

From: [Foi Enquiries](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: EIR-17-1013 - Green Flag Awards
Date: 03 August 2017 14:03:33
Attachments: [Further Information - Right to Review & Appeal.pdf](#)
[EIR-17-1013 - Duthie Park.pdf](#)
[EIR-17-1013 - Hazlehead Park.pdf](#)
[EIR-17-1013 - Johnston Gardens.pdf](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your information request of 18 July 2017. Aberdeen City Council (ACC) has completed the necessary search for the information requested.

On July 17, 2017, Keep Scotland Beautiful announced the 2017 winners of the Green Flag Award in Scotland.

These decisions are based on inspections. After each inspection, a form is filled in to produce an inspection report.

Please email me copies of each inspection report for all the parks that were inspected within your council area – whether or not the park in question received a Green Flag Award,

Please refer to the attached reports. Please note that Seaton Park is still to be judged and so we do not hold a report for that.

We hope this helps with your request.

Yours sincerely,

Information Compliance Team

INFORMATION ABOUT THE HANDLING OF YOUR REQUEST

As the information which you requested is environmental information, as defined under Regulation 2(1) of the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (the EIRs), ACC considered that it was exempt from release through FOISA, and must therefore give you notice that we are refusing your request under Section 39(2) of FOISA (Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002). However, you have a separate right to access the information which you have requested under Regulation 5 of the EIRs, under which ACC has handled your request. Please refer to the attached PDF for more information about your rights under the EIRs.

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Green Flag Award 2017

Name of Site: Duthie Park, Aberdeen

Managing Organisation: Aberdeen City Council

Desk Assessment Feedback (Management Plan and supporting documentation)

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
Presentation	The layout of the MP makes it easy to follow through the GF requirements. It is concise and to the point. Is a 10-year working document for HLF bid and provides information for day to day management	Judges would suggest the inclusion of photographs would be of great benefit to judges that didn't already know the park as well as an updated Park Plan that includes access/parking shows location within Aberdeen City and relationship to core paths and cycle routes. Suggest annual review of 10-year plan should ensure clear distinction between what has been carried out and what has yet to be done
Health, Safety & Security	The park would seem to offer suitable facilities for healthy pursuits. Various staff on site with varying remits which should enhance feeling of safety during staff working hours. Some paths have been upgraded to enable all abilities users. The MP suggests that play equipment is available for all ability users.	Limited lighting in the park and open gate policy which could allow anti-social behaviour. Out of hours contact details and information to facilitate responsible park use could be available. Check scheduled maintenance achieved for 'Bandstand to be repainted in 2015 & Railings to be painted in 2016'
Maintenance of equipment,	Information suggests that buildings, fixtures etc have been upgraded and are maintained	Has the recommended asset management system been put

buildings & landscape	<p>or checked by other council sections on a cyclical basis. MP contains regimes for the maintenance of play equipment.</p> <p>The appointment of additional gardeners shows commitment to the high horticultural standards within the park.</p> <p>Good to see that the Japanese Garden has been revisited and a new maintenance plan put in place.</p>	in place to record/improve response?
Litter, cleanliness, vandalism	Litter picking regime and staff presence should maintain cleanliness and reduce litter.	Judges would suggest that incidents of vandalism/anti – social behaviour, police involvement be logged and included in MP during annual review. The costs of rectification could also be included.
Environmental Management	<p>Inclusion of SUDS system during recent upgrade will be of benefit in reducing water usage.</p> <p>Good use of Biological controls in glasshouses.</p> <p>Aim to reduce pesticide/herbicide and fungicides are welcomed.</p> <p>Green Waste recycling and leaf mould formation and use are beneficial in this setting.</p>	<p>It may be beneficial to include ACC Sustainability Policies either as a link in the MP or as an Appendix. This should also include details of how these should be focussed on the park to further improve the “park ecology and long term financial operation.”</p> <p>A plan showing the recently installed SUDS system would be beneficial for the judges along with some idea of the water saved and associated costs.</p> <p>Urgent consideration should be given to rain harvesting from all buildings associated with the park as a source of free water to the point of plans and costings to attempt to secure funds.</p> <p>Judges would suggest that at annual review & monitoring of of pesticide, fungicide & herbicide use, figures for usage of all be included which will allow future judges to gauge success to meet the aims. Judges noted that usage seemed to be heavy and noted response which unfortunately did not contain any reference to any specific review and findings.</p>

