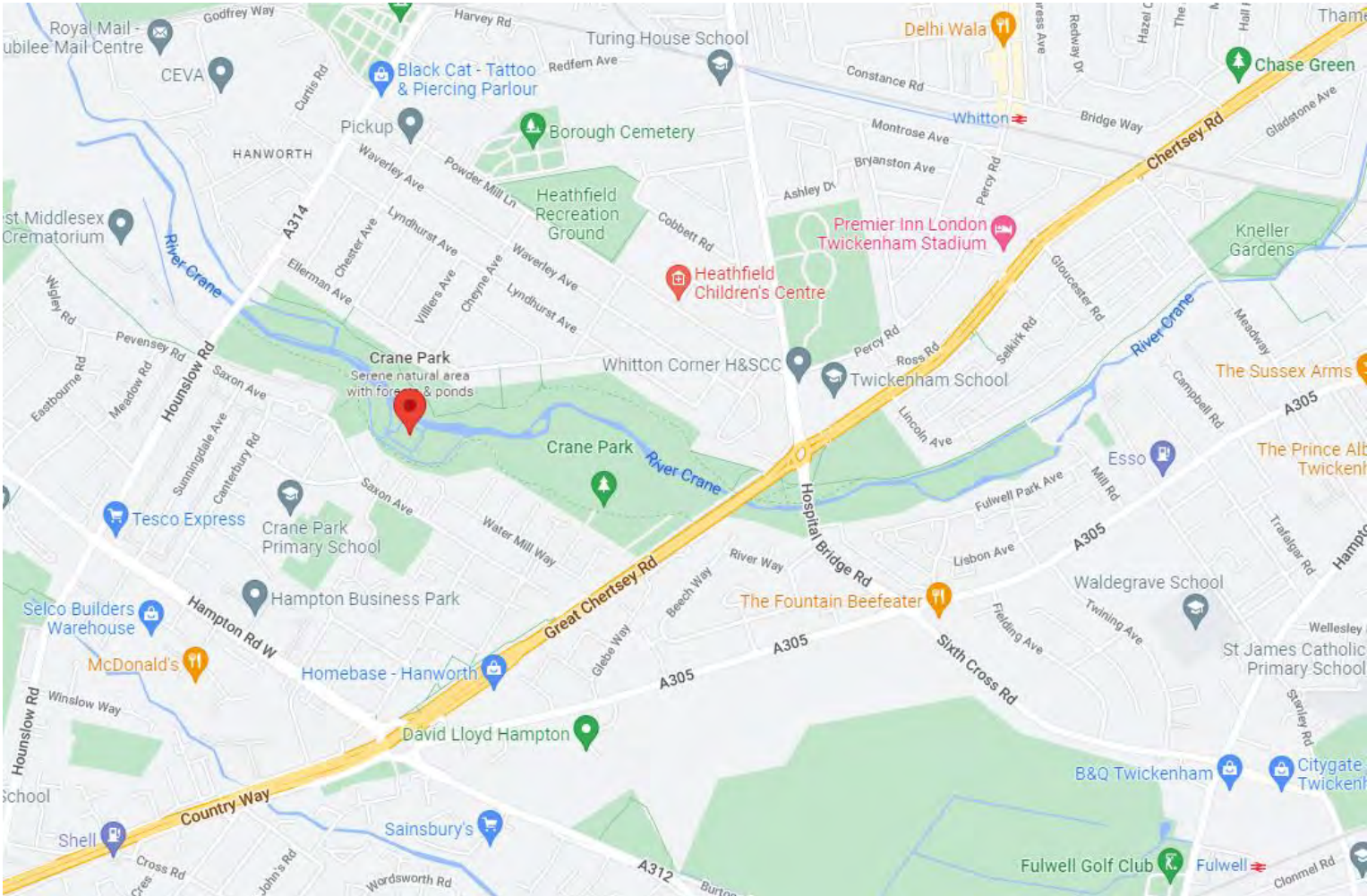
4.2.8 Facilities

Facilities include:

- Seating – there are adequate benches throughout
- Cycle routes
- Historic building – Brick Tower
- Nature reserve on Crane Park Island which is free to visit

4.2.9 Maps and Plans

Map 1: Location map of Crane Park



Map 2: Map of Crane Park and Aerial Photo



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 the 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 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 Common and Fields.

