

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH

Parks Working Group Notes

8th Sept 2022 - Held at the Reading Rooms

Present:

Cllr J Ballman – Chair

Cllr M Lucas

Cllr J Yeowell

A Briggs – CSNPC Estates – Clerk

A Reeves – CSNPC Clerk – Online

A Webb – CSNPC Community – Online

Notes:

Meeting started at 6.00pm

Cllr J Ballman opened the meeting and gave a summary overview reminder of why the Parks Working Group had been set up.

Item 1.

A Briggs presented the draft of the Terms of Reference. Drafted for the Parks Working Group.

Cllr J Ballman gave comment to the inclusion of Open Space and referred to the historic Open Space assessments completed by Swindon Borough Council.

Cllr J Ballman agreed with the contents set out within the Terms of Reference.

Members agreed.

Action – A Briggs to present Terms of Reference to the October 2022 Leisure & Recreation Committee for consideration.

Item 2.

A Briggs presented a written definition of 'What a Park or Open Space is'. This was read verbatim as;

A park is an area of natural, semi-natural or planted space set aside for human enjoyment, both social and recreation, and/or for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats. A green space that is freely accessible to the public.

Parks may consist of grassy areas, rocks, soil and trees, but may also contain buildings and other artifacts such as statues, fountains or playground structures.

Some parks have fields for playing sports such as football, and paved areas for games such as basketball.

The definition of open space within the Town and country planning act is as follows:

"open space" means any land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground - Town and country planning Act 1990 – Section 336

The group agreed with the definition as presented.

Action – A Briggs to present the definition to the Leisure & Recreation Committee for approval.

Item 3.

A Briggs spoke at length about the drafting a policy and management plan for Parks and Open Spaces.

Comment was given to the comprehensive document that had been prepared for St Marks as part of the Green Flag Award Scheme application.

It was commented that this document compiles detailed information on Park management along with other key information.

A Briggs mentioned other CSNPC Policies, including the Tree Planting Policy and Environmental Policy, commenting that as part of the overarching Parks Policy, these other policies should be referred too. A Briggs further suggested key local and national documents and policies should be referred too, including;

- 1) CSNPC Grounds contract
- 2) Open Space Audits
- 3) National Planning Policy Framework
- 4) Swindon Local Plan
- 5) Joint Strategic Needs Analysis

Cllr J Ballman commented that the document would need to be a working document, achievable and transferable to allow for sites to be reviewed and included in future.



A Reeves advised the group that the St Marks management plan document was drafted in 2020. That CSNPC were awaiting confirmation of their assessment date from the assessors. However, the document would need to be updated to reflect any changes over the past 2 years.

The document was presented to the group.

A Reeves explained that the foundation of the Green Flag document could be replicated to other Parks and Open Spaces, as the relevant information was Swindon wide. There would then be a need to complete specific site assessments as a working document.

Conversation was held about the award scheme, replication to other sites and remedial works.

There was further discussion around landscape architecture and seeking external support for recommendations.

A Briggs explained he would draft a short overarching policy document, of which the detailed plans would sit as appendices.

Cllr J Yeowell queried whether there were set size distinctions for Parks and Open Spaces.

A Briggs referred to the Swindon Borough Council Local plan and provided associated information in response.

A Briggs informed the group that there were no registered CSNPC Parks listed on the SBC local plan or Borough website.

A Briggs advised the group of a software developed as part of a study by Exeter University. The software called Outdoor Recreational Value Tool (ORVAL).

It was explained that ORVal reports values and visit estimates for existing and new greenspaces that are derived from a sophisticated model of recreational demand. These numbers are predictions of a model and not actual counts of visits to a particular greenspace or actual measures of the welfare which that greenspace provides.

The group were informed that neither St Marks or Penhill Park were listed on the software. However, that it could be a useful tool as part of park and open space evaluation.

A Reeves interjected discussion to advise Members that an announcement had been made confirming HRH Queen Elizabeth had passed away.

A Briggs Summarised action points and the meeting concluded.

Action – A Reeves to reissue the St Marks Green Flag Document.

Action – A Briggs to draft an overarching policy. Draft policy to be issued to all for comment.

Action – A Briggs to contact Idverde, as to re-establish communication with their Green Flag Assessor.

Action – A Briggs to seek costs from the Idverde Contract Manager, as to allow for consideration part of 23/24 budget setting.

Meeting closed at 6.35pm