		Specific information on progress of investigation into litter recycling would be of benefit to the judges. This could be contained within annual review.
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage	It can be seen from MP that significant work has been carried out within the park in the last few years and that a maintenance programme is in place for the many listed features. Reference is made in the MP to differing grass cutting regimes in different areas of the park.	It would be beneficial to judges for a plan of these areas to be included within the MP.
Community Involvement	The MP and Friends website suggest that there is high community involvement from the restoration project onward which is to be applauded. Pictorial evidence of differing age groups carrying out planting on Friends website.	It may be beneficial for judges if joint meeting minutes/notes were made available to judges either through MP or available during the visit. Note/minutes from Friends meeting as above
Marketing & Communication	Some good information available on ACC website with link to the Friends website. ACC park site is unfortunately standard Council format which does necessarily extoll the virtues of Duthie Park in full. It appears that the pictorial heritage of the park and records of events has been passed to the Friends group. Information about access by public transport can be found through links to external websites or by clicking on link to alternative parking leaflet. I would be better for the visitor if timetables were embedded in the site and all links work effectively. The Friends are making an effort to publicise events through website/facebook and to recruit volunteers but there is limited information about the group, its constitution/terms of reference and how best to get involved.	Consider developing a more interactive Duthie Park specific website which could be invested in by ACC, Friends and other relevant user groups Improve availability of online information including how to access the park by public, transport. Encourage Friend to provide contact details, links to newsletter, minutes and constitution online Consider communicationg with the public about the vision for the park and future management/development Expand use of social media opportunity to engage with different audiences e.g. twitter.
Overall management	The Management Plan is of good standard which reflects Green Flag standards and the aims of ACC for the period until 2020. It states that annual reviews will take place. There are a number of related plans which should also form part of the overall park management comprising the CMP, Historic Research Supplementary Document, Duthie Park Audience & Access Development Plan,	No indication is given to who the author of the plan is, what discussion has taken place with the stakeholders of the park which could be easily added at annual review. The MP presented for 2017 gives no indication that reviews have taken place, by whom or any actions decided.

	<p>Training Plan and Volunteer Plan</p> <p>The Duthie Park Manager prepares a quarterly Report to the Duthie Park Steering Group (representatives from ACC and the friends) identifying “actual” progress in delivering the Development Plans against both 5 Year Action Plan targets and obtaining the Group’s direction in respect of any key issues arising</p>	<p>Judges would suggest the inclusion of a “Review Sheet” which will be completed annually with the details of the review group and actions taken. This sheet could also be used to highlight to judges of any changes from previously presented MP. It may be beneficial to judges to show the linkage from front line staff and the MP – possibly from notes of toolbox talks or team briefs.</p>
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Additional comments

While it is difficult to balance the requirements of the MP with all the information that could be included, consideration should be given to the creation of a Management File which would be kept on site and presented to judges during their visit. This could quite easily contain information that may not be relevant in the current MP but will all the same show the continual development of the park, previous events and the development of the interaction between the authority and the community/Friends group. Previous records could also be stored there which would not only assist the judges but should also assist management as a one stop shop for information. Some of the reports currently prepared for other purposes would add significantly to the value of the MP.

Field Assessment Feedback

Band score – 55-59

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
A Welcoming Place	<p>Duthie Park has a strong identity from outside with the recent wall and ongoing fence work giving it an almost imposing feel and feeling of importance. These works have been/ are being done in a manner which does not detract from this feeling.</p> <p>Signage/noticeboards/maps/plans of park at all entrances/gates and are of a good standard and</p>	<p>The one weakness is with parking arrangements – time limited with mention of fines for exceeding time limits – though this was explained as part of HLF funding.</p> <p>Annual visitor numbers could</p>