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;
- Well-maintained and clean;
- Environmental management;
- Biodiversity, landscape and heritage;
- Community involvement;
- Marketing and communication; 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 available;
- 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

The main entrance in London Borough of Richmond upon Thames is on Meadway, Twickenham and off the A316. It has pedestrian and cycle access, it has a large interpretation board showing a map of Crane Park.

5.3.2 Boundaries

The southern boundary between London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and London Borough of Hounslow primarily runs through the river where Crane Park is split between the two boroughs, with LBRuT on the north and LBH on the south. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames boundary also includes the Crane Park Island Nature Reserve. The northern boundaries are marked by fences which back onto private properties, these are on Ellerman Avenue, Lyndhurst Avenue, Woodlawn Crescent, Crane Park Road. The park is split by an underpass, under Great Chertsey Road, there is a small section of park in between Great Chertsey Road and Hospital Bridge Road where the southern boundary borders onto private properties. There is another underpass at Hospital Bridge Road (there is a crossing above ground). The northern border of the area to the east of Hospital Bridge Road backs onto Lincoln Field Football Centre and then private properties on Lincoln Avenue. The southern border of this section backs onto a Public Right of Way foot

path. The eastern boundary is on Meadway, the western boundary of the LBRuT area of the park is on the boundary between LBRuT and LBH between Godfrey Way and Corfe Close.

5.3.3 Roads, Paths, Cycleways and Access

There is a network of surfaced and unsurfaced paths through the park. Surfaced paths are checked regularly and repaired as needed. More informal paths are grass surfaced and are cut regularly through the summer season to ensure they are easily accessible.

The paths are used by pedestrians and cyclists. There are bollards on wider paths to block vehicle access other than maintenance vehicles.

5.3.4 Parking

There is no public parking within the Park. There is parking on some of the surrounding roads including Ellerman Avenue and Meadway.

5.3.5 Information

Information relating to Crane Park is available on the parks section of the Richmond Council website:

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/find_a_park/crane_park

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.

5.3.6 Cleanliness

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. Crane Park is kept clear of litter by the Grounds Maintenance contractors, Continental Landscapes. Bins are emptied daily and the site is litter picked at the same time. To prevent bins overflowing on days when the park has high numbers of visitors, the contractor will carry out additional emptying with the litter bags being collected and removed from the site on the same day. Bins will be cleaned and disinfected to remove the accumulation of dirt, usually quarterly.

Vandalism does occur, especially graffiti on signs and structures. In Richmond, the officer or operative observing the graffiti reports it to the Council's graffiti team for removal within five days.

The site is popular for dog walkers and unfortunately fouling is evident. Most dog walkers are local residents and do clean up afterwards however the Council has implemented Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) relating to Dog Control which can be found here:

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/16037/pspo_dog_control_order.pdf

We have a Parks Enforcement Contractors, whose duties included enforcing the PSPO's including those relating to Dog Control.

5.3.7 Planted Areas

FORCE together with TCV has planted a native hedge with old variety fruit standards along the boundary from Hospital Bridge Road to Meadway.

5.3.8 Scenic Quality

Crane Park’s mature landscape gives it good local landscape value, Crane Valley is a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation and includes the Crane Park Island Nature Reserve. There are many routes to be taken through the park with some trails set up by FORCE, such as the Dragonfly Trail. This can be found on their webpage here: <https://www.force.org.uk/discover/dragonfly-trail/>

5.3.9 Grass Areas

There are various different grass areas in Crane Park, these include amenity grass, meadows and wildflower areas. These are appropriately maintained for their use and respect their nature conservation value.

