



**Draft**

# **Meols Lower Green**

## **Management Plan and Security Audit**

**2006-2010**



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# 1 Introduction

Wirral Council has produced this document in conjunction with the Friends of Hoylake and Meols Gardens and Open Spaces to provide a comprehensive framework for the future development of Meols Lower Green. The Management Plan is structured using the CABE space (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) model and the site assessed using the 8 Green Flag criteria.

We encourage suggestions from park users and the wider community to this plan.

If you would like to help in any way please contact Neil Irons (Senior Parks Development Officer) on 0151 666 4712.

**Vision:** *To be agreed with stakeholders*

**Parks & Countryside Service**, Wirral Council, Westminster House, Hamilton Street, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 5FN.

## Departmental Mission Statement;

*'Promoting a healthy, safer lifestyle and improving the quality of life for all.'*

*Aims:*

- *To enable sustainable, economic, social, neighbourhood and environmental regeneration.*
- *To improve the health and well being of Wirral residents.*
- *To promote opportunities for personal, community and business development.*

## 2 The wider policy context

**Wirral Council has produced 9 corporate objectives:**

- PROTECTING AND IMPROVING OUR ENVIRONMENT
- PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION OF WIRRAL
- PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL
- IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF WIRRAL PEOPLE
- MAKING WIRRAL SAFER
- MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF WIRRAL
- SUPPORTING AND PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE
- IMPROVING TRANSPORT
- CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING SERVICES

The Parks and Countryside Service Plan for 2007/08 sets the targets for the service within the context of the above corporate objectives and the Regeneration Departmental Service Plan.

## 3 Site Information

**Name:** Meols Lower Green

**Address:** School Lane, Meols, Wirral

**Size:** 1.54 Hectares

**Primary classification:** Local Park

**Ward:** Hoylake & Meols

**Tenure:**

The site is owned and managed by Wirral Council, Regeneration Department, Parks and Countryside section.

**Stakeholders:**

- Grounds maintenance staff
- Great Meols Bowling Club
- Meols Ladies Bowling Club
- Friends of Hoylake and Meols Gardens and Open Spaces

**Summary of Features:**

- Bowling Green
- Shrub / Tree planting
- Picnic Tables
- Tarmac footpaths
- Seating

**Access:**

The main entrance to the park is located on School Lane with a shared pedestrian / vehicular access on Mumfords Lane. These entrances can be accessed by wheel chair.

There are also three pedestrian access gates into the bowling- green on School Lane, Mumfords Lane and one within the park.

**History:**

## Resources:

There is currently no dedicated capital budget for improvements to the park. Grounds maintenance is funded from the annual maintenance revenue budget. The Area Parks Manager has overall responsibility for management of the park. A mobile team of gardeners are responsible for maintenance of the bowling green, litter picking, amenity grass cutting and hedge cutting, grass cutting of larger areas is performed by a gardener using a mini – tractor.

## 4 Analysis and Assessment

The decline in investment in parks over previous decades has resulted in some deterioration to the fabric of the site, however, the Friends have contributed to some recent improvements including planting of trees and grasses and 2No picnic tables.

The built environment and soft landscape is still in need of improvement and requires more investment.

Horticultural maintenance is variable.

The use of the Green Flag Award criteria can provide an excellent framework for a site assessment as it focuses on 8 key management themes as follows;

### i) A welcoming place



A mixture of fencing treatment surrounds the park. The roadside boundary fence was replaced approximately 6 years ago using attractive metal railings, the remainder is post and rail coupled with chain link. Double steel gates on Mumfords Lane allow vehicular access to the site. Single steel gates allow pedestrian access to the bowling green but these are kept locked unless bowlers are on site. The main entrance to the site on School Lane is not gated. Wirral does not own the new pavilion and small car park; however, the Great Meols Club who own the ‘footprint’ of the site also rent the bowling- green for their matches. The local scout

group owns the rendered, single storey building at the Mumfords Lane entrance. It is defaced with graffiti and presents a poor first impression.