	<p>GF certificate is being displayed. The Green Flag is flying at the Polmuir Road entrance to the park which is considered the main entrance. There is no doubt that the vast array of improvements have increased greatly the attraction of the park which in turn has resulted in increased visitors.</p> <p>Gates are open at all times and are equipped to record visitor numbers and times.</p> <p>The options of the three play areas, ponds, horticulture, glasshouses and restaurant (when open again) make Duthie Park a destination park with attractions for a wide spectrum of Aberdeen residents and visitors.</p> <p>David Welch Winter Gardens has a range of interpretation boards and leaflets including information about local granite quarrying, orienteering in the park and the refurbishment project as well as a rotating exhibition space-currently a school project.</p> <p>There has been a reduction in the number of cricket wickets to one and set playing/match times which has increased access for all other user groups. Park and boating pond well used for relaxing, recreation, events, exercise classes/groups.</p> <p>Pedal boats can be hired during the summer from third party provider.</p> <p>Several education rooms are available for group use in David Welch Winter Gardens and the ranger base.</p> <p>Distinct house style of interpretation being introduced (does not include heritage interpretation in the park)</p>	<p>be included in MP at review and would be of great benefit to the judges.</p> <p>Display contract details on noticeboard and ensure information about current events and volunteering opportunities is up to date and available.</p>
Healthy, Safe and Secure	<p>The scale and open layout of the park give it a sense of tranquillity even when there are fairly high numbers of visitors undertaking a wide range of activities.</p> <p>The width of the paths/roads allow free movement of pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders and the odd works vehicle. The paths in the main are in good condition with a variety of surfaces.</p> <p>At the pond areas lifesaving equipment was in place.</p> <p>Weighted gated access between lower play area and car park to ensure children remain safe.</p> <p>A section of wall has recently been rebuilt after severe damage after flooding.</p> <p>Two customised raised beds suitable for wheelchair access are available in the community garden area.</p>	<p>Records of checks on lifesaving equipment could be included in MP.</p> <p>More seating around play areas when budget available.</p> <p>Consideration of remedial work at play areas where eroded which is being caused by the sheer number of users – while this does not represent a serious risk at present monitoring will be necessary and the preparation of a remedial plan with costs to access funding streams.</p>

Well Maintained and Clean	<p>While the park and its infrastructure have greatly benefitted from HLF funding, the staffing structure and MP are such that the park should be able to maintain the current very high standards. The judges noted the ongoing work on the prepared beds for annual planting soon. One area of herbaceous planting was noted that had some small annual weeds but that was next to where the staff were weeding, but nothing serious.</p> <p>The areas within the Winter Gardens were also maintained to a very high standard and are a credit to the staff.</p> <p>There is an ongoing, planned programme of refurbishment in the David Welch Winter Gardens to address corrosion and the replacement of glass.</p> <p>Anticipated opening of refurbished café, under lease arrangement in the summer</p>	Keep up the good work!
Environmental Management	<p>Ongoing investigations in to water usage is ongoing as is monitoring of pesticide/herbicide use.</p> <p>Biological controls in glass houses are evident and a recent contract has improved performance.</p> <p>We were advised, as per MP that in general terms the use of herbicides is limited.</p> <p>Peat usage seems to be being addressed in MP though the continued use of annual bedding will always mean that peat use will be present for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>2015/16 Flood recovery programme in place – electric supply to holding tank/linked lakes to be relocated. Tender to be selected for work to be undertaken to ensure that the water circulation system for the linked lakes will be reinstated and electric supply relocated.</p> <p>The biomass boiler now provides up to 80% of the energy needs in the winter gardens and is linked to Feed In Tarriff. Operated by an external contractor with financial benefits to the park/authority.</p>	<p>Hopefully it will be possible to set deadlines for the investigation for alternative/original water source and for this to be included in the MP.</p> <p>At review include previous year's figures for biological control – these figures are already available from ongoing monthly monitoring by current contractor.</p> <p>Include usage figures for chemical use in annual review.</p> <p>Investigate the opportunity for litter recycling when the council changes collecting/sorting policy.</p>
Biodiversity Landscape and Heritage	<p>While the landscape is, in the main much on the formal side, the newly created wetland feature should provide another layer of habitat that will be of great benefit, not only to the wildlife but also as a teaching aid for the coming years.</p> <p>The Granite area is of great interest with its information board describing the various granites and the quarries they came from.</p> <p>The reclamation/rebuilding of the rock garden is a superb example of what can be done with an</p>	<p>The judges suggested that it may add more interest to consider adding a map showing the location of the quarries at some point in time.</p>

