

# BURY KNOWLE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

2018 - 2022

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Customer comments

## 1.0 A Welcoming Place

Bury Knowle House, built around 1800, and its grounds, was purchased by the City Council in 1931 and opened as a 7 hectare public park the following year. Many of the original historic features including the Ha-ha, listed stone walls and mature trees have been preserved, creating one of Oxford's most unique and picturesque parks.

More recent improvements include a sensory garden, tennis courts and an extensive new 'Destination Standard' play area. World famous children's authors C S Lewis and J R Tolkien both lived locally, and their work is celebrated in the park by a number of sculptures which depict characters from their books.

Bury Knowle lies on the London Road in the busy commercial suburb of Headington, and as well as being a popular family park for the local community, is also used as a place to picnic and relax by the many shop and office workers; and by students, a large number of whom are based in the area. The backdrop of the historic house and parkland also provides a fine setting for the regular community events held in the park each year. Despite the number and diversity of users, antisocial behaviour is rare, and there is a good relationship with the local community and a well-established and proactive Friends' group.

This plan sets out what management strategies are currently in place for the park and what improvements could be made to further enhance it. Although the current period of financial restraint means there is a need to be realistic and pragmatic, this management plan maintains an aspirational approach, and identifies potential avenues of additional funding, such as capital bids and sponsorship.



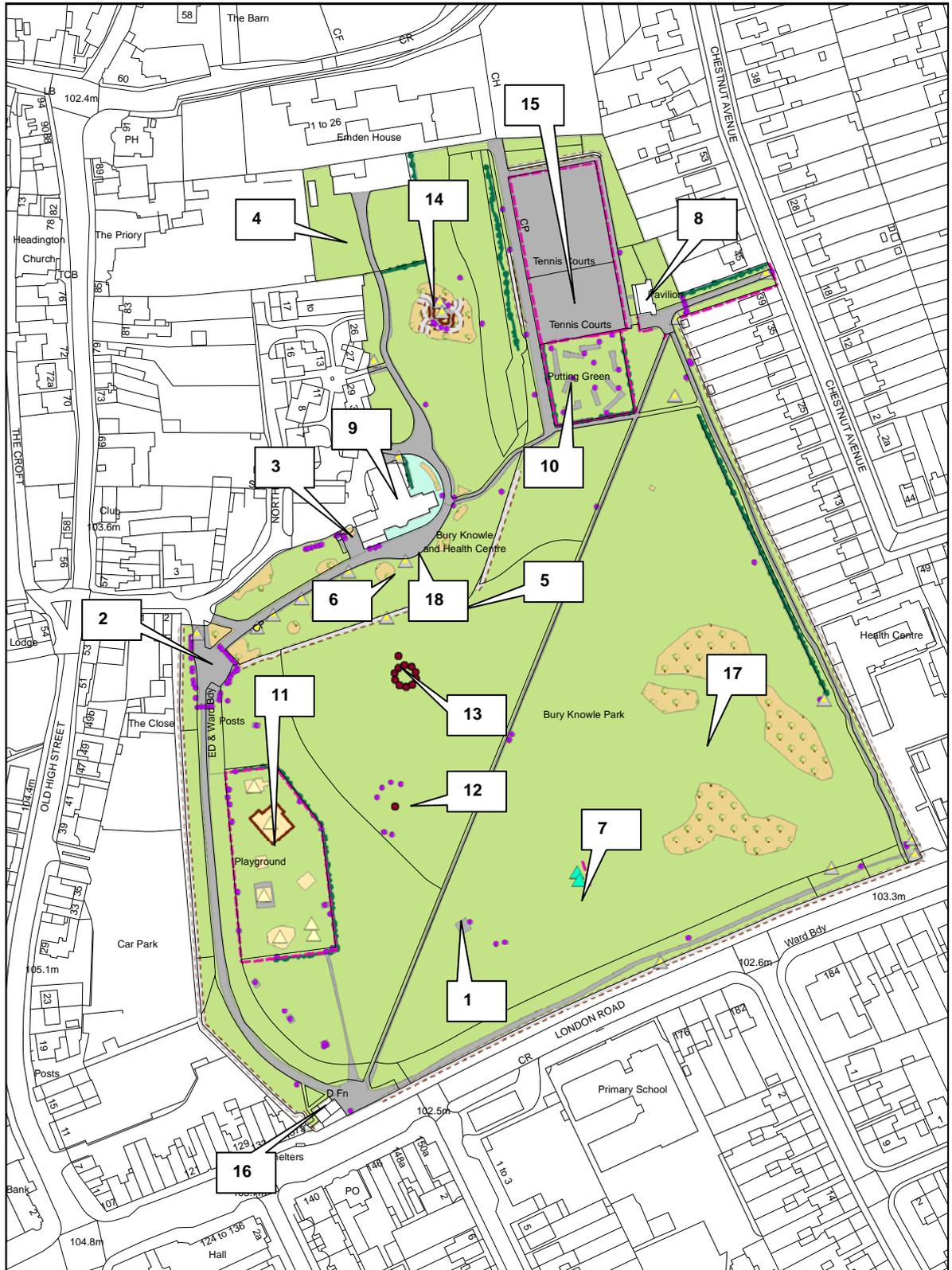
### 2016 Green Flag Judges Comments

**"Bury Knowle Park has unique character and is obviously much used and cherished by local people. The park has been refurbished with the addition of an innovative children's play area and some good art features which fit**

**in well with the design and layout of the park. Park staff are knowledgeable in respect of this park."**

## 1.1 Site location and asset map

Postcode OX3 9HX



## Legend

———	OS MasterMap ( Line)
▲	Play Equipment
▲	Sports Equipment
▲	Utility
●	Furniture
●	Architectural Features
-----	Retaining Wall
-----	Fences
———	Edging
—●—●—●—	Hedge (Line)
■	Hedge (Area)
■	Playsurface

1. Basket ball hoop
2. Car park
3. Cycle racks
4. Lock's Court
5. Ha ha
6. Jubilee tree and plaque
7. Kick-about football area
8. Kiosk/Gardeners mess room

## Grass

■	<all other values>
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## Type

■	Amenity Grass
■	Conservation Grass
■	Fine Grass
■	Rough Grass
■	Sports Pitch
■	Difficult Ground
■	Hard Surface
■	Planting
—	Watercourse
■	Water Body

9. Library/Bury Knowle house
10. Miniature golf
11. Play area
12. Sculptured seating and Story Book Tree
13. Sculpture – Wheel of Hope
14. Sensory garden
15. Tennis courts
16. Toilets
17. Woodland/copse
18. Aslan



## 1.2 Park features and infrastructure

### Basketball hoop

The basket ball practice hoop is located close to the play area and is well used.

### Benches and picnic tables

Benches are located throughout the park and all are in good order.

Picnic tables are provided within and adjacent to the play area, within the mini golf enclosure and by the kiosk. All are in good order.

### Bins (dog waste)

There is a dog waste bin at each of the four main entrances and two more in the central area of the park. A number of these bins were recently replaced with a new larger design. The dog waste bins are emptied at least twice a week. They are well-used and dog fouling is not a major issue in the park (see section 4.7 for dog control policies).

### Bins (litter)

Litter bins are provided throughout the park and they are emptied at least once a day. Keeping on top of the litter is one of the major challenges in this park. Its popularity and proximity to shops and takeaways means that the bins can need emptying up to three times a day during the summer months, which can use up a lot of staff time. After a successful trial of a Big Belly Solar Compactor bin, a number have been installed.

### Car park

There is a small car park at the North Place entrance which is often full. In 2010 bays were marked with one designated for disabled use. Parking is for park users only; however, because it is free and so close to the shops it can be abused. Signs have been erected warning that unauthorised vehicles will be clamped but the council has no powers to enforce this.

Some areas need re-surfacing and the bollards repairing.



### Cycle racks

There are secure bike racks next to the library. Consideration will be given to also installing them at other entrances in the park when funds become available.

### Flower beds

- How the displays are managed changed in 2010: they used to be filled with annuals which were changed with a spring display planted in October and a summer display planted in May, which was wasteful and increasingly expensive. Now, the material required each season is reduced by investing in new perennial plants and shrubs.
- Large beds are planted with shrubs and perennials in the centre to provide a structure to the display and all year interest.
- Architectural shrubs are used in place of spot plants which were previously replaced each season.
- A strip of bedding is used around the edge of the beds to provide colour high-lights throughout the year.
- A greater variety of flowering plants is used to cover the ground which improves the appearance of the park and suppresses weed growth.
- Some smaller beds are planted with wild flowers, and in 2014 wild flowers were included under the copse.
- Using less material reduces the environmental impact of using peat, reduces the energy used to produce plants in a heated green house and reduces waste caused by plastic pots. The need for watering is also reduced.
- The Friends of Bury Knowle Park have planted bulbs and other plants, particularly near entrances. They have an ongoing commitment to planting and maintaining the central beds in the sensory garden

### Ha-ha

The Ha-ha runs along the front of Bury Knowle house and has a revetted limestone wall. This feature originally acted as a boundary to keep livestock and deer out of the more immediate grounds and garden without the need for a fence or hedge, thus maintaining uninterrupted views of, and from, the house.

An area of the Ha-ha was rebuilt in 2012 to repair damage caused by fallen tree. It is now in good order.



### **Jubilee Tree**

In 2012 the Friends of Bury Knowle Park raised funds to plant an Oak Tree to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A planting ceremony took place in front of the library building in the presence of Sister Frances Dominica, Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire. A plaque provides information about the tree.

### **Kick-about football area**

There is a small unmarked football pitch with mini-goals in close proximity to the play area. It is heavily used so the posts are moved routinely to prevent goalmouth wear and tear and the area renovated. This was originally a single kick-about goal but was converted into an informal pitch following requests from park-users.

### **Kiosk / Gardener mess room and store**

In 2016 the former pavilion received major investment to refurbish some of the interior and make sound the exterior. The building which is in three sections, now consists of a mess room and store for the gardener or maintenance teams to use when working in the park at one end. Kiosk facilities for refreshment and to book the miniature golf in the middle. A vacant room, which still needs refurbishment at the other end.

In November 2014 following a tender process San Remo Catering were successful in winning the contract to run the kiosk in Bury Knowle Park. They bring many years' experience of catering in public parks, working with local authorities and key stakeholders. They have worked with OCC on waste transfer and re-cycling and recently won an award for their efforts.

### **Library**

Headington public Library is located in Bury Knowle House. Oxfordshire County Council rent the ground floor and part of the basement to use as the library from the City Council on a 21 year lease and at the time of writing the lease is being renewed. The lease ensures they are responsible for the internal areas they occupy, along with the upkeep of the building, cleaning and maintenance works.

The County Council have built a lift for disabled and buggy access at the side and there are two car parking spaces for use by library staff next to the house.

### **Lights**

The lights from the car park to the library are on a timer. They are controlled and managed by Oxford City Council City Estates Department.