The two entrances to the park itself are suitable for wheel chairs.

There is currently no signage indicating site name or related information to any entrance.

There is no direction signage to the park from the main roads surrounding the park.

## ii) Healthy, safe and secure



Wirral Council operates a 24hr Community Patrol force providing a measured response to any act of vandalism or anti-social behaviour.

Wirral Council has a written and up to date Health and Safety Policy.

Signage requesting dog owners to clean up after their pets is not erected or marked at entrances to the site and during my visits I found dog fouling to be excessive. There are no bins situated in the park, however, two bins are situated in the bowls arena.

A children's play area is located over the road on Meols Recreation Ground.

It is proposed to introduce an Annual Site Safety Inspection Checklist. It should identify defects within the park that present a risk to staff and/or users and includes footpaths, walls, fences, buildings, furniture and planted areas.

**A Security Audit** was carried out at the site that assessed the gardens under the following 12 criteria:

**Sight lines** – The park is reasonably well overlooked by adjacent housing, although the tree and shrub area on the Mumfords Lane boundary does offer some screening for antisocial behaviour. There are no obstructions to sight lines across the site.

**Anti-social behaviour** – Dog fouling was excessive and there was no signage to advise the public. There was graffiti to the scout hut wall. The bowls pavilion / arena was littered with beer cans and presents an undercover hideaway for youths at night.

**Motor vehicles** – There is no evidence of vehicles on the site.

**The park at night** – Officers from the Parks and Open Spaces section attend the Police youth tasking and coordinating group meetings. Meols Lower Green is not currently identified as a 'hot spot'.

**Footpaths** – Generally tarmac footpaths have been recently re-surfaced throughout the site.

**Boundaries** – The gardens are bounded in the main by 1.2m fencing of either, timber post and rail fencing or metal railings.

**Buildings** – The bowling pavilion is not in Wirral Council ownership. It has a small car park for club members to the School Lane end. The scout headquarters is not in Wirral Council ownership.

**Play areas** – *Not applicable*

**Who was on site** – Dog walkers were on site at the time of the audit visit.

**Is the park well cared for** – The park is urban and mainly laid out to grass with perimeter planting to the west boundary. Recently planted ornamental grasses adjacent to the footpath that bisects the site have not been looked after. Young tree planting has recently been carried out to give height and interest. Two picnic tables have recently been installed using monies supplied by the Friends Group.

### iii) Clean and well maintained



There are no site- based members of maintenance staff. A mobile team who are supported by a gardener who mows the larger grass areas perform grounds maintenance at the site.

This horticultural maintenance is carried out in accordance with a frequency based work programme allied to a specification. The work programme is issued to staff on a quarterly basis. These are used for identifying all maintenance operations on the site and the required standards. It is understood that currently these documents are not being fully utilised and are under review.

The Senior Development Officer using the following 13 headings has carried out an assessment of the current maintenance condition of the site. The facilities and features are simply ticked as good, fair or poor and can only represent findings during the writing of this plan. The facilities and features without a rating are not available at the site.

### Grounds maintenance site checklist

| <b>Grass</b>     | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Fine Sport       |             |             | √           |
| Playing Fields   | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Ornamental       |             | √           |             |
| General          |             | √           |             |
| Rough            | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Wild Flower Area | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |

| <b>Planting</b>    | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Annual             | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Herbaceous         | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Roses              | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Shrubs             |             |             | √           |
| Hedges             | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Young staked trees |             | √           |             |
| Mature Trees       |             | √           |             |
| Woodland           | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |

| <b>Hard Surfaces</b>                            | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Tarmac Sport                                    | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Hard Porous                                     | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Footpaths                                       |             | √           |             |
| Drives                                          | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Car Parks                                       | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Steps                                           |             | √           |             |
| Artificial cricket wicket/Artificial turf pitch | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |

| <b>Play Areas</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Maintenance       | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |

| <b>Litter</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Collection    |             |             | √           |



|      |  |  |   |
|------|--|--|---|
| Bins |  |  | √ |
|------|--|--|---|

| <b>Buildings</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Maintenance      |             | √           |             |
| Graffiti         |             |             | √           |