	<p>old feature. This work was aided by the Rock Garden Club.</p> <p>The community garden is another wonderful feature with the park with its fruit trees and vegetable plots.</p> <p>Partnership with Aberdeen Bee Keepers Association to house 3 hives behind the winter gardens which can be seen from the safety of the winter gardens.</p> <p>HLF funding grant conditions ensure that work undertaken complies with set standards to reinstate and maintain heritage features.</p> <p>Wall panels reinstated beside east and west entrance gates reinstated after refurbishment post 2015/16 flooding.</p> <p>Park staff receive induction training enabling them to answer questions and tell park users about the park's heritage.</p> <p>Park guide training now in place with 10 volunteers recruited who will be able to provide guided walks and interpretation.</p>	
Community Involvement	<p>It was apparent during the visit that community involvement is a strong part of the success of the park. The groups who assist the park from the Friends, Rock Garden Club, Volunteer Guide and volunteer gardeners and to all other regular users of the park.</p> <p>Staff based at the old bowling green are heavily involved with various groups from nurseries, primary schools, youth organisations and families by providing a raft of differing opportunities on a regular basis.</p> <p>It was apparent at the end of the visit that a different set of users had converged on the park – runners and keep fit groups/training sessions.</p> <p>Ranger services provides excellent education programme engaging with local schools from the city and shire as well as running a range of holiday workshops for children, families and adults and providing a tailored support for children with challenging behaviour.</p> <p>RHS runs a variety of gardening workshops with park staff for new gardeners and aspiring young gardeners.</p> <p>Outreach collaboration project developing with RGU and Garthdee allotment group.</p> <p>Former tennis courts are converted to a community garden. Designed by a volunteer, the garden reflects the local landscape of mountains to the sea and is divided into four growing quadrants: fruit, vegetables, farm and formal garden. The volunteer coordinator works with schools and the SRUC on a farm education programme with a selected school and Park Force volunteers, twice weekly to manage and maintain it.</p>	<p>Include greater detail of involved groups with MP.</p> <p>The judges felt that the MP could be improved by either creating a link to the activities being carried out or by a management file.</p>

	<p>Some volunteers with particular needs are referred by organisations e.g. NHS, Inspire, Momentum and Foyer.</p> <p>The Friends group meet monthly and is actively engaged in fundraising to support education, volunteering, amenity improvement and is involved in the park steering group.</p>	
Marketing and Communication	<p>The Information streams – leaflets and a good number of information boards throughout the park available at the park are first class, The council website is a generic one and may lack some information and could be improved, likewise the Friends one lacked contact details but on site their tireless work is evident.</p> <p>Aberdeen City's strategy of In Bloom, Green Flag entry could also be seen as a strategy for encouraging visitors from not only the Aberdeen but also from further afield for those who have an interest in Horticulture.</p> <p>The Friends produce a monthly printed newsletter which is available from the winter gardens and have a Facebook presence and website.</p> <p>Part of the winter gardens can be hired and used for weddings or concerts.</p>	<p>Consider how to optimise the proposed upgrade to the City Council website to promote the park, its activities and access to it by public transport and how best to integrate this information with the Friends.</p>
Management	<p>It was apparent to the judges that the staff and volunteers they met during the visit are dedicated to maintaining the high standards in the park.</p> <p>Plans are in place to refurbish the remaining glasshouses which will mean all have been refurbished.</p> <p>There are plans to turn one of the lodges in to a learning centre/office but listed building status means that is going to be difficult.</p> <p>During the visit the judges noted the dedication of all staff to the park.</p> <p>Good management and good interaction with the public and staff are essential to keep the park moving in the right direction.</p> <p>It was clear during the visit that there was a substantial amount of information available through leaflets and various plans that could be incorporated into the MP.</p> <p>Reinvestment of underspend and donations facilitated development of enhanced education staffing programme and facilities such as award</p>	<p>Consider incorporating summary of actions from Audience and Educational Plans into Management Plan, describe the annual review process for each and include any maps and illustrations/photographs as appropriate.</p>

	winning playpark. Comprehensive Audience Development Plan and Volunteer and Training Plan in place which is reviewed annually.	
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Additional Comments

The judges would like again to thank all staff and volunteers that they met during their visit and thank them for their hospitality.