### **Miniature golf**

The miniature golf is located at the top of the park next to the tennis courts, and customers pay and collect the clubs and balls from the kiosk. The very limited opening hours of the kiosk also limits the use of this facility.

In 2014 the perimeter hedge was lowered and fence removed to improve visibility of this facility to the rest of the park. However, usage remains low.

This facility is looking tired and is in need of refurbishment, but the low level of use and uncertain viability of the kiosk make it unlikely that it would attract the required funding. The city council will work with the Friends group to investigate whether this facility should be maintained, or the enclosure converted for an alternative use.

## Paths

The majority of the paths in the park are hoggin, though those near the tennis courts and kiosk are tarmac. The hoggin paths are edged and topped up regularly. The central path was widened in 2013 with assistance from the Community Payback Team to reduce costs. It provides an important green and well-used cut through into Headington

## Play area

- Bury Knowle Park benefits from a prestigious Narnia inspired play area, where you walk through a wooden sculptured wardrobe as in the story. The play area is full of fun and imaginative games, from a unicorn and crocodile see-saw to a pirate ship immersed in sand with a water game.
- Bury Knowle Park received £85,000 to create this 'Destination Standard' play area, which was supplement by a successful Play Builder application.
- Groundwork Thames Valley was commissioned to create the facility, and they undertook an extensive consultation exercise with local schools, park users, friends groups and local residents to establish a design.
- The work was completed in 2011, and the park has greatly benefited from this new play area, which in turn is much enhanced by its fine setting.
- It is well situated with access and visibility being good from all areas of the park and it provides a focal point.
- It has proved extremely popular and has greatly increased the overall usage of the park.
- An independent insurance company inspects the facility every 6 months.
- There is an in-depth monthly play area inspection as well as a weekly visit by the Landscape and Play Team.
- In 2016 there was a city wide consultation on making fenced plays a voluntary non-smoking zone. This was widely supported and has been implemented.

## Railings and gates

The iron railings and gates located close to the library, and at the various entrances, date from the 1930s and were installed when the park was first opened to the public. They are generally in good condition and were all repainted in 2010 using labour from the Community Pay-back scheme.



## Sculpture

- In 2005 the trunk of a dead cedar tree was turned into a sculpture know as The Story Book Tree, by local sculptor Matt Cave, featuring characters from the books of the Headington authors J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis: the dragon Smaug from *The Hobbit*, Aslan the lion from *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and the horse from *The Horse and His Boy*. The work was sponsored by Oxford Brookes University, Oxford University Press, A.C.Nielsen, Knowles (Oxford) Ltd, Symm & Co. and WHM Consulting Ltd.
- In 2017, after a successful TESCO community fund bid by The Friends Group, a second stump was carved into Aslan in front of the library.
- Two carved seats, one with a dragon serpent and one with a beaver, were installed next to the tree in 2006; a third with an eagle was added in 2007, a fourth in 2012 with two owls and a mouse. The latest seat instalment in 2013, depicts the C. S. Lewis's Narnia' character Reepicheep, a mighty mouse, donated by the chair of the Friends group. These seats are very popular with children and many parents use them as a setting for photographs.
- The wooden sculptures in the park do have a finite life, and need wood preservation treatment.
- In 2002 a local artist Dianna Bell worked with 10 schools in the area to create a Wheel of Hope Sculpture. Children from all backgrounds, cultures and religions shared their ideas of hope for the world. They ask for peace, a better environment and a desire for people to work together
- The sculpture is a series of relief tablets, modelled in clay and cast in concrete. They are set into the grass to form a circle. Diana led workshops with eleven schools and there is one tablet from each school. The children drew designs and each child made a small tile. The final design was modelled by the children and then cast by the artist.
- The relief tablets are set into the grass at ground level, and as a result do require regular maintenance to stop moss covering them and the grass growing over the edges.

## Sensory garden

The sensory garden was installed in 1992/93, and is located to the side of Bury Knowle House, adjacent to an area of sheltered housing for the elderly. In 2013 it was in poor condition with a broken water fountain, which prompted the Friends Group to act. They successfully campaigned and raised funds to improve the area. They then worked with the local school and Waterperry Gardens to redesign the area and have worked to re-furbished, re-plant and now maintain the area. It now contains plant species that are particularly interesting to touch, smell and hear.

In 2016 their successful TESCO community fund bid paid for a much needed disabled pathway to the garden. This work could not have been completed by the Parks Service alone, the enthusiasm of the Friends Group has added a lot of value to the project, and the Parks Team is very grateful for their input.



**Signage**

There are two historic metal signs with the city’s coat of arms, sited close to the London Road entrances. These stand above the height of the wall and advertise the park on the Headington side. They are very old and require refurbishment. There are currently no external brown signs on the approach to direct visitors to Bury Knowle Park

Good quality welcome signs were installed at all the main entrances in 2010. There are also two community notice boards. One attached to the kiosk and the second supplied by The Friends Group at the main entrance.

The history of the house and park, and its connection to children’s authors J R Tolkien and C S Lewis, would make a good subject for an information board.

**Table Tennis**

Following a successful Oxford wide *PING!* Programme, two table tennis tables were installed in 2013, one adjacent to the play area and the other on an unused area in the tennis courts.

**Tennis courts**

The tennis facilities are run by Parks Tennis, a community interest company, who have been working in partnership with the City Council for 3 years now to bring low-cost tennis and coaching for all ages and abilities to Oxford's public parks. Booking can be made on-line or through an app on a smart phone. Charges apply, although a number of free slots are still provided.

The Parks Tennis programme offers something for everyone including pay & play court bookings for those that just want to play a social match, coaching for those looking to learn the game or improve their skills, cardio-tennis for anyone wanting to focus on fitness, Advantage Tennis just for the men, Tennis Tuesdays just for women and the Oxford Tennis League for that friendly competition.

**Toilets**

The toilets are managed and maintained by the City Council’s Cleansing Services. They were refurbished in 2014 which included replacing the slabs around the outside. They are located on the perimeter of the park along London Road and serve the shoppers and visitors to Headington as well as park users.

**Walls**

The perimeter walls are contemporary with the house (Listed Building references: Park wall: 1485/59A). Any repairs or alterations require planning permission. They are in good condition and repairs are undertaken promptly.



## 2.0 Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

### 2.1 Historical background

The new London turnpike road built in the late eighteenth century made Headington, which until then had been rather inaccessible, an ideal place for the gentry of Oxford to build their country retreats.

In about 1800 Bury Knowle House was built for Joseph Lock (1760–1844), an Oxford goldsmith and banker of All Saints Parish who was Lord Mayor in 1813 and 1829. In 1804 Lock erected the present wall that bounds the park, and this made him very unpopular at the time as it formed a barrier across the coffin route from the outlying hamlet of Headington Quarry to St Andrew's church.

In 1809 he leased the coach-house and stables of the Hermitage, and these later became part of the growing Bury Knowle estate.

The last private owner of the house was Henry Mark Beaufoy in 1926. He then sold it, together with its large park, to the City Council in 1931 and the grounds were opened as a public park the following year. The house was initially used as a baby clinic, but became Bury Knowle Library in 1934 (rechristened Headington Library in 1999).

The world famous authors, and giants of children's literature, C S Lewis and J R Tolkien, both lived in Headington; and the park has a number of sculptures which reference this connection, including a 'Narnia Gate' in the new play area, and a story book tree and carved seating depicting characters from the Lord of the Rings and the Lion Witch and Wardrobe books.

### Maintaining the historic fabric and setting

- The Park is situated in The Old Headington Conservation Area. Further information is available at: [http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/Old\\_Headington\\_occw.htm](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/Old_Headington_occw.htm)
- The Headington Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2032 had a positive result in the referendum on May 2017. The plan promotes the conservation and enhancement of green open spaces and encourages use of trees and biodiversity
- Listed Building references: Bury Knowle House: 1485/59. Park perimeter wall: 1485/59A.
- The house is owned and maintained by the Estates Department of Oxford City Council.
- No new planting is permitted within 4 meters of the Ha Ha.
- Ivy is not allowed to establish on any of the historic walls or Ha ha
- Any new trees planted are of species in-keeping and appropriate to the historic parkland.
- Events in the park are monitored to ensure they do not cause damage to the historic fabric.



## 2.2 Biodiversity

One of the aims of Oxford City Council's Green Spaces Strategy is: "to promote the central role that green spaces play in contributing to the city's biodiversity, sustainability and heritage".

Although some survey work has already been done in Bury Knowle (described below), there is now a need to undertake a more detailed and scientific study of the park's biodiversity to ensure it is managed in a way which protects and encourages endangered or declining species. Contact has been made with Oxford University Department of Biodiversity to arrange for students to undertake surveys and set up projects in a number of the City Council's parks, including Bury Knowle. There is also a project to recruit volunteers to undertake biodiversity surveys of wildlife and habitats in the park. Once data has been obtained from the surveys it will be used to create a more detailed conservation strategy. There may also be the opportunity to tailor or create specific habitats to attract new species.

### Wildlife habitats

The RSPB and the Oxford Ornithological Society ([www.oos.org.uk](http://www.oos.org.uk)) carry out bird surveys across Oxford in various parks. In 2011 the Friends Group and St. Andrews School built over 20 numbered bird boxes and the school are monitoring occupancy.

### Trees

The park retains a number of fine specimen trees from the original parkland, including Sequoias, Beeches and a Tulip tree. Three native lime trees were added to the park in 2014 to represent the army, navy and airforce.

A full tree survey is completed every three years. This measured tree type, location, age, height, diameter, crown spread, vigour, condition, risk and any recommendation for tree surgery. All trees were plotted on GIS and stored on our tree management system.

### Grasslands

The areas of short grass are first cut just before Easter, and then on a ten day cycle, until the grass stops growing in the autumn (depending on the weather).

There is a copse area where the grass is allowed to grow longer in order to encourage insects and other species



## 3.0 Community Involvement

### 3.1 Stakeholders and partners

The Friends of Bury Knowle Park Group was established in 2009, just before the first Green Flag Application. This active and dedicated group is still going strong in 2017 and has contributed significantly to the park's on-going improvement by raising funds and undertaking regular volunteer work. This has included the complete refurbishment of the sensory garden, maintaining plant containers and beds and bulb planting. They also organise photograph competitions, an annual summer social gathering, bird box building, and promote the park and the group at various community events.

The introduction of Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAG), which coordinates the skills, powers and resources of the Police, local politicians, Council and numerous other agencies, has resulted in a significant reduction in the level of antisocial behaviour in the city. The city council's Green Space Field Officers, who patrol the parks and enforce the byelaws, form an important element in the NAG team and specifically target their resources to tackle issues highlighted as NAG priorities. They have been particularly successful in greatly reducing dog fouling, fly-tipping and littering which previously blighted a number of the city's green spaces, and have achieved this through a combination of education and enforcement.

The City Council works with Abingdon and Witney College to deliver an apprentice scheme. The apprentices gain experience in fine turf, horticulture, landscape work, arboriculture, countryside management, cemeteries, Rangering and business administration. It is very successful, in 2007 an apprentice won the ASPE Apprentice of the year competition and in 2010 an apprentice won the Freeman of the City of Oxford award for the best apprentice in horticulture.