| <b>Walling</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Maintenance    | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Graffiti       | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |

| <b>Fencing</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Maintenance    |             | √           |             |

| <b>Drainage</b>              | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ditches                      | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Inspection Chambers / Covers | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Gully pots                   | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |

| <b>Furniture / Memorials</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Maintenance                  |             | √           |             |
| Graffiti                     | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |

| <b>Signage</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Maintenance    | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Graffiti       | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |

| <b>Lighting</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Maintenance     | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |

| <b>Water</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Fair</b> | <b>Poor</b> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Maintenance  | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |
| Safety       | N/a         | N/a         | N/a         |

Although by no means exhaustive, the following concerns were noted during the assessment;

**Grass** – Amenity grass areas appeared to have been recently cut, but excessive clippings suggest that these areas had not be cut to frequency. The bowling green was littered with worm casts and contaminated with moss. There was no edging board for the green and this presents an untidy and random edge to the gully.

**Planting** – Ornamental grass beds have not been hand weeded through successive seasons resulting in a loss of plants (despite annual replanting) and these are now rather empty. Grass clippings have been dumped in the shrub beds around the bowling green and this is unsightly.

**Hard surfacing** - The condition of the footpath surfacing is generally good although there is some weed to the flagged areas around the bowls pavilion. All paths would benefit from brushing and weedkilling.

**Play Areas** – None on site (across road on Meols Recreation Ground).

**Litter** – No litter bins in the park area. At least one bin should be sited at the School Lane entrance. Dog fouling was evident particularly to the grass areas. Two bins were being maintained in the bowling green area but litter over the site i.e. cans, bricks, timber, fast food cartons etc was evident. Litter was also present in all shrub beds.

**Buildings / Walls** – Buildings within the park are privately owned. Graffiti to the rendered wall of the scout hut should be removed as and when it occurs to discourage similar acts.

**Fencing** – The steel gates from Mumfords Lane into the park would benefit from being painted black. Railings are relatively new. Post and rail fencing is in acceptable condition.

**Drainage** – No problems.

**Furniture / Memorials** – The Friends have funded two new picnic tables for the park and these are already well used.

**Lighting** – There is no security lighting to the park but it is well overlooked and illuminated by surrounding housing and street lighting.

**Water features** – None on site.

It is apparent that operational factors beyond the influence of this management plan require consideration in order to improve grounds maintenance. The main issues for consideration could include staff management (i.e. motivation, supervision, training) coupled with the issue of resourcing (i.e. revenue funding, machinery and materials).

Overall Meols Lower Green receives a fair standard of maintenance but there are areas for considerable improvement particularly shrub maintenance, litter and graffiti removal, it is intended to improve these items within the period of the plan.

#### **iv) Sustainability**



Wirral Council has an Environmental Policy that the Parks and Countryside section supports.

Water and energy consumption in the park is monitored and where necessary modification is made to minimise wastage, in line with the authorities Environmental Policy. A separate water meter and water point is used for irrigating the green.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations are incorporated into the Service's Quality Assurance procedures.

The park is well served by public transport infrastructure.

An environmental audit should be carried out for the site.

## **v) Conservation and Heritage**

*Bio-diversity report to follow*



Much of the built environment in the park is relatively recent. The bowling pavilion and perimeter railings were constructed approximately 6 years ago based on the original design features. The shrub bed bounding Mumfords Lane is over-mature and should be the subject of a rolling programme of clearance and replanting whilst retaining the main framework of trees. Consideration should be given to providing suitable cycle racks.

## **vi) Community involvement**

Meols Lower Green has an active Friends group who liaise regularly with officers from Wirral Council. They organise events and apply for grants to raise funds for improvements to the site.

Wirral Council staff should continue to encourage positive use of the park by stakeholders and the general public.

Provision and use of information boards should be considered to improve links with the site users.

## vii) Marketing

Wirral Council has a web site that has links to the Parks and Countryside information.