HLF Funding, support from the Council, the Friends and dedicated staff have transformed the park and ensures that it is managed and maintained to a very high standard for the benefit of all.

The excellent education and volunteering programme has facilitated wider community engagement in the park and enabled a wide range of local organisations to work in partnership with park staff to develop successful and popular activities in addition to general use by all age groups and abilities for recreation and activity. The total number of visitors counted in 2016 was 1,135,126, a testament to its ongoing popularity as an accessible, quality green space.

It would appear that the park is in good hands and the judges hope that the interaction with groups will continue to maintain and indeed add to the current level of success.



Green Flag Award 2017

Name of Site: Hazelhead Park, Aberdeen

Managing Organisation: Aberdeen City Council

Desk Assessment Feedback (Management Plan and supporting documentation)

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
Presentation	<p>A well explained document that is easy to follow. Good to see plans and photo of the park in the Management Plan.</p> <p>MP states that it will be reviewed annually but gives no indication of when and by who or how it is recorded.</p> <p>There is mention of Greenspace Scotland Climate Change Report.</p> <p>There is a quote from Councillor Neil Cooney covering many sites including Hazelhead.</p>	<p>It would be beneficial to include some photographs of the features on the park to show judges the scale eg mentioned trees, plantings, play areas etc. as it is often difficult for judges to grasp the size of the park and features from the MP.</p> <p>It would be beneficial to include a review sheet at the front of the MP which would be a record of the changes that have been discussed and/or made and who was involved in the review.</p> <p>Judges felt this should either be contained within the MP, as a link or as a section or held in the Management File which would be available to judges during their visit. Actions from this report that influences the park should be included within Action Plan.</p> <p>It would be prudent to date this quotation to give it some context regarding the redesign</p>

	Suggestion of an accessibility audit	of the heather beds. Change the text from 'should' and 'could' to 'will be' carried out
Health, Safety & Security	Multi usage for sport/health benefits/recreation family use mentioned in MP also frequency of play equipment checks etc. Staff being on site may reduce anti - social behaviour and usually adds to the feeling of security to users. MP suggests that First Aid is available at the restaurant.	Recommendations section of the plan uses the term 'will be', this gives the notion that it doesn't or hasn't been done but will be while the Action Plan states that it is being done regularly. Other terms used are 'could be' and 'should be' This gives a sense of a lack of commitment.
Maintenance of equipment, buildings & landscape	The MP seems to list items which are requiring attention of one sort or another. The 10 year management plan should include all the actions that the plan contains under the "Recommendations" headings.	The judges felt that costings for these works should be sought and these along with a more specific timescale would be beneficial. The Judges Feedback sheet from 2015/16 recommends these actions and this should be actioned asap. Judges would suggest that their inclusion, along with costings could be employed as a vehicle to access additional funding.
Litter, cleanliness, vandalism	The MP contains information that explains litter picking and general maintenance.	Little mention is made of vandalism, how it is dealt with. Previous judges suggested there was no information regarding staff hours in the park. This should be addressed to include work hours through the week and also if staff are on duty at the weekend. It would be beneficial to include, at annual review, details of anti - social behaviour within the park over the last year.
Environmental Management	There are general aims about not using horticultural peat and reducing chemical use. Plant waste is recycled and energy use in pets corner being investigated. Water metering and monitoring is mentioned along with a proposal for SUDS.	While the aims are there, there is little to describe how reductions are going to be achieved. At review, it would be beneficial to include spray records/chemical usage as a driver to using less. Judges suggest that this is a project that could be