5.3.10 Provision of Litter Bins

Provision of litter bins is sufficient and in key areas at entrances, along the main perimeter paths and within the play area.

Dog waste can now be disposed of in normal litter bins and these bins are emptied daily by the Council’s street cleansing contractor.

5.3.11 Seating

There is adequate seating throughout Crane Park. Benches are checked, cleaned, maintained, and replaced as necessary. The benches range from standard park benches to carved benches such as the Oak Leaf bench shown below. which

Replacements will usually match the existing furniture so that style remains consistent.



5.3.13 Buildings, including toilets

The Brick Tower, which is a listed building, provides classroom facilities and displays material on the history and nature conservation. It is open on Sunday afternoons, and typically receives between 50 and 100 visitors, around half being children. There are toilets on site.

5.3.14 Health and Safety

Regular visual inspections of the park, its furniture and pathways are incorporated into grounds maintenance contracts.

Trees in Richmond’s parks are generally inspected on a four-year cycle with an annual check of high-risk areas such as main entrances; there is also an inspection after periods of extreme weather.

Richmond has a Parks Patrol team that inspects, enforces and responds to incidents and intelligence to make parks safer. The officers undertake tasks such as making visitors aware of hazards and educating visitors about the byelaws.

5.3.15 Nature Conservation Value

As a site of Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation, there is an extreme value to nature conservation at Crane Park. It contains a semi-natural deciduous woodland with areas of dense scrub and undergrowth, where there are areas for bat roosts and bird nesting. There is grassland with a range of species and a river channel which is a mix of heavily modified stretches and areas which are becoming more diverse with riffles and deep pools.

5.3.16 Access for people with disabilities

Accessibility for those in wheelchairs, for the elderly and the less able-bodied, is a priority and has been met as far as possible within the 'Help a London Park' project. Most of Crane Park Island Nature Reserve is accessible by wheelchair. Paths range from smooth to dirt. There are a number of bridges providing access to the island, without steps. Along the guided walk there is a bench, and seating by the river-dipping platform. The Shot Tower is only accessible at ground floor level for wheelchair users.

6. Vision and Objectives for the park

6.1 Vision for Crane Park

In line with the wishes of the local community, voiced through The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE), the future vision for the park is:

Is to protect and enhance Crane Park and its flora and fauna for nature and as community resource.

6.2 Aims and Objectives for Crane Park

- To identify and cherish the special character Crane Park
- To ensure that the management of the Park protects and enhances the biodiversity of the site;
- To ensure that the management of the landscape maintains the character of Crane Park as plants grow and mature;
- To ensure that all landscape improvement works are supported by a commitment to maintenance of the same;
- To ensure that Crane Park is promoted and managed in order to provide a high-quality service for the people using them;
- To meet the demands and expectations of the local community
- To encourage and promote community involvement in the implementation of the proposals and in the on-going management and development of Crane Park. To this end, to consult and work closely with FoRCE.

7. Management of the park

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 overseen by the Head of Culture, 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.

7.1.2 Delivery Partners

The Council works and consults with The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE). 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 Framework 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. 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 (renewed March 2021 – 2025)

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 qualifying contractors to design excellent services using their knowledge and experience.

Relevance to Crane Park

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 Crane Park 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 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.

7.2.2 Signage

Signage has been installed at main entrances, to make the park welcoming and inform visitors of interest and byelaws. The signage is kept clean and any notices kept up-to-date.

Signage for the London Loop is also maintained to ensure this route is easily navigable.

7.2.3 Pathways

There is a network of surfaced and unsurfaced paths through the park. Surfaced paths are checked regularly and repaired as needed. More informal paths are grass surfaced and are cut regularly through the summer season to ensure they are easily accessible.