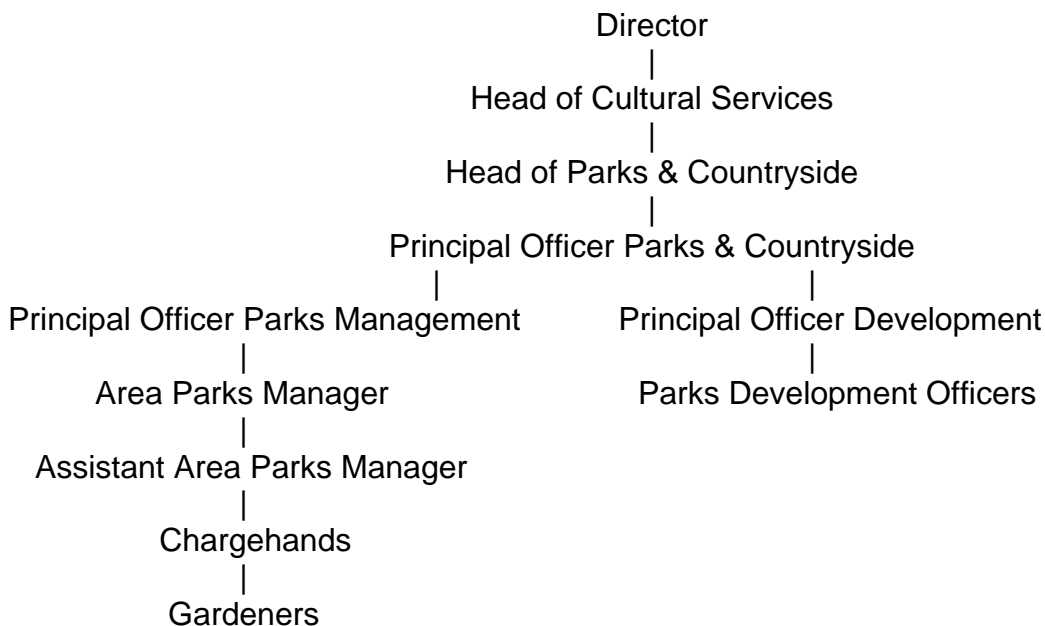
A site name and information board at the main entrance to the park providing current information on local events with contact numbers should be considered.

Market research could be undertaken to give a better understanding of the site users and their views and the findings incorporated into this plan.

## viii) Management

The production of this management plan should provide staff and public with the expectations Wirral Council has for the future development and maintenance of the gardens.

Following re-organisation of The Parks & Countryside Service in 2004 the following management structure was put in place.



The production of this management plan should provide staff and public with the expectations Wirral Council has for the future development and maintenance of the park.

## 5 Aims and Objectives

**Aim:** To encourage people into the park and to make it more welcoming.

**Objectives:**

1. Consider providing direction signage from the main roads.
2. Provide a good quality site name board to the park indicating site name, managing organisation and contact numbers.
3. Encourage removal of graffiti from scout hut wall by building owner when it occurs.

**Aim:** To improve the health, safety and security of the public when visiting the gardens.

**Objectives;**

1. Erect / paint dog 'clean it up' signage to entrances.
2. Standardise type of waste bins to site.
3. Ensure any graffiti is removed within a reasonable timescale.
4. Provide appropriate bin to School Lane entrance to also be used for dog waste.
5. Improve standard of litter picking to include all the site not just bins emptying.
6. Begin Annual Site Safety Inspection.

**Aim:** To improve and develop the built environment with hard and soft landscaping, creating a feeling of quality throughout the park.

**Objectives;**

1. Produce winter work programmes to reflect this document / action plan.
2. Improve frequency / standard of amenity grass cutting.
3. Improve surface management of bowling- green.

4. Supply / erect edging board to bowling- green.
5. Improve maintenance / re-plant ornamental grass beds.
6. Cease dumping of grass clippings in shrub beds.
7. Spot treat weed / brush footpaths regularly.
8. Paint double gates from Mumfords Lane.