		<p>investigated, costed and included with a timescale within the MP due to its importance for the future. Some consideration should be included into the future review of annual vs herbaceous plantings in line with global warming and its suggested effects.</p>
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage	<p>The MP suggests that the nature of the park is such that there is a broad range of biodiversity though also suggests that some of the plantings may not be appropriate and that a number of works over the years have detracted from the cultural and heritage value of the park”.</p> <p>The MP suggests that some features of significance are present but would be unrecognisable to visitors.</p>	<p>The MP should also contain firm deadlines for the changes that are being proposed – this again may benefit from the inclusion of costings as a driver to access funding. Judges felt that it would be useful for these items to be explained along with the required works and associated costs to return the park to what it is felt that it should contain.</p> <p>It may be possible to create information boards about these features to explain.</p>
Community Involvement	<p>The MP suggests strong links with the community.</p>	<p>Greater explanation of the contribution made by and the interaction with the Friends and other groups would be beneficial to judges. A list of achievements or photographs of the work or contributions carried out by the friends could be added to reflect the valuable efforts. If joint meetings are held links to minutes could be added at annual review. If surveys/consultations are carried out, these should also be available to judges via MP or during the visit in a management file.</p>
Marketing & Communication	<p>Marketing is via ACC website and the Friends webpage. Lots of proposals for leaflets and increased marketing.</p>	<p>Judges accept that Council websites tend to be generic and not specific. Hazelhead Park may benefit from an improved version but would not be crucial.</p>
Overall management	<p>The MP suggests that the Park management has undergone changes in the past when the systems may not necessarily have worked for</p>	<p>The MP should show linkage through to front line staff whether discussed at</p>

	the benefit of the park. The MP lists in great detail the areas where improvement is needed in the park.	induction, annual review to try to ensure staff are on board and aims of the MP are agreed upon.
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Additional comments

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Field Assessment Feedback

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
A Welcoming Place	Excellent signage at entrances. Car parking with disabled parking bays both close to entrances. A wool project carried out by Hazelhead Primary School on the trees brightened up the avenue to the park on an extremely wet day.	Judges had slight concerns about car parking/flow of traffic/pedestrians. Continue adding signage and information panels as indicated in Action Plan.

Healthy, Safe and Secure	<p>Major drainage works were taking place during the judges' visit and it is foreseeable that these may go on for some time.</p> <p>Large, mixed age childrens' play area which has regularly undergone upgrades.</p>	<p>It may be beneficial to visitors to the park if ongoing works were highlighted/signed at the gate or put on the website?</p> <p>Points of contact/First Aid needs highlighted, may have been on Information board?</p>
Well Maintained and Clean	<p>Gents toilets were clean, fresh and tidy – currently in a Portaloo while ongoing works are being carried out at the Pets Corner which is currently closed for major refurbishment. Maze building and the Lodge are undergoing survey to consider repairs needed and future options.</p>	<p>Park is looking more cared for and sharper than last visit by one of the judges.</p>
Environmental Management	<p>Heat and power for the new Pets Corner building are being supplied through area wide Biomass boiler.</p> <p>Judges noted that grass/path edges had been cut/edged rather than sprayed and trees had areas edged round them to make grass cutting easier.</p> <p>Judges were advised that some areas were now cut by pedestrian mower as it was felt that staff from outwith the park did not take the same care on ride on machines.</p> <p>Leaf mould from Duthie park had been incorporated into the rose beds that were replanted last winter to reduce the risk of pernicious weeds becoming established in the park.</p>	<p>Use the Climate Change Report to inform further improvements around and within the park.</p>
Biodiversity Landscape and Heritage	<p>The majority of horticultural features are well maintained with the heather beds undergoing a major overhaul which is due to end at the end of this year.</p> <p>The lodge is a listed building.</p> <p>An area of wildflowers have been sown.</p> <p>Some discussion was had during the visit regarding some areas where it is anticipated that some major refurbishment works will be required to bring shrubbed areas back in to scale with their surroundings.</p>	<p>Continue the restoration of beds while maximising existing features. Good work.</p>