The City Council worked in partnership with Groundwork to deliver the Play Area Refurbishment Programme where Bury Knowle Park received £116,250, which was supplemented by a successful PlayBuilder bid.

In the past the City Council worked with the Thames Valley Probation Service, under the Community Pay Back Scheme, to provide useful work for offenders which also benefits the local community. This has included work in the park to clear vegetation, edge paths and paint all of the railings.

#### Stakeholders in the park include:

- The Friends Group
- Headington Library
- The residents of the flats in Bury Knowle House
- External contractor for the kiosk
- St. Andrews Church of England Primary School
- Parks Tennis (formerly Premier Tennis)
- The residents of Lock's Court



### 3.2 Consultation

Since 2000 Parks Customer Satisfaction Surveys have been completed annually across parks and recreation grounds in Oxford, including Bury Knowle Park. Park users are interviewed using a standard questionnaire, or customers can complete the survey on-line. This identifies patterns of use and customer improvement ideas which are recorded in an annual report (see Appendix 2) and fed into the Five Year Action Plan (Section 5.0).

Extensive consultation by Groundwork was carried out for the new play area, including schools, residents, drop in sessions and all stakeholders in the park.

In 2016 a new survey was carried out to better understand the way Oxford's residents use and value their local green spaces (see Appendix 1). Nearly 500 people responded, making this one of the largest surveys of its kind in the county. The findings revealed just how much people treasure their local parks and nature areas, and that they consider them vital to the health and well-being of themselves and their families:

- Almost all the respondents (98%) felt that their local green space plays a positive part in their happiness and well-being
- Almost all respondents (98%) felt that their local green space helps make their local area a better and a more desirable place to live
- The majority (95%) of respondents felt that their local green space helps to encourage them and others to keep fit and healthy

Many respondents also took the opportunity to praise the quality of the green spaces provided by the City Council and the way they are managed:

- "Oxford should be proud of its green spaces and the council and staff who develop and maintain them"
- "Oxford's green spaces are an absolutely vital part of the city. Oxford City Council does an excellent job in providing facilities and upkeep/ maintenance"



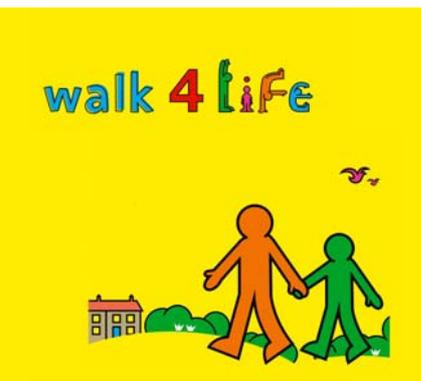
### 3.3 Events

- Bury Knowle Park is licensed for the performance of plays, films, live music, recorded music and dance from 09.00hrs until 23.30hrs. The Council does not organise any events itself in the park, but encourages community groups and corporate organisers to use it as a venue.
- Regular events held in the park include films, brass bands, community and charity days and the annual Headington Festival.
- The Council's Events team supports small-scale community events in the park, which are covered by the park's licence. Events organisers must seek approval from the Council's Events Team.
- Oxford City Council has a team that helps events organisers to comply with relevant legislation, and to organise safe events. Parks staff play an important part in getting the park ready, monitoring the event and returning it back to normal afterwards.
- The Friends Group has expressed an interest in seeing more events in the park, including story telling and involvement in Arts Week.
- The Friends group attend the annual Headington Christmas Fair and the annual Headington Summer Fair to raise awareness of the group and fundraise for plants.

### 3.4 Volunteering

In 2017 the City Council achieved the "Investors in Volunteers" award. It promotes volunteering in green spaces in many different ways including:

- Joining the Friends of Bury Knowle Park
- Join the weekly volunteering working group organised by the Countryside Ranger and Volunteer Coordinator. Receiving volunteers from the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) which is the foremost organisation protecting wildlife and enhancing iconic landscapes. Also from the Oxford Conservation Volunteers (OCV), a voluntary organisation that has been carrying out practical work conserving the wildlife and traditional landscape of the Oxford area since 1977.
- Since 2010 annually welcoming an undergraduate intern from a University in Holland studying Leisure Development. They provided a lot of support in the customer satisfaction survey analysis.
- Volunteering as an individual to work alongside the Green Flag Park gardeners.
- Business team building days.
- Volunteering to be a Health Walk Leader which includes a free day of training by Natural England.



**BURY KNOWLE PARK  
LEARN TO NORDIC  
WALK COURSE**

Free Taster Session on Thursday  
3rd November

Course Starts on Thursday 10th  
November

11am - 12noon

6 week course

Bury Knowle Park

£40 per person

Limited number  
of places  
available so book  
your place NOW

Burns 46% more calories than  
ordinary walking!

Easy on the knees and joints

Great for neck, shoulder and  
back problems

Suitable for all levels

Social, safe, outdoor activity

For more information or to book your place contact  
Emma Collins at [ecollins@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:ecollins@oxford.gov.uk) or Lynda  
at [lynda@beautyage.co.uk](mailto:lynda@beautyage.co.uk)

**GO ACTIVE**

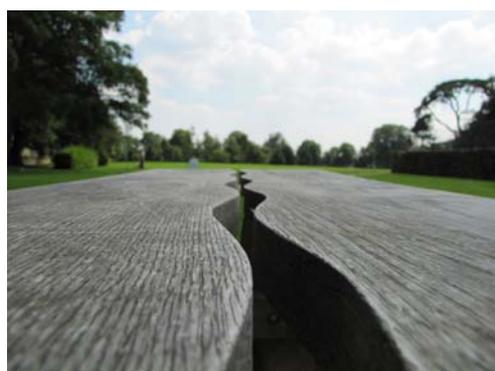


### 3.5 Contribution to health & wellbeing

One of the aims of the Green Spaces Strategy is: “To promote the central role that green spaces play in contributing to the city’s health and well-being”. There are worrying trends relating to the nation’s health: obesity and less active lifestyles have led to a rise in preventable diseases which is placing increasing pressures on the National Health Service. Bury Knowle Park provides a wealth of opportunities for exercise and informal sport. Evidence shows a brisk walk in a local green space every day can reduce the risk of heart attacks, strokes and diabetes by 50%, fracture of the femur by 30%, colon and breast cancer by 30% and Alzheimer’s by 25%. Add to this the positive impact of exposure to nature and green space on stress and mental health, on aggression and violence within inner-city communities and on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder amongst children, and the full picture in relation to health and wellbeing and access to green space can start to be understood.

Bury Knowle Park offers many activities that contribute to the national and local health agenda:

- In 2016 there was a city wide consultation on making fenced play a voluntary non-smoking zone. This was widely supported and has been implemented.
- Tennis courts
- Grassed areas for informal sports
- Organised health walks are very popular in Bury Knowle Park and well attended providing an important amenity for the local community
- Silver Joggers Group
- Play area which includes adventure play equipment for older children
- Opportunities to volunteer
- Feel part of a local community



## 4.0 Management

Outstanding performance at Oxford City Council has been recognised by achieving a number of high profile awards:

- The Best Achieving Council category at the MJ Achievement Awards in 2014
- Investors in People Gold standard
- Investors in Volunteers
- Customer Service Excellence, which is an independent accreditation to recognise organisations that deliver excellent customer service and drive customer-focused changes.
- Oxford frequently performed well in the Thames and Chiltern in Bloom
- Regularly shortlisted for the APSE Parks & Horticulture Service of the year
- Six Green Flag Awards.

Oxford City Council's mission is: 'Building a world-class city for everyone'.

This management plan contributes towards the council's priorities set out in the Corporate Plan for 2016 - 2020 including:

- A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy
- Strong and Active Communities
- A Clean and Green Oxford
- An Efficient and Effective Council

The park management plans are one of a number of tools used to deliver the objectives set out in the Oxford Green Spaces Strategy 2012-2026, available upon request.

### 4.1 Vision for the park

The vision for Bury Knowle Park is: 'To work with the community to create a world class, vibrant and safe city park that promotes, health, biodiversity and learning, and is accessible to all.'

One of the aims of the Council's Green Spaces Strategy is: 'To achieve high quality green spaces across Oxford, including spaces that are nationally recognised for their quality and attractions'. The management of Bury Knowle Park contributes towards achieving this aim.

Despite the current financial climate, Oxford City Council has been very successful in obtaining capital funding to ensure the infrastructure of its parks is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century and meets the needs of its customers.

Improvements to Bury Knowle Park in the last ten years have included:

- Creation of a 'Destination Standard' play area which includes adventure play equipment for older children
- New welcome signs installed at the main entrance
- Introduction of a standard design for bins and benches
- Major renovation of the historic Bury Knowle House undertaken at a cost of £175,000 which included repair of the roof, façade and refurbishment of the interior.
- Repair of historic walls and Ha ha
- Repainting of the perimeter railings and gates
- Full tree survey undertaken (to be repeated on a three year rolling programme)
- Installation of a number of sculptures and an area of carved seating

- Success in obtaining further capital funding for the refurbishment of the kiosk pavilion and tennis courts
- Successful trial and installation of two Big Belly Bins
- Renovation of sensory garden and access path
- Installation of community notice boards
- Refurbishment of toilets and surrounding area

Much work has been done in recent years to restore the historic infrastructure of the park and house, and to greatly improve the play and sports facilities, but additional work is needed to further develop some of the facilities, improve the overall visitor experience and increase biodiversity.

There will also be a focus on meeting the needs of the wide variety of park users. This is particularly important at a time when there is a need to maximise the use of urban green spaces to promote healthy lifestyles.

A detailed list of aims and Five Year Action Plan is provided in Section 5.

## 4.2 Well Maintained and Clean

In 2010 (revised 2016) a full grounds maintenance specification and standards was written and applied to Bury Knowle Park, see Appendix 3.

One skilled gardener is based in Bury Knowle Park 3 days a week to ensure it is kept in prime condition throughout the year. The gardener is pro-active and has a can do approach, having been given autonomy and responsibility. In addition, mobile Green Space Field Officers visit daily to patrol the park, and specialist teams look after the facilities, trees and infrastructure.

The service has been accredited with IOS9001:2008 and ISO14001 and monitors the quality of its horticulture.