Vegetation strips along main paths are cut back 0.5m – 2m to increase visibility and provide ease of access; these are cut on a monthly basis. Tall scrub is also cut back to improve the access corridor.

7.3 Healthy, Safe and Secure

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

7.3.1 Community Safety

All contractors working in the park 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.

Parkguard regularly patrol the park. In addition the local Police Safer Neighbourhood team regularly visits the park.

The park is currently included in a Public Spaces Protection Order designed to reduce anti-social behavior in public places in the borough, effectively replacing the open space byelaws. For example, barbeques, fires and fireworks are prohibited; bicycles must not cause a hazard, nuisance or damage; drones are prohibited; and smoking is prohibited in any enclosed play or sports area. More details can be found on the Council's website.

7.3.2 Dogs

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.

Signage clearly indicates that dog mess should be picked up and disposed of by those walking their pets.

The Council is currently in the process of phasing out dog bins and replacing these with multi-use bins. 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 Crane Park 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.

7.4 Clean and well maintained

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the park is clean well maintained:

7.4.1 Horticulture

Grass

There are various different grass areas found throughout Crane Park, the Twickenham end is managed as a formal park and grass is kept between 25-50mm height. Informal pathways are grassed are grass surfaced and are cut regularly through the summer season to ensure they are easily accessible

Hay Cut Areas: there are hay cut areas, which is completed by specialist sub-contractor after the seeds have set; the grass is cut and left for up to 3 days (weather dependant) to allow any remaining seeds or wildlife to drop into the remaining sward. The sward is cut to between 100 – 150mm depending upon site.

Wildflower Areas: The meadow areas are (if necessary) oversown with an annual mix in April and weeded (approximately) monthly until about July. Once the seeds have set the grass is cut as per the hay cut above.

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames sowed a number of flowering Meadows mixes in spring 2010 as a trial. The mixes were designed for maximum visual impact and value for wildlife. More meadow areas were added in 2011.

All areas for sowing were grass so was sprayed off with a translocated herbicide during appropriate weather conditions. The chemical is de-activated on contact with soil so is safe for use around humans and animals. It has also been approved for use near watercourses.

These areas were temporarily fenced off while the seed germinated and plant growth reached a robust stage.

Crane Park Area 1 (East of Hospital Bridge Road, adjacent to Whitton Sports Pitch)

This area was sown with a native perennial mix and oversown with a native annual mix for additional colour in the first year. The perennial mix was predominantly Ox-eye Daisy, Wild carrot, Red Campion, Vipers Bugloss and Common Knapweed, with Musk Mallow, Greater Mullein and a few other wild flowers in small numbers. The annual mix will be Cornflower, Corn Marigold, Corn Chamomile and Corn Poppy.

Crane Park Area 2 (between Hospital Bridge Road and Great Chertsey Road)

This area was sown with an annual mix which is a mixture of natives and non natives. Of all the meadow mixes, this one has the longest flowering season which starts around 8 weeks after sowing and lasts until November. The main components of the mix include Shirley Poppy, Californian Poppy, Cornflower, Fairy Toadflax, Red Flax, Bishops Flower, Tickseed, Corn Marigold, Black-eyed Susan, Red Orache, Larkspur and Cosmos.

Both areas were sprayed off with a translocated herbicide during appropriate weather conditions. A 200mm layer of sand was applied over the dead turf and the seed sown direct into the sand.

A broad area of mown grass around the perimeter of the meadow and cut a path through a section of the meadow allowed people to walk through it.

7.4.2 Trees

Tree maintenance – woodland

The woodland and trees are intended to provide habitat for birds, moths, butterflies, beetles and invertebrates. Where and when possible removal of non-native trees and the retention of native species such as oak, birch, black poplar, willow and crab apple is carried out. There is a presumption against tree planting within the woodland other than direct replacement of rarer native species, and then only from known local

sources. Retaining standing dead wood so long as it is safe so to do, and providing a range of fallen logs and habitat piles where cutting or felling proves necessary. Maintenance is intended to be kept at a modest level, but trees are monitored on a cycle and following extreme weather (see Safety and Security for more details).