Community Involvement	<p>Friends group have been of great benefit to park management. Advised that regular meetings take place.</p> <p>Information on the Friends, incl. contact details on notice boards.</p> <p>Once complete, the building in the Pets Corner will house an Educational room which will be of great benefit to local schools and groups.</p> <p>A current Climate project trail was in the park which was again the work of local school children.</p> <p>Another school was taking part in orienteering in the torrential rain!</p>	<p>Judges suggested that notes from these meetings be either added to the MP or a Management File.</p> <p>Hopefully this will include a community noticeboard area for school projects etc.</p> <p>Make sure the Friends are valued and their work is recognised and promoted to encourage new members.</p>
Marketing and Communication	<p>Events are held at the park throughout the year and Hazelhead has a long history of serving the people of Aberdeen well and continues to do so.</p>	<p>Seems difficult to quantify but traffic counters could go some way to show rise in visitor numbers over the years and would justify the value that investments made in the park are worthwhile.</p>
Management	<p>Management changes in the recent past seem to have re-invigorated the staff and the standards in the park.</p>	<p>Continue the good work and use the judges' comments to get support for improving the park.</p>

Additional Comments

Judges appreciate the magnitude of raising the standards in the park and addressing the issues that maybe had been overlooked in the past. The continuing struggle to source funding to carry out the necessary works from both within and outwith the council are seen as a major task.

It became apparent during judging visit that the park is managed by a very small management team. They are to be congratulated on the work they and their staff do and the high standard they have achieved and the processes that are now in place to maintain the high standards.

Their interaction with staff, The Friends and the local school is also to be commended.



Green Flag Award 2017

Name of Site: Johnston Gardens Aberdeen

Managing Organisation: Aberdeen City Council

Desk Assessment Feedback (Management Plan and supporting documentation)

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
Presentation	The Management plan uses the Green flag framework to structure the content which makes it easy to follow. It comprises assessment of current status, recommendations and appendices which summarise the 10 year management and maintenance schedule. Maps are included and linkages are noted to Structure/Local plans as well as ACC Health & Safety policy.	Forthcoming annual reviews of the management plan should make a clear distinction between what has been achieved what is scheduled for the forthcoming year/s. Maps and photographs add value to the document but they need to be good quality reproductions – scaled and labelled- and supplemented by relevant text/context. ACC in bloom achievements (introduction and appendices) is not relevant to the MP. It would be helpful to evidence Stakeholder consultation in developing the MP by including a list of organisations/consultees
Health, Safety & Security	Appears to be safe access to the gardens and good linkages to core path network, as well as public transport links. Children's play area is visually inspected regularly, inspected every 2 weeks by council staff and inspected by independently inspectors annually	Consider measures that could be put in place to address anti-social behaviour and provide first aid response if practical
Maintenance of equipment, buildings & landscape	Areas identified for improvement include Toilet provision, car parking, planting in the rockery, repair and maintenances of buildings, pond, railings, paths and upgrading	Timescale should be identified for proposed accessibility audit and tree survey.

	play equipment.	
Litter, cleanliness, vandalism	Measured priority response procedure in place for vandalism and graffiti as well as litter picking, dog fouling and cleanliness.	Recent reports of vandalism have prompted police patrolling of the area – measures should be discussed and enacted as appropriate and records kept of incidents
Environmental Management	Aim to maintain and improve composting practices, reduce use of pesticides and avoid horticultural peat	Where practical Improve arrangements for recycling litter. Record & monitor use of pesticides for annual review
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage	Bird/bat boxes on site and locally grown plants used when/where and possible. Countryside Rangers involved in conservation management, data collection and running workshops for the public	Continue to plant native species to increase biodiversity.
Community Involvement	Commitment to community engagement demonstrated through appointment of community engagement officer, establishment of dedicated Friends group, support for volunteers and proposals for establishing educational opportunities and events	Identify roles for volunteers and encourage involvement. Subject to the council's data protection guidelines and agreement of the friends. Make minutes and contact information for Friend's group/office/bearers available to sustain recruitment.
Marketing & Communication	An ACC webpage is dedicated to Johnston Park	Consider how best to promote Johnston Gardens appropriately to relevant audiences through ACC, community engagement officer and Friends group.
Overall management	The MP reflects the expectations of green flag standards. It identifies a number of works which need to be carried out over the next 10 years to address the past degradation and clearly aspires to engage more fully with the community and Friends group to develop educational programmes/events and raise funds for projects that will enhance biodiversity, provide volunteering opportunities and improve the fabric of the park and its buildings & infrastructure.	Establish a clear process for monitoring and reviewing the MP on an annual basis. Ensure that there is full stakeholder engagement in the process of confirming achievements, setting the future agenda for action and when and how these will be delivered.