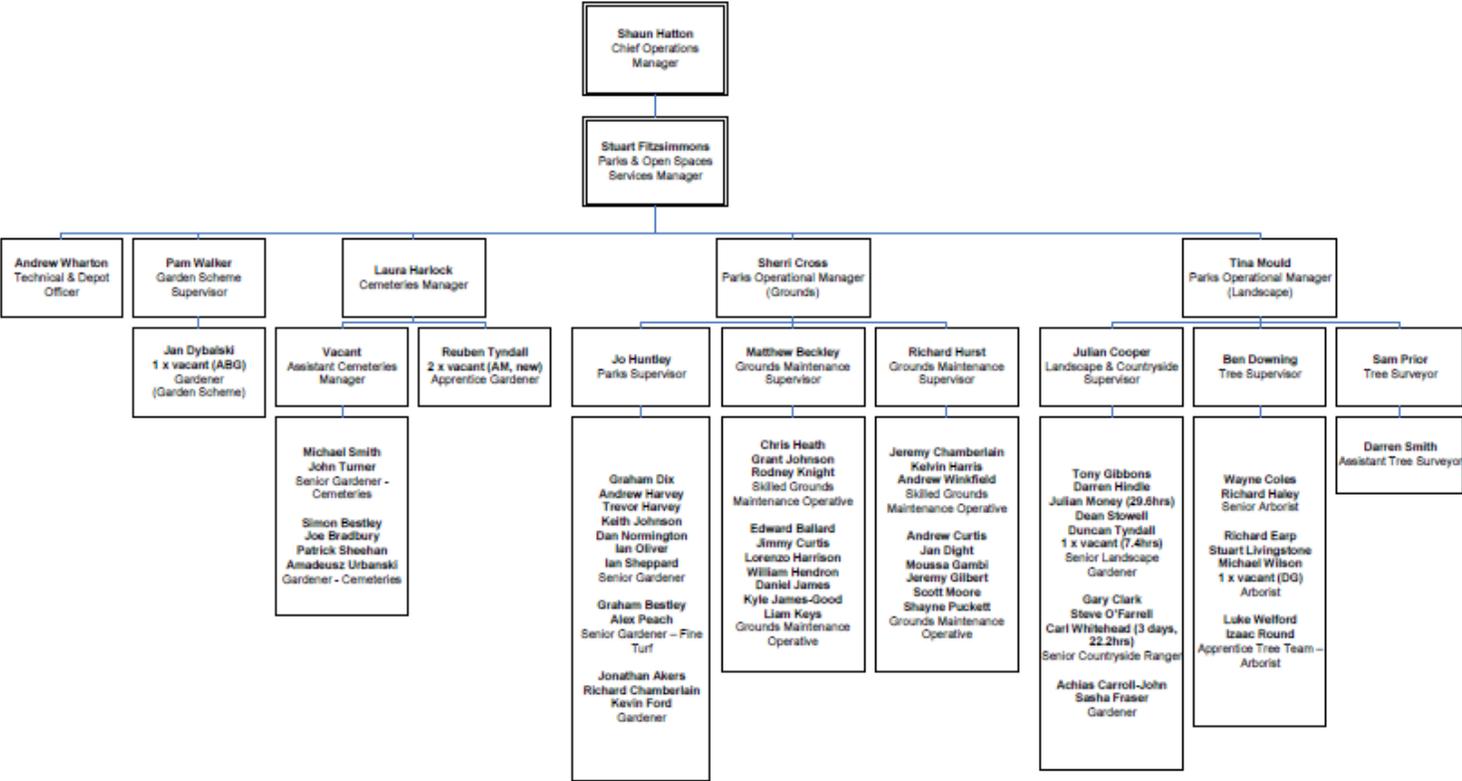


### Management structure

A re-structure at Oxford City Council in 2015 resulted in the management & maintenance of green spaces being located with the Parks and Open Spaces Team within Direct Services. Green Space Development and community involvement in green space is located within Community Services. At the time of writing Direct Services is creating a commercial arm, Latco, to undertake external work in addition to statutory work.

### Parks Direct Services

**Parks & Open Spaces Services Team**



**Community Services**



### 4.3 Marketing and Communication

The service has a marketing plan that provides a full audit of the current marketing situation, available on request. A leaflet is available to download from the website, or a hard copy can be obtained from the office containing information about the site and its history.

Detailed information, pictures and information about forthcoming events in the park are available at [www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk). A copy of the Bury Knowle Park Management Plan is available from the Parks office and on the website.

The service is increasing its use of social media, and now has a Facebook page and a Twitter account. It is including QR codes on new signage.

### 4.4 Healthy, Safe and Secure

Customers view the park as a safe and secure place because:

- It's usually very busy, especially due to the proximity of the Headington shopping area and the Library being in Bury Knowle House, and this helps to improve customers' perception of safety
- The park is open with few hidden dark corners; hence the lines of vision are good.
- There is lighting along the path to the library
- The play area is located close to the main entrance from London Road, a busy cut through to the shops, which allows for good natural surveillance from the pavement
- There is also a pedestrian crossing immediately outside the London Road entrance
- Daily patrols by the Green Space Field Officers who enforce the byelaws, ensure dog owners act responsibly, and issue fines to those who do not; tackle environmental crime and ensure the parks are free of graffiti, fly-tipping and vandalism
- Offensive graffiti on areas that we are responsible for will be removed within 1 working day. All other graffiti will be addressed within 7 days
- Presence of an on-site gardener
- Close proximity of Health Centre
- The park is also patrolled by the Green Space Officers, who monitor it during the busy weekends when the gardeners and other parks staff are not around. They enforce the byelaws, ensure dog owners act responsibly, and issue fines to those who do not, tackle environmental crime, and ensure the parks are free of graffiti, fly-tipping and vandalism.

Bury Knowle Park is covered by the Oxford City Council Byelaws and a site specific risk assessment, both of which are available on request.

In 2011 Oxford City Council and local Police teams were given new powers called Dog Control Orders to help deal with irresponsible dog owners. Any owner whose dog is out of control or causing a nuisance in a public place may be ordered to put the dog on a lead immediately or face an £80 fine or court action; and no one is allowed to walk more than four dogs at a time. In addition, the fine for owners who fail to clear up after their dog fouls in public place increased from £50 to £80 and owners can also be fined £80 if they allow their dogs to go into a fenced off play area.

At the same time as adopting the act 150, dog waste bins were installed in parks and recreation grounds across the city to provide a convenient means of disposal for dog owners. As a result dog fouling is not a significant problem in Bury Knowle Park.

## Staff

- All staff who use equipment are trained annually by external specialists. Staff are made aware of the Council's Health and Safety Policy (available on request) when they begin work. Procedures are included in ISO9001:2008. Internal copies are made accessible to all staff.
- The Parks Management Team undertake risk assessments on all equipment and machinery used by the department.
- Cutting machinery is only used by trained staff
- All staff are provided with, and are required to wear, appropriate safety equipment.
- All parks vehicles are included on a vehicle maintenance schedule, managed by the Council's Direct Services. Maintenance of vehicles is carried out in a dedicated garage within their depot.
- Fuel, equipment and machinery are all stored in a secure compound within Cutteslowe Park, with a small amount stored on-site.
- Oxford City Council has been accredited with Investors in People, reflecting its commitment to its staff. The Council values its staff and offers a full programme of training linked to an appraisal system.

## Play areas

- The Landscape and Play Team maintains the play facilities in Bury Knowle Park, completing weekly equipment inspections and quarterly safety inspections of the play areas. These inspections test the fixings, supports and components of equipment, and report any faults or required repairs.
- Every member of the team is fully trained in play area maintenance to ROSPA standards, and all have achieved RPII (Register of Playground Inspectors International) Operation Level.
- They are also trained in the use of machinery, health and safety, and all are CRB checked.
- The council's insurer carries out technical checks every 6 months

## 4.5 Environmental management

A high number of environmental principles are demonstrated within the service and applied to Bury Knowle Park:

- The service works with the Oxford City Council Climate Change Action Team which aims to tackle the effects of climate change and reduce the overall carbon footprint of its buildings and services.
- In December 2011 the Parks Team was accredited with ISO14001.
- Pesticides are used only where there are no practical alternatives. Where more traditional methods can be used, such as the removal of thatch by hand over a small area, or the removal of weed growth within fine turf areas, then these methods are carried out to minimize the environmental impact of using chemicals.
- A chemical log is kept in the store in the depot. When chemicals are delivered, their details are logged. When they are taken out, the user fills in a spraying log, recording when and where the pesticide was used, how much was used, the reason, the application method, the weather conditions and the protective clothing worn. All the contaminated items of PPE and containers are disposed of by an external registered company.
- Old play equipment, and any other metal items collected from the park is taken to the Parks depot and put in a metal skip. All scrap metal is recycled and used as a source of income.

- The service actively reduces the use of peat-based products wherever possible. When ordering floral displays via our suppliers we put within the specification that this is a requirement of Oxford City Council.
- The service utilises vehicles operated via alternative fuels including LPG and electricity and continually seeks to procure the most energy efficient and low-emission vehicles.
- To prepare for the likelihood of a drier climate in future, the use of bedding plants has been reviewed. More resilient plants such as Geraniums, Marigolds and Dahlias are used instead, along side perennial planting. With drier summers, and warmer winters with reduced risk of frost, we will eventually consider planting Mediterranean varieties of plant (non-hardy varieties). Any new trees and shrubs planted will be able to tolerate future conditions. If summers become even drier, the use of bedding plants may be reduced further.
- The Green Space Field Officers use electric bikes to patrol the city's parks. This has allowed them to beat congestion, whilst also reducing the council's carbon footprint and making significant savings on fuel and vehicle maintenance cost.

Oxford City Council's Procurement Strategy states, when buying materials, we will:

- avoid ozone-depleting chemicals & those with a high global warming potential
- use durable products and materials
- choose low-maintenance building materials
- choose building materials with low embodied energy
- use building products made from recycled materials
- use salvaged building materials when possible
- choose European soft wood over hard wood. Wood must come from schemes that have been certified as sustainable, e.g. by the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC). We will not use tropical hard woods such as teak, iroko and mahogany unless it has been reclaimed for reuse
- avoid materials that will give off gas pollutants
- minimise packaging waste.
- During the tendering process, companies are asked to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and those that comply are looked on more favourably.

## 5.0 Aims and Five Year Action Plan

Action	How	Resources	Timescale	2018 Review
<b>Buildings and infrastructure</b>				
Install more cycle racks	Install secure bike racks by the main London Road entrance	Source funding	2019	
Better control cycling in the park	Undertake a signage audit to identify need and locations etc. Consider embedded tiles signage to reduce clutter	Green Space Development Team	2018	
Put up external signage	Install brown signs on adjacent roads directing people to the park	Small capital money allocated for signage across all parks	2019	
Install an historical information board	The board would provide information on the history of the park and its connection to children's authors J R Tolkien and C S Lewis	Fundraising by Friends Group	2019	
Car Park	Suffers problems with commuters and local shoppers using the car park rather than park users. Continue to investigate ways to improve.	In-house	2018	
Request from the Friends Group for more seating	Rustic benches in the copse Circular benches around trees			

Litter in the summer can be a problem at the London Road entrance	Investigate possible solutions	Direct Services Streetscene Litter Team	2018	
Deep Clean Tennis Courts				
Mini Golf	Work with the Friends Group and other park users to investigate whether this facility should be maintained or the enclosure converted into alternative use.	Parks Development Team	2018	
<b>Biodiversity</b>				
Improve biodiversity	<p>Work closer with environmental groups such as BBOWT to improve biodiversity.</p> <p>Seek grant funding to survey groups of flora and fauna with the aim of identifying important habitat features and guiding their future management so as to maintain and where possible enhance the value of the park for wildlife.</p>	<p>GSD Team to seek funding</p> <p>GSD Team to work with environmental groups such as BBOWT</p> <p>Approach Brookes to assist surveys</p>	2018 on-wards	

Habitat improvements	Continue to leave deadwood in park. Drill holes in deadwood in copse	In house resources, local schools, BBOWT	2018	
Wild Flower Areas	Request from the Friends Group to plant wild flowers along the bank behind the sensory garden. This will provide greater visual interest and increase biodiversity (including providing food for pollinators). If successful it will be extended in future years	Possible funding from Friends	2018	
<b>Community</b>				
Firm up partnerships with the Library and the Health Centre		Parks Development Officers	Ongoing	
Access Audit		Approach Oxford Unlimited	2019	

## 6.0 Monitoring and Review

The Green Space Development Team, with Parks Direct Services reviews the management plan once a year. This review will incorporate a discussion on the comments and advice from the Green Flag judges. Progress will be measured against the Five Year Action Plan.