Where necessary, areas of woodland will be thinned to increase light levels and improve the understorey / ground layer.

Tree maintenance – amenity areas

Many of the trees are a prominent feature in both the local and wider landscape. New trees and shrubs are planted to replace those that have died as and when required. Trees are monitored on a cycle and following extreme weather.

7.4.3 River and Wetland Management

The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) have been planting a reedbed on the flood bank in the area of Hospital Bridge Road which started in 2013 and managing it by removing willow and removing trees to ensure that there is sufficient light. This work will continue in support of the Reedbed Habitat Action Plan.

A back water channel was dug in order to protect the reed bed and fauna which is found there. This has become necessary because the bank closest to the reeds has begun to silt up. The project ensured that the river flows through the reeds nearest the bank. The back channel will provide additional burrowing habitat for water voles as well as a degree of protection from dogs, in support of the BAP Water Vole Species Action Plan.

FORCE, in consultation with the LBRuT Parks and Open Spaces, created 6 scrapes in the wet ground between Hospital Bridge Road and Mill Road and thereby transformed them into shallow but discrete wetland areas. These were planted using wetland species transferred from upstream at Green Lanes site in Hounslow. Further planting has taken place this year to increase the interest of the scrapes. The objective of this project is to create accessible and stimulating wildlife habitats that are easy to investigate, and will have the effect of improving the biodiversity of the local area as well as reducing the problems of site management for the Council’s contractors. There are other areas within the park where this model could be applied.

FORCE, together with TCV, has planted a native hedge along the boundary from Hospital Bridge Road to Meadway. The aim of this is to enhance the biodiversity of the green space adjacent to the river and to screen the fencing which is very unsympathetic to the space. The hedge includes standard trees at regular intervals.

The Council are seeking to improve bankside habitat and increase areas of aquatic and emergent flora along the river by increasing structural diversity and removing trees to increase light levels.

Both Councils will continue to liaise with the Environment Agency about removal of tow boarding and the installation of in stream deflectors to increase structural diversity and make the channel more natural.

A great deal of work is being done to remove invasive plants from the river corridor. Japanese Knotwood, Giant Hogwood and Himalyan Balsam are all targeted on an

annual basis using a mixture of contractor support and volunteer effort. For more details, please see the work plan in section 11.

7.4.4 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. 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.

7.4.5 Park Furniture and Fittings

The grounds contractors ensure that all furniture is clean and will check benches, notice boards and bins on a regular basis. Items will be cleaned as needed. 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.

7.4.6 Hard Surfaces

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

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 will be inspected regularly by staff and contractors on site.

7.5 Environmental Sustainability

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the park is managed in a sustainable way:

7.5.1 Recycling green waste

The Council’s ground maintenance contractor takes all green waste to Townsmead recycling centre. Efforts should be made to recycle green waste. In doing so it is essential to ensure that the recycled waste only includes acceptable material:

- Amenity 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

Where wood from tree works cannot be left in situ, chippings 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.

7.5.2 Pesticides

The use of pesticides 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.

7.5.3 Biodiversity

As a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation with a Local Nature Reserve, Crane Park is an important site for wildlife. It acts as a corridor for wildlife built up of a wide variety of habitats including the river and marginal wetland, open grassland and heath, woodland, and scrub. These habitats add value to the corridor and as such it is designated as a a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation.

The Crane Valley boasts a large variety of flora and fauna including species listed on the Richmond Biodiversity Action Plan. This includes reedbeds, Song Thrush, Water Vole, Bats and pollinators.

7.6 Community Involvement

A significant proportion of community involvement in Crane Park is organised via the Friends of the River Crane Environment, (FORCE), LWT and the organisation representing residents of the Butts Farm Estate, the Working Together Group.

Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) is a charitable organisation, set up in 2003 to represent the interests of the environment, local residents and visitors along the corridors of the River Crane and the Duke of Northumberland's River. It opened to public membership in April 2004, received charitable status in 2005 and currently has over 450 members. More information is available at [FORCE](#).

- monthly volunteer days carrying out small scale and cumulative practical improvements and maintenance
- project works – funded by grants and/or FORCE funds and implemented by FORCE members or via contracts
- lobbying local authorities, private landowners and other statutory organisations for environmental and public amenity improvements along the Crane corridor
- joint works with other bodies such as local councils, LWT, Crane Valley Partnership, Biodiversity Action Plan groups, etc

7.6.1 Educational Value

FORCE and LWT have been developing educational resources for use by local schools in the park. The outdoor classroom has been developed to support the use of the park as an education facility.

The FORCE resources are cross curricular and aimed at Keystage 1 and 2. They are available on the FORCE website www.force.org.uk for schools to download.

LWT lead guided educational activities for schools and families on Crane Park Island and using the class room facilities in the shot tower.

The Shot Tower, with its display material on the history and nature conservation, is open on Sunday afternoons, and typically receives between 50 and 100 visitors, around half being children.

There are opportunities with both groups to get involved in hands on conservation work and join special events during weekends and school holidays.

LWT have organised successful community events such as a production of 'Wind in the Willows'.

7.6.2 Parks Events

The Council encourages the hire of parks to appropriate organisations. The Friends and ward councilors 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 found at: www.richmond.gov.uk

A number of Fun Days and Community Days have been held by the Friends group in recent years.

7.7 Marketing

Promotion and marketing of Crane Park is carried out through a range of methods, the Council to ensure that local people and visitors to LB Richmond upon Thames are aware of the park.

Regular press releases are issued to raise awareness of issues and successes. Press conferences are given for more major stories.

Community activities are at the core of the marketing for the site, with local people encouraged by posters and emails to attend volunteer tasks, monitoring days or meetings to discuss proposals.

Events are held or attended as opportunities arise.

The combined efforts of the organisations involved have been very effective at campaigning together when necessary, for example when achieving the highest vote for Crane Park in the GLA's Help A London Park competition by encouraging local people to register their vote.

7.7.1 Entrance Signage

A corporate style of signage for Richmond's parks and open spaces was launched in 2007. It was designed to be attractive and informative.

7.7.2 Internet

Information about the park is available on the council’s website: www.richmond.gov.uk.

Information on The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) can be found on their webpage here: <https://www.force.org.uk/>

7.7.3 General Promotion

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

8. Achievements and Action Plan

8.1 Achievements

Changes and improvements made at Crane Park in 2021-22 include:

- User survey report completed by FORCE
- Surface clearance for accessibility of the Brick Tower
- The two meadows on the east and west side of Hospital Bridge Road are now being managed as natural meadows but were previously exotic.

8.2 Action Plan

Item of work and location	Year		Timing	Resources
	2022	2023		
Improve interpretation on site by erecting pollination station signage		Y	To be installed 2023	Parks Team and Continental Landscapes
Organise high vis patrols between park patrol contractor and the Police	Y	Y	Ongoing	Parks Team and Parkguard
Continue reviewing weed management throughout the site	Y	Y	Ongoing	Parks Team, FoRCE and Continental Landscapes

8.2.1 Development and Renewal

As indicated previously, while the section is open to changing demands from the local community with regards to facilities within any of the borough’s parks, major changes to or developments of the parks facilities are not envisaged. 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 team will continue to work with The Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE). We are committed to being receptive to concerns and suggestions voiced individually or through community groups.

8.3 Operational Commitments

This is presented in tabular form and includes the most important elements of the day to day maintenance of a park, 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
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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 the River Crane Environment (FORCE). The Plan will run from January 2022 to December 2023, with an interim progress update in January 2023.