Additional comments

It appears that garden and management staff, the community engagement officer and Friends group are working together to maintain and enhance the Gardens for its users

Field Assessment Feedback

Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
A Welcoming Place	The well-kept unimposing entrance opens to a broad main (core) path bordering the central pond and gives way to a network of smaller meandering paths, both tar and granite steps, which traverse the slope through the mature trees, colourful rhododendrons, shrubs and alpine. The garden planting provides open views and seclusion and a tranquil 'magical' haven for relaxation, contemplation. Popular and well used by all ages the garden also provides a backdrop for wedding photographs. Well signposted with brown signs.	Implement plans to install new sign/notice boards and display emergency contact details, information about current events, volunteering opportunities and the Friends group. Undertake minor access improvements on paths as necessary
Healthy, Safe and Secure	The small scale and layout of the park give a sense of intimacy and tranquillity. The paths in the main are in good condition with a variety of surfaces and widths, repairs are carried out as and when required.	Implement as appropriate any finding from recent Health & Safety Audit. Install closed top rubbish bins when budget permits and any practical measures to deter gulls. When plans allow make minor changes identified to the path layout.
Well Maintained and Clean	The gardens are open at all times and are very well maintained and very tidy with adequate provision of rubbish /dog fouling bins. The toilet block is open when staff on site and volunteer 'Friends' open and close the toilets over the weekend. The pond recently was dredged, the railings have been stripped back and repainted. The outside of the toilet block, the shelter and the bridges have also been repainted and the curved bridges are fitted with anti-slip. The play area for small children is in good order and antisocial behaviour is dealt with.	Refresh and paint toilet interiors as soon as practical.
Environmental Management	Gardens are chemical and peat free. Traditional weeding, raking, hoeing undertaken and green matter is recycled through the nearby Hazlehead facility. Pond water is recirculated to maintain flow. Strong working relationship with arboriculture team, dead trees made safe and selected pruning in discussion.	Consider management options for pondside rhododendrons and part removal of diseased elm and design possibilities for remaining stump.
Biodiversity Landscape and Heritage	Bat and Bird boxes installed and occupied. Some planting to encourage bees and butterflies and small area of the island less cultivated. Variety of mature deciduous coniferous, species trees. Extensive rhododendron planting for colour and aesthetic	Continue work on revitalising rockery with native plants and continue to support small scale educational activities with local groups

Community Involvement	Recently established Friends volunteer (2 hour sessions every 6-8 weeks) to help the garden staff. They receive on the job training to undertake maintenance and gardening activity and other tasks including collecting visitor numbers (estimated 126K last year). They are supported by the community engagement officer who liaises with the garden staff to develop the volunteers work programme and risk assessment for each activity.	Continue to consolidate and support the Friends and encourage volunteer involvement in working with the gardens staff and further fund raising
Marketing and Communication	There is a dedicated web page on the ACC website and volunteering opportunities are promoted on the community engagement officer's facebook page and local radio programme.	Consider how best to encourage volunteers to join the Friends.
Management	Strong cooperation between those involved in caring for and managing the gardens and sensitive consideration of management options related to maintaining the character and aesthetic of the gardens. Appears to be quick response to occasional incidents of vandalism	Clarify the process for annually reviewing and updating the management plan, make clear who is responsible for coordinating the review, who is involved and when it will take place.

Additional Comments

The beautiful and magical gem, Johnston Gardens, is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the garden staff. The excellent relationship between the staff, management, community engagement officer and the recently established Friends group has created volunteering opportunities which encourage local people to participate in the upkeep of the garden and to help maintain it for all to enjoy. There is a strong sense that people benefit from the beautiful surroundings and the opportunity to be at peace and reflect in such a tranquil spot.