All parks staff will be made aware of the Bury Knowle Park Management Plan. All teams (Fine Turf, Landscape and Play, Trees, Green Space Officers, Grounds, Management) have regular meetings, and any actions relating to their respective teams will be monitored at these meetings.

Where individuals are given specific tasks in relation to Bury Knowle Park, it may be appropriate to include the tasks in their Personal Development Plan, and monitor through the appraisal process. User surveys will be carried out in the parks on an annual basis and scores will be used to monitor changes in approval ratings amongst parks users.



## 7.0 Supporting Documents

These documents are made available on request, and are also available to Green Flag Judges on the day of a tour.

1	<b>Grounds Maintenance Service Standards and Specification – Executive Summary</b>
2	<b>Bury Knowle Park Risk Assessment</b>
3	<b>Customer Satisfaction Survey results</b>
4	<b>Marketing Plan &amp; Leaflet</b>
5	<b>Winner of the 2012 Best Local Authority Park Thames &amp; Chiltern in Bloom Competition Also Category Winners Silver Gilt 2013</b>
6	<b>Friends of Bury Knowle</b>
7	<b>Refurbishment of Play Area</b>
8	<b>Press releases, Media Coverage, Events etc</b>
9	<b>DDA Audit – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010</b>
10	<b>Byelaws</b>
11	<b>Maintenance Documents</b>

## Appendix One: 2016 Value of Oxford's Parks & Green Spaces Results



### Summary

The City Council recently undertook an extensive consultation exercise to better understand the way Oxford's residents use and value their local green spaces. Nearly 500 people responded, making this one of the largest surveys of its kind. The findings revealed just how much people treasure their local parks and nature areas, and that they consider them vital to the health and well-being of themselves and their families:

- Almost all the respondents (98%) felt that their local green space plays a positive part in their happiness and well-being
- Almost all respondents (98%) felt that their local green space helps make their local area a better and a more desirable place to live
- The majority (95%) of respondents felt that their local green space helps to encourage them and others to keep fit and healthy

Many respondents also took the opportunity to praise the quality of the green spaces provided by the City Council and the way they are managed:

- "Oxford should be proud of its green spaces and the council and staff who develop and maintain them"
- "Oxford's green spaces are an absolutely vital part of the city. Oxford City Council does an excellent job in providing facilities and upkeep/ maintenance"

Conclusions are provided at the end of the report on the significance of the results, and how they should inform on-going and future investment and provision of green space in the city.

### 1. Background

In December 2015 The Land Trust commissioned a social value survey on its green spaces. With their permission aspects of the survey were replicated by Oxford City Council. A social value approach provides a method to quantify goods and services, which are not traditionally quantified monetarily.

The survey explored visitors' perceptions of parks, why they used them, the impact they make to people's health and well-being and how they personally value the spaces.

A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix A and compliments as Appendix B.

## 2. The consultation process

The on-line survey was open for 5 months from Sept 2016-January 2017. This was supplemented by on-site interviews. It was also promoted through social media and advertised in email auto-signatures and distributed to Parks Friends groups and at volunteer sessions.

A £25 shopping voucher prize draw was provided as an incentive to complete the survey, although 45% opted out of being put in the prize draw. A total of 498 surveys were completed; this is the highest recorded return rate for a parks and green spaces survey nationally since year 2000.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Sites Surveyed

Table below lists the sites surveyed and numbers of returned questionnaires:

Site	Total	Category from GSS
Florence Park	68	Green Flag City Park
Cuttleslowe and Sunnymead Park	62	Green Flag City Park
South Park	45	City Park
Bury Knowle Park	31	Green Flag City Park
Five Mile Drive Recreation Ground	26	Local Park
Lye Valley Nature Reserve	25	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Blackbird Leys Park	19	Green Flag City Park
Hinksey Park	19	Green Flag City Park
Port Meadow	17	<b>Countryside Site</b>
Shotover Country Park	16	<b>Countryside Site</b>
Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground	13	Local Park
Kendall Copse	11	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Oxford University Park	9	Other
Rock Edge Nature Reserve	9	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Headington Hill Park	8	City Park
Alexandra Park	7	Neighbourhood Park
Raleigh Park	7	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Fettiplace Barton	6	Local Park
Oatlands Road Recreation Ground	6	Local Park
Magdalen Woods	5	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Aristotle Lane Recreation Ground	4	Local Park
Botley Park	4	Neighbourhood Park
Grandpont Nature Reserve	4	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Kidneys Nature Park	4	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Meadow Lane	4	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Milham Ford Nature Park	4	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Barracks Lane Meadow	3	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Magdalen Quarry	3	<b>Nature Reserve</b>

Northway Park	3	Neighbourhood Park
Thames Tow Path	3	Other
Wolvercote Common	3	<b>Countryside Site</b>
Christ Church Meadow	2	Other
Croft Road Recreation Ground	2	Local Park
Manzil Way Gardens	2	Neighbourhood Park
Rivermead	2	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Rose Hill Recreation Ground	2	Neighbourhood Park
Warneford Meadow	2	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Angel and Greyhound meadow	1	Other
Boundary Brook Nature Park	1	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Peat Moors	1	Local Park
Burgess Field Nature Park	1	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Chilswell Valley	1	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Donnington Field	1	Local Park
Dunstan Park	1	Neighbourhood Park
Hollow Way Recreation Ground	1	Neighbourhood Park
Hythe Bridge Pocket Park	1	Other
Iffley Lock and Thames towpath around that area	1	Other
Louie Memorial Fields, Botley	1	Other
Land from north of Victoria Arms access lane to ring road	1	Other
Margaret Road Park	1	Local Park
Marston (cycle path area)	1	Other
New Marston Recreation Ground	1	Local Park
Old Marston Park	1	Local Park
Quarry Hollow	1	Local Park
Risinghurst Recreation Ground	1	Neighbourhood Park
Ryder close the waterways.	1	Other
Seacourt Nature Reserve	1	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Spindleberry Nature Reserve	1	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
SS Mary and John churchyard	1	Other
St Clements	1	Other
Trap Grounds Town Green	1	<b>Nature Reserve</b>
Valentia Road	1	Other
Wellington Square	1	Other
Wytham Woods	1	Other

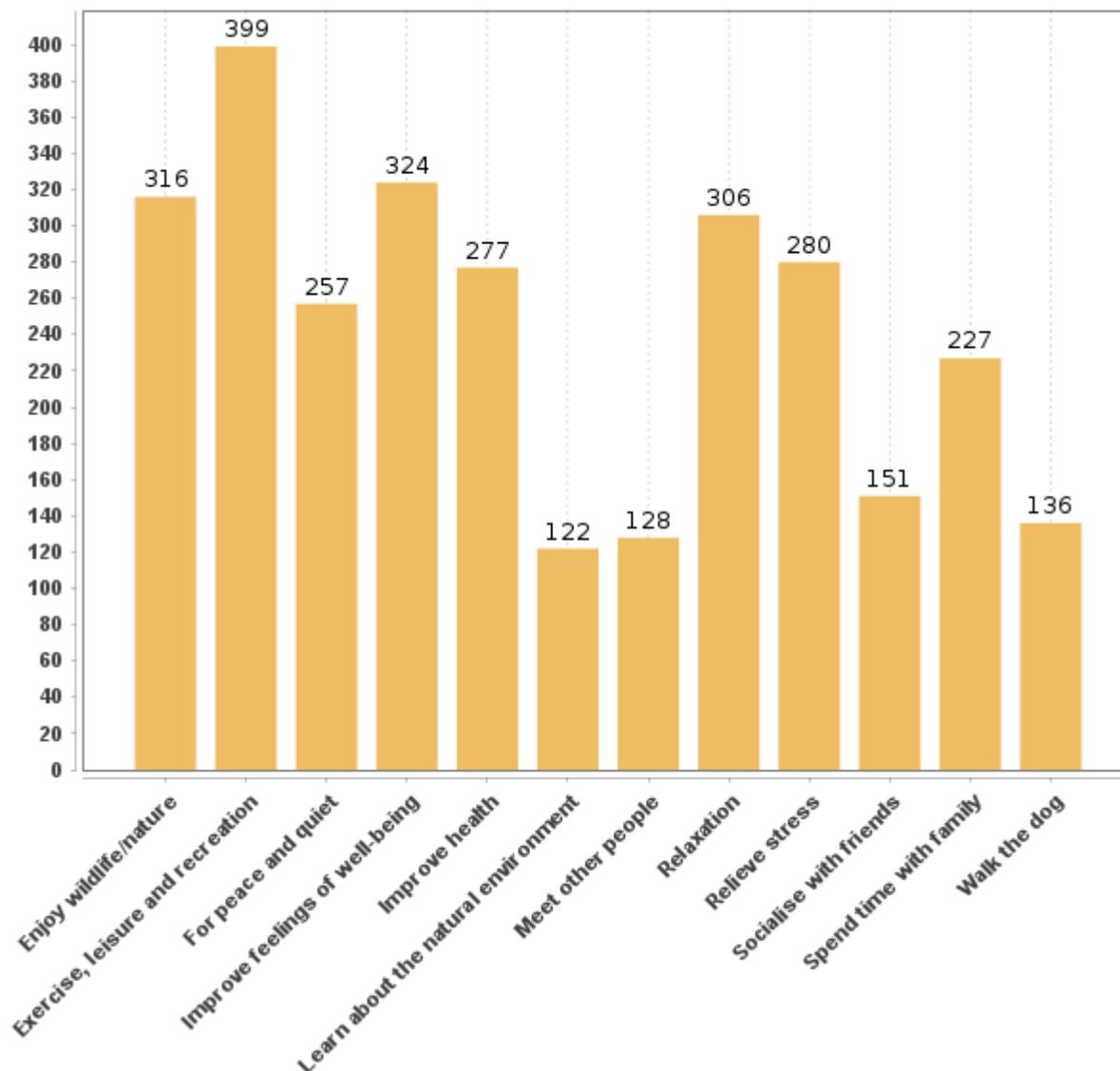
It is usual for the popular Green Flag Parks such as Cutteslowe & Sunnymead, Florence and Bury Knowle to receive a high number of completed surveys. However, interestingly, in this survey a lot of nature reserves and countryside sites also featured, some with a high return rate such as Lye Valley and Rock Edge.

<b>Category</b>	<b>No. of sites surveyed</b>	<b>No. of completed surveys</b>
Green Flag and City Parks	7	252
Countryside Site/Nature Reserves	22	125
Neighbourhood Parks	8	21
Local Parks	12	63
Other plus non-OCC sites	15	26

Based on these results we can suggest that the importance of the nature reserves and countryside sites is evident in the respondents' choice of site.

### 3.2 Health and Exercise

Respondents were asked why they use the park/green space; they could select more than one answer.



The most frequently cited reason for using green spaces was for exercise, leisure and recreation, with 80% of respondents choosing this option. Other high scoring activities included improving feelings of well-being (65%), enjoy the wildlife (64%) and relaxation (62%); all receiving over 300 votes each. Other significant reasons cited were: learning about the natural environment (25%), to meet other people (26%), walk the dog (27%) and socialise with friends (30%).

The results from the Oxford survey mirror The Land Trust results in that the most frequent use of the sites is also for exercise, leisure and recreation, but in their survey only 56 percent of respondents cited this reason. The least frequently cited reasons for using the Land Trust sites was to learn about the natural environment

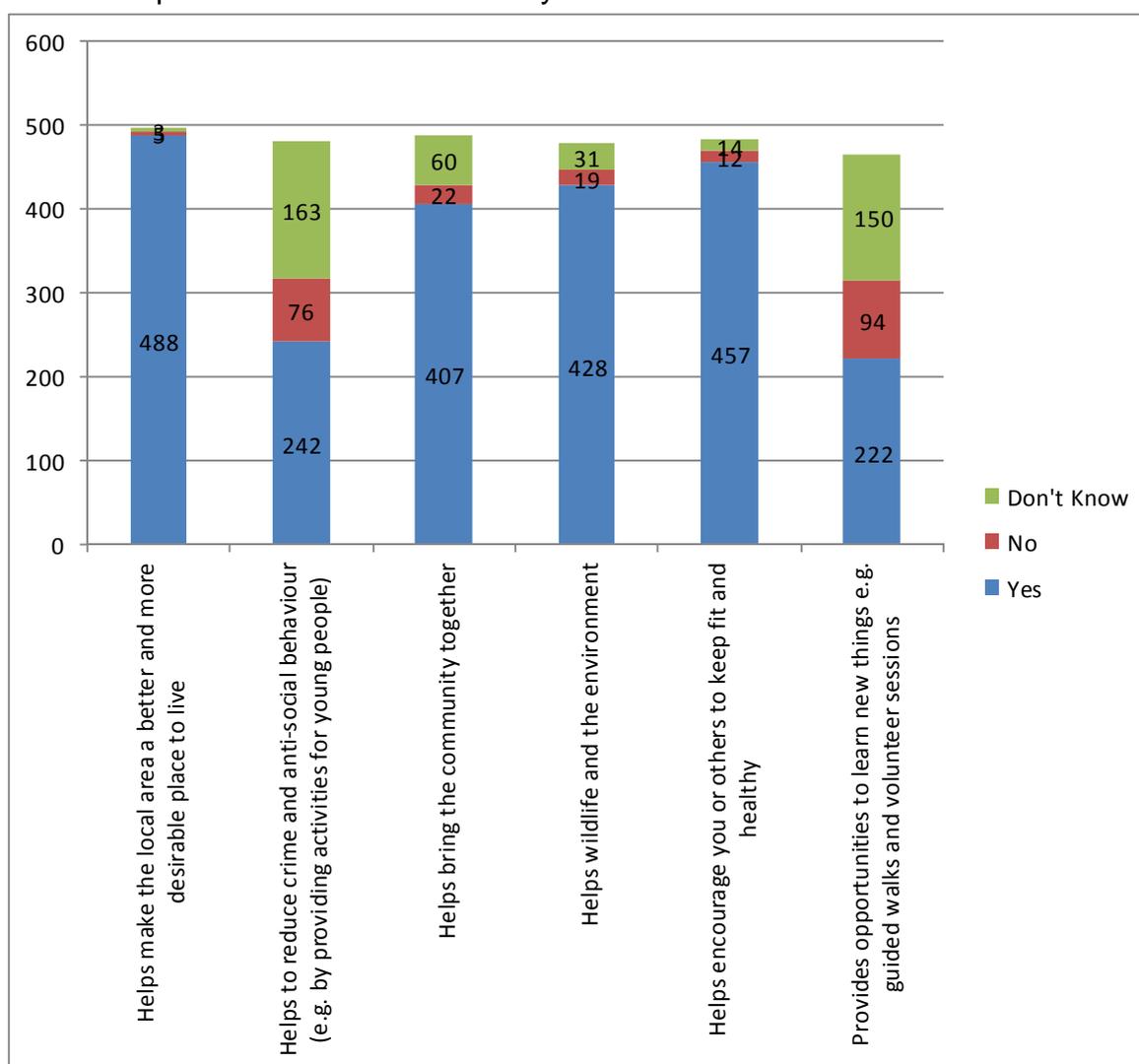
(16%), meet other people (10%) and socialise with friends (10%). The main difference was walking the dog, which was cited by 45% of respondents in the Land Trust Survey compared to only 27% Oxford.

**Visitor comments:**

- *“I support people with dementia and they benefit enormously from walking in a safe space where there is no traffic and there are trees and plants and grass. We also enjoy watching children playing and dogs being walked. It is an uncommercial space where you can spend time and feel better for it.”*
- *“They provide sanity and relief from all the traffic and urban environment. As soon as I enter the park I feel a relief from stress and pressure. It’s as though a green envelope has folded me inside it and I am calm. Seeing greenery, particularly trees, de-stresses me and makes me slow down.”*

**3.3 Contribution to Local Community**

Respondents were asked a series of questions on whether the site contributes to different aspects of the local community.



Almost all the respondents (98%) felt their local green space helps make their area a better and more desirable place to live, and 95% felt it encourages them or others

keep fit and healthy. This demonstrates a very high level of understanding and appreciation residents have regarding the role their local green spaces play in ensuring satisfaction with urban neighbourhoods and encouraging healthier lifestyles.

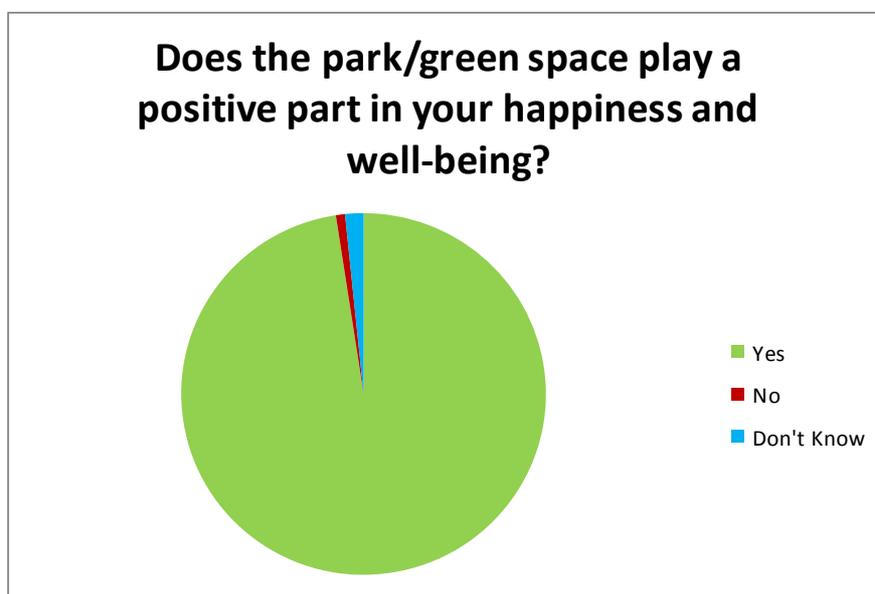
#### Visitor comments:

- *“A small but relatively peaceful oasis acting as an antidote to the noise and poor air quality around the London Road. Well looked-after and vital to me for jogging or convenient quiet walking. A vital asset to the people of Headington.” Bury Knowle Park*
- *“It is hard to overstate how much they contribute to the sense of community and the quality of life in Oxford.”*
- *“Having lived in the countryside all my life, now living in Oxford I am impressed with the quality of the parks, the facilities offered and the attention to the long term environmental developments. It’s like having my own garden back again but without the work.”*

Although 89% of those surveyed thought their local green spaces help wildlife and the environment only 50% though they provided opportunities to learn new things. This suggests there is potential to increase the use of green spaces to teach people, particularly children, about things such as food production, wildlife and caring for the environment.

### 3.4 Contribution to happiness and wellbeing

Almost all the respondents (98%) felt that the sites play a positive part in their happiness and well-being.



#### Visitors Comments:

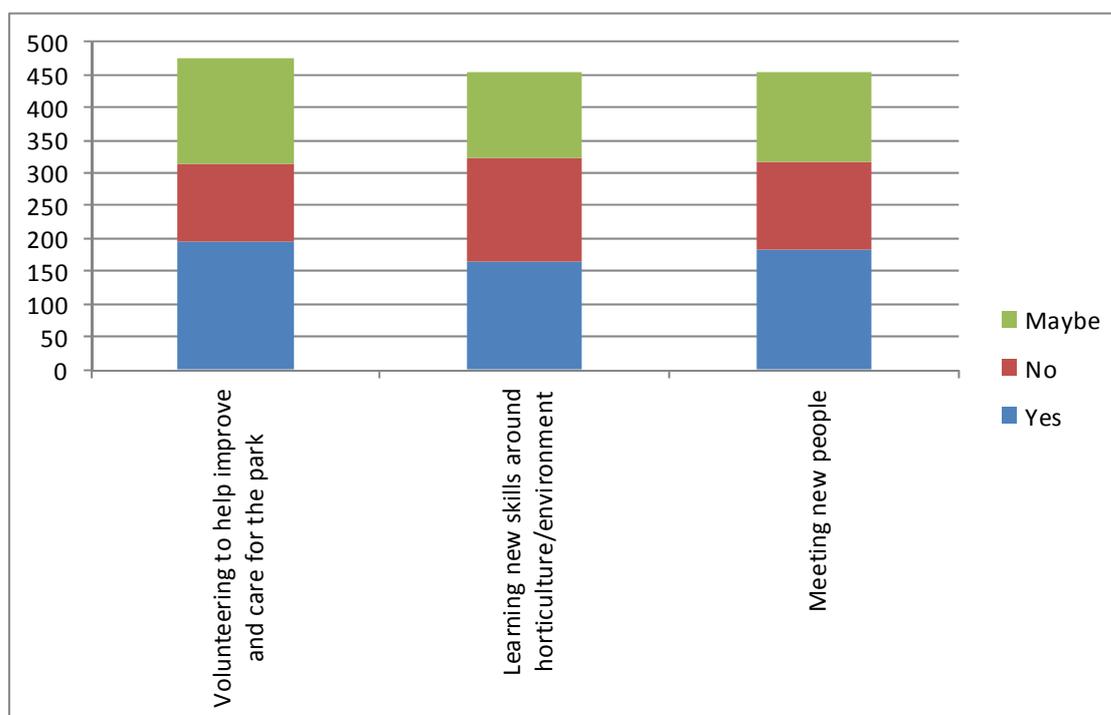
- *“I couldn’t live happily without it”.*
- *“As a GP, I know too well how much we need parks and natural spaces in a town. Especially a densely populated town like Oxford. We need natural spaces to stay mentally as well as physically healthy. Please preserve these*

*parks for all of us to enjoy, get some head space, get sunshine (vitamin D), see beautiful plants and enjoy animals (from insects to deer and owls), get fresh air and exercise.”*

- *“In a particularly stressful time I went for several walks on Portmeadow and found that it cleared my head so I could move ahead again. Walking there with friends has also been very enjoyable, and enables conversations in a very different way from being indoors.”*
- *“The parks are a really important part of the fabric of the city and help make Oxford such a great city to live in. Maintaining the parks isn't a luxury - it is vital for the health and well-being of the city”.*

### 3.5 Getting Involved

Respondents were asked if they would welcome opportunities to get involved in different types of activities. The results were fairly equal across all three options, with a sizable amount of interest in volunteering (40%), meeting new people (40%) and learning new skills around horticulture/environment (36%).



### 3.6 Top Words

Respondents were asked to describe their green space in one word, the size of the word represents the frequency it was mentioned.

Space	34
Peace	33
Beautiful	18
Health	15
Nature	15
Freedom	14
Community	14

#### **4. Conclusions**

The results of the consultation reveal the high level of value Oxford's residents place on their local green spaces, and a belief they play a vital role in encouraging healthier lifestyles and maintaining feelings of well-being.

The level of response to the survey, and the numerous and unanimously positive comments, also demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with the way the council manages its green spaces and the facilities it provides. This validates the considerable investment Oxford City Council has made in its parks, play areas and sport facilities over recent years, and the management policies and practices it has put in place.

The evidence provided by the survey should be used to ensure provision of green space is maintained in the city, and that there is adequate provision in the numerous new developments that will be created in reaction to housing need over the next two decades.

There is also a need to increase access and further promote the use of the city's green spaces to ensure all communities are reaping the benefits they provide. The results of this survey can be used to help with this promotion.



**Visitor comments:**

- *“Florence Park allowed me a fabulous opportunity to be involved with the biological processes of our natural environment. As a child I remember distinctly collecting frog spawn to help grow in the family pond. It provides a valuable resource for people of all ages to engage in the nature that defines them.”*
- *“Florence Park is a particularly well-managed resource and, increasingly, working well with local community groups' positive involvement. I really hope this can continue and increase; as above, I would welcome more opportunities to interact with Council staff (e.g. horticultural training/volunteering in the park) and it would also be great to be able to, for example, purchase Council-made compost and surplus plants. Initiatives like Friends of Florence Park, the new cafe contract, floodlights for the tennis courts and play space improvements are all very beneficial.*
- *“As a Council Countryside volunteer I help clear its paths and cut back intrusive scrub so that people can enjoy the meadow land right in the heart of Headington.”*
- *“I often work as a volunteer in Magdalen Wood West, clearing brush, coppicing and creating glades to encourage butterflies and flowers to return which have been shaded out. It is a wonderful amenity in the middle of a housing estate where I suspect many children are not taken on countryside expeditions by their parents. It may therefore be the only place they can interact with nature.”*
- *“As Britain is a country with a declining species richness, Shotover Country Park should be appreciated more fully as a unique biological reserve with nationally rare and declining species and should be managed sensitively in this respect for maximum protection and conservation potential. It should be noted that this conflicts very little with its use as a popular country park.”*
- *“The park provides a great amenity for local people. It's often full of local people playing cricket, football or exercising on the machines. Many of the people I see playing sport in the park are from ethnic minorities including EU migrants, and these groups may generally be feeling less welcome to participate in British society, due to the rise in hate crimes across the country. It's great to see local people from all backgrounds feeling confident to socialise and play sport together in an open space. Young guys use the basket ball courts, and families with young children frequently use the tennis courts and playground facilities.”*

Appendix A

## 2016 Value of the Park Survey

### Complete the survey for your chance to win a £25 shopping voucher!



Oxford City Council would like to hear what you think of the parks, nature reserves and green spaces that it manages. We want to know what they mean to you and how they benefit the local area. This is so we can learn how to make the parks and green spaces even better in the future.

### Please write the name of the park/nature reserve you would like to comment on

---

1. Why do you use the park? *Please tick all that apply*

Reason	✓	Reason	✓
Improve health		Walk the dog	
Exercise, leisure and recreation		Socialise with friends	
Relieve stress		Spend time with family	
Improve feelings of well-being		Enjoy wildlife/nature	
Relaxation		Learn about the natural environment	
For peace and quiet		Other (Please state)	
Meet other people			

2. Do you think the park...?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Helps make the local area a better and more desirable place to live?			
Helps to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (e.g. by providing activities for young people)?			
Helps bring the community together?			
Provides opportunities to learn new things e.g. guided walks and volunteer sessions?			
Helps wildlife and the environment?			
Helps encourage you or others to keep fit and healthy?			

3. Pick one word that sums up what this park means to you

.....  
 4. At the park, would you welcome more opportunities to get involved with:

	Yes	No	Maybe
Volunteering to help improve and care for the park			
Learning new skills around horticulture/environment			
Meeting new people			

5. Does this park play a positive part in your happiness and well-being?

Yes	No	Don't know

6. Do you have anything else you would like to say about the park?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

7. About You

**Are you male or female? What is your post code?** \_\_\_\_\_

Male       Female

**How old are you?**

Under 16     16-18     19-24     25-44     45-59     60-74     75+

8. Please supply details if you have answered yes to Q4 or would like to be included in the prize draw.

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Email	
Tel	

**Thank you for taking the time to help us with this survey!**  
 Prize Draw Terms and Conditions are available on request: 07483 010610

## **Appendix B - Compliments**

“Oxford's green spaces are an absolutely vital part of the city for all the reasons above. Oxford City Council does an excellent job in providing facilities and upkeep/ maintenance. Any threat to funding or resources must be strongly resisted”.

“It's well managed with good investment” Bury Knowe Park

“Oxford should be proud of their green spaces and the council and staff who develop and maintain them”.

“They are great - well maintained by the council - they are very necessary for well-being.”

“A small but relatively peaceful oasis acting as an antidote to the noise and poor air quality around the London Road. Well looked-after and vital to me for jogging or convenient quiet walking. A vital asset to the people of Headington.” Bury Knowle Park

“The work the Council has done with the wildlife trust to manage and restore the valley is a credit to both parties and to the city.” Chiswell Valley

“It is very well kept and imaginatively cared-for. Its facilities have increased and improved a great deal in recent years.” Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park

“About time a good water feature has been built - the San Remo cafe is brilliant!” Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park

“Keep up the great work in the park - well done.” Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park

“It is kept immaculately clean and tidy; recent changes and upgrades have meant more opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy their visits” Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Park

“It is brilliantly maintained and has wonderful children's playgrounds. Dog bins reliably and regularly emptied.” Florence Park

“It is well maintained, suitable for all ages, the ground maintenance crew are friendly, hardworking and polite.” Florence Park

“The activities at half term and school holidays are brilliant” Florence Park

“A very pleasant, well equipped and well maintained park.” Hinksey Park

“Thank you for the great job that the Parks team does to keep Marsh Rd Park and all the others in such tip top condition!”

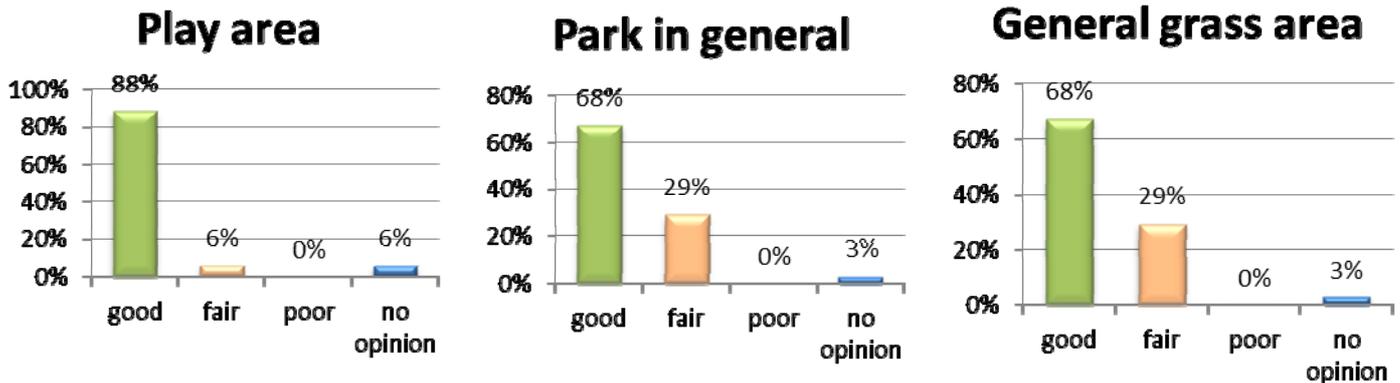
“Thank you to all those who keep Shotover so well.”

“It's great and very well kept. Thank you very much. Keep it as natural and pure as possible.” South Park

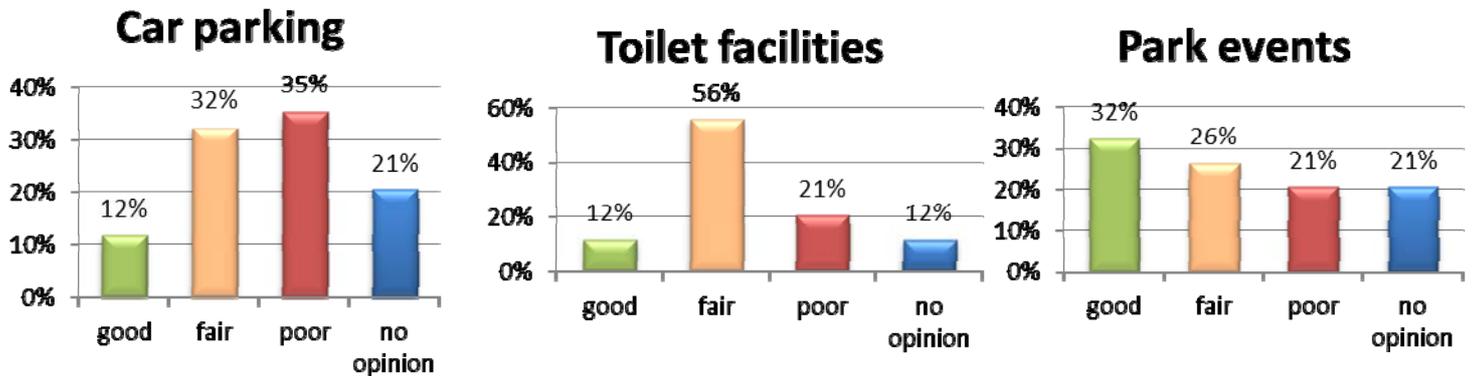
## Appendix 2: Key findings 2014 customer satisfaction survey

A total of 34 surveys on Bury Knowle Park were completed this year. Of these 34 surveys 11 were completed online. In 2013 a total of 49 surveys on Bury Knowle Park were completed.

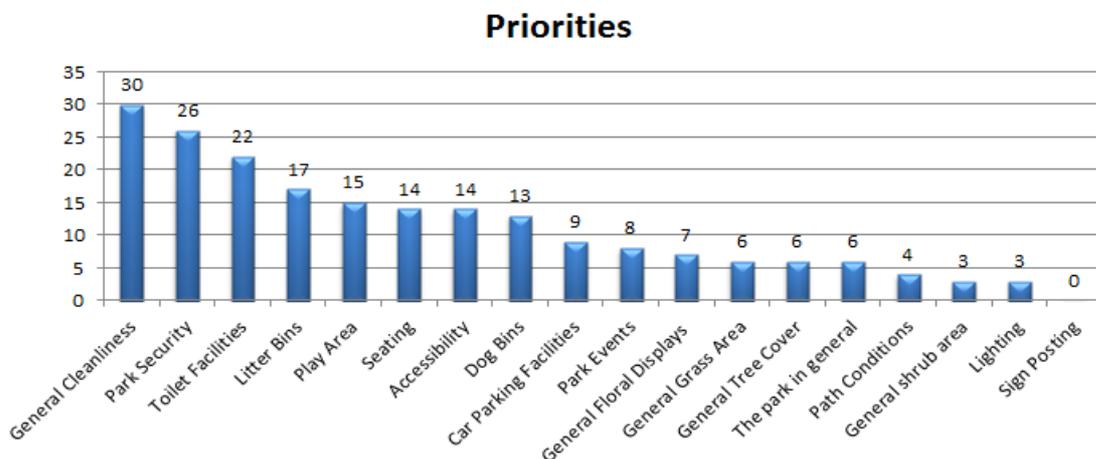
Derived from the data on Bury Knowle Park it can be said that overall people are satisfied with the parks features. The best scoring features in the park are the play area, the park in general and the grass area.



There are only three features scoring a 'poor' rate higher than 10% which are car parking facilities, toilet facilities and park events.

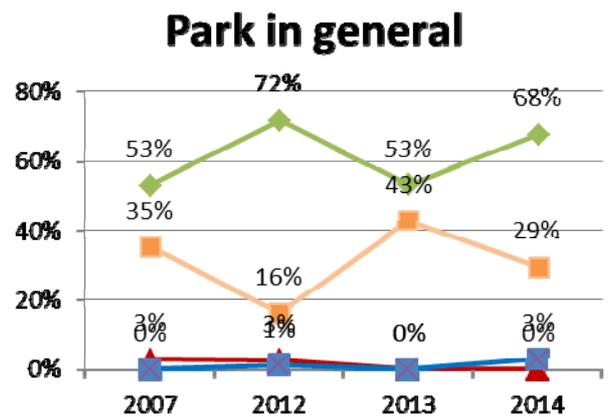
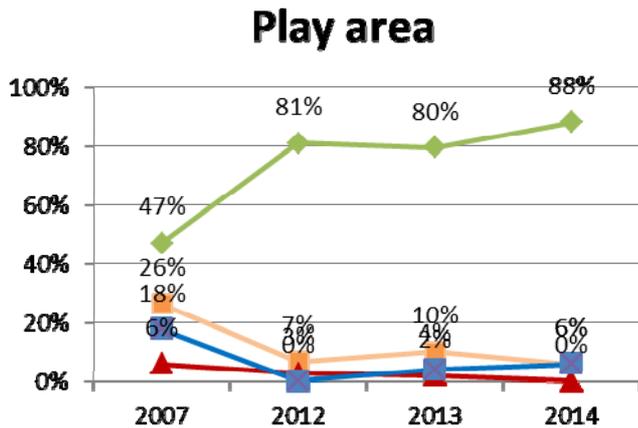


The general cleanliness of the park has been ranked as a priority. This feature of the park is scoring satisfactory. Secondly the parks security is a priority.



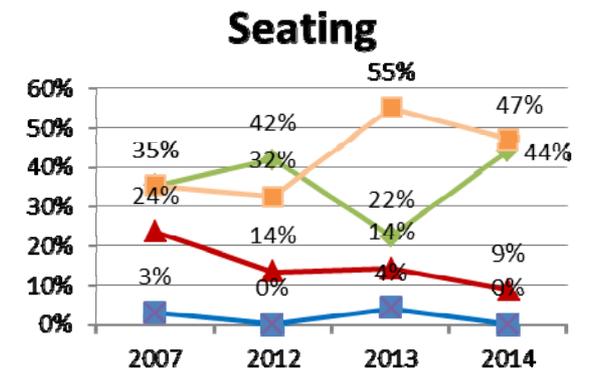
Comparing the data outcome to the outcomes of the previous years there is a positive increase in play area satisfaction. With a slight dip in 2013 the 'good' satisfaction level scores 88% in 2014. The highest score yet.

The park in general also shows an increase in 'good' score. In 2013 a 53% of the participants said their satisfaction level was 'good'; however in 2014 there were 15% more 'good' scores, it increased to 68%.

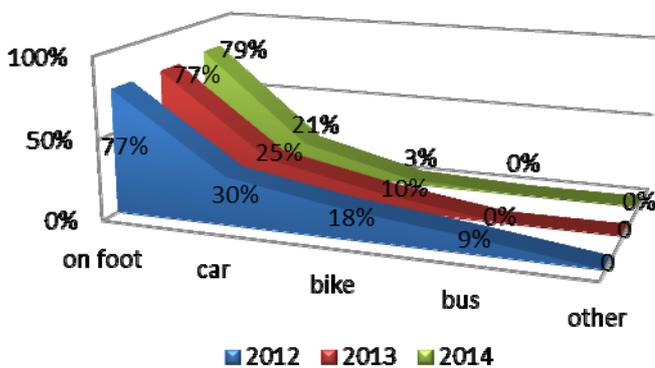


Seating received the sharpest increase in 'good' satisfaction level with an increase of 22% from the previous year.

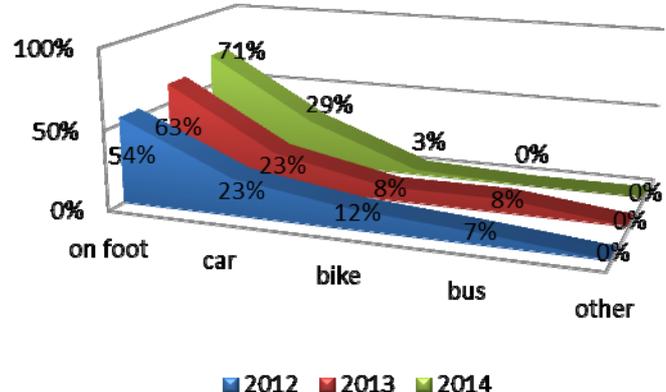
Most of the visitors seem to be walking to the park. Understandably there is a slight increase in car usage in winter time.



Comparison transportation - Summer



Comparison transportation - Winter



## **Appendix 3 Direct Services**

### **Parks and Open Spaces Specification Executive Summary (April 2016)**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This summary highlights the purpose of the Parks and Open Spaces specification and provides headline information to Officers, Councillors and the public on the standard of works that we aim to achieve.

#### **2. Purpose of the Specification**

- 2.1 The specification illustrates the way in which we deliver services in the following areas; parks maintenance, outdoor sports facilities, pavilions, litter picking, litter and dog bin emptying, park patrols, cemetery management and maintenance, tree works (including planting), playground maintenance and countryside maintenance.

#### **3. Headline Standards:**

- Litter and Bin Emptying
  - Bins are emptied at the same time as litter picking is undertaken. The frequency varies depending on the usage within the parks from daily in high use parks to weekly in low use parks across the City.
  - In our Green Flag Parks this is ongoing throughout the day.
  - Big Belly bins have been placed around the City Parks to reduce the frequencies of visits. These bins are able to inform use of their status as to when they need emptying. This data is transmitted to our Park Office
- Grass Cutting
  - The majority of grassed areas, termed standard in the full specification, are cut between late March and early November with around 15 to 16 cuts over the year. Grass Cutting is dependent of the weather conditions so as to keep to a high standard across the City Parks
- Sports Turf
  - Maintained to a standard suitable for amateur leagues, such as Football, Lacrosse, Rugby, Gaelic Football, Tennis, Bowls, and Cricket etc. All are maintained by a highly skilled workforce.
  - Marking out is carried out to accommodate all types of rules for individual sport as well as the normal programmed sports
- Shrub Beds
  - Green Flag Parks are maintained on an ongoing base over the year, City Parks are visited by staff and the main works are carried out over the winter months in the dormant season.
  - The majority of shrub beds, termed standard in the full specification, are pruned and maintained twice per annum and barked when necessary
- Hedges
  - The majority of hedges, termed standard in the full specification, are cut according to the nesting season between the months of August and March
  - Countryside hedges are cut once per annum again between August and March, any hedge cutting outside of this period would be carried out only with the

advice of an ecologist at each are this work would take place. ( note we endeavour not to promote hedge cutting during the bird nesting period)

- Tree Surveys and Tree Maintenance
  - Tree surveys are carried out as a Parks Management function every three years.
  - The tree team carry out work as required from the surveys based on their priority.
  - Further work may be undertaken as a result of public request following an inspection.
  - Please refer to the Tree Management Plan Dec 2011
- Pavilion and Toilet Maintenance
  - Pavilions cleaned a minimum of once per week.
  - Parks toilets cleaned daily
- Playground Maintenance
  - Monthly inspections undertaken
  - Monthly report of repair work carried from weekly inspections
  - Independent engineer checks undertaken every six months
  
- We also offer a 24 hour out of hours service – 07711 439 090

3.1 The appendices show a summarised frequency table of all of the activities that are covered in detail the full service specification.

3.2 The specification will be reviewed on an annual basis.

3.3 Sites are also monitored to ensure the standards in the specification are being consistently delivered.

3.4 This document is only a summary of the specification and the full specification should be viewed for a complete understanding of the standards we aim to achieve. A full copy of the specification is not on the website as it is a working document however it is available from [parks@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:parks@oxford.gov.uk).

Appendices:

1. Parks maintenance table of frequencies
2. Fine turf table of frequencies