**Aim:** To improve sustainable work practices within the park.

**Objectives;**

1. Produce an Environmental Audit for the park.

**Aim:** To conserve and improve the best features of the site and retain those of historic importance.

**Objectives;**

1. Enable cycle access to park.
2. Begin re-planting of feature shrub bed to Mumfords Lane boundary.

**Aim:** To support community involvement in the site.

**Objectives;**

1. Continue to capacity build with stakeholders.
2. Consider provision of an information board to improve links with park users.

**Aim:** To raise the public profile of the park and promote the site as a community resource.

**Objectives;**

1. Improve the Wirral Council website.
2. Provide site signage.
3. Using Friends Group consider a study of park users.

**Aim:** To manage the implementation and review of this plan.

**Objectives;**

1. To seek funding to make as many quality improvements to the park as possible.
2. To create mechanisms to actively review both maintenance and improvements.
3. Maintain and review a management plan.

## 6 Action Plan

| <b>Actions</b>                                                                 | <b>Lead Officer</b> | <b>Target date</b> | <b>Funding source</b>                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Provide direction signage from main roads                                      | Area Parks Manager  |                    | Requires additional funding (RAF) £5K |
| Provide new site name and information board to main entrance                   | Area Parks Manager  |                    | RAF £2.5K                             |
| Encourage removal of graffiti from scout hut wall                              | Area Parks Manager  | Ongoing            | From existing resources               |
| Standardise waste bins (hooded type) / Provide new bin to School Lane entrance | Area Parks Manager  | Ongoing            | RAF £2.5K                             |
| Re-erect / repaint dog signage to entrances                                    | Area Parks Manager  | 2007               | From existing resources               |
| Begin Annual Site Safety Inspection                                            | Area Parks Manager  | 2007               | From existing resources               |
| Remove all graffiti as it occurs                                               | Area Parks Manager  | Ongoing            | From existing resources               |
| Improve standard of litter picking to whole site                               | Area Parks Manager  | 2006-2010          | From existing resources               |
| Produce annual winter work programme for site                                  | Area Parks Manager  | Annually           | From existing resources               |
| Improve standard of amenity grass cutting                                      | Area Parks Manager  | Ongoing            | From existing resources               |
| Improve surface management of bowling green                                    | Area Parks Manager  | 2007 & Ongoing     | From existing resources               |
| Re-edge bowling green                                                          | Area Parks Manager  | 2007 / 08          | From existing resources               |
| Re-plant ornamental grass beds                                                 | Area Parks Manager  | 2006 / 08          | From existing resources               |
| Remove clippings for composting (do not dump in shrub beds)                    | Area Parks Manager  | Ongoing            | From existing resources               |
| Brush / weed kill Footpaths to                                                 | Area Parks Manager  | Ongoing            | From existing resources               |



|                                                            |                                                       |             |                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| frequency                                                  |                                                       |             |                                |
| Paint double gates from Mumfords Lane                      | Area Parks Manager                                    | 2007        | From existing resources        |
| Produce an Environmental Audit                             | Environmental Auditor                                 |             | May require additional funding |
| Encourage public cycle use to park                         | Partner Cycle Officer                                 | 2006-2011   | From existing resources        |
| Renovate shrub bed to Mumfords Lane boundary               | Area Parks Manager                                    | 2007 - 2010 | RAF £0.5K pa for 5 years       |
| Support and work in partnership with users / stakeholders  | Area Parks Manager / Senior Parks Development Officer | Ongoing     | From existing resources        |
| Improve Parks website                                      | Parks Officer                                         | Ongoing     | From existing resources        |
| Undertake market research study                            | Friends & Partners                                    |             | From existing resources        |
| To seek external funding                                   | Friends & PDO                                         | 2006- 2011  | Funding to be sourced          |
| Create system to monitor grounds maintenance / development | Area Parks Manager / Senior Parks Development Officer | 2007-2011   | From existing resources        |
| Maintain / review management plan                          | Area Parks Manager                                    | Annually    | From existing resources        |

## 7 Monitoring and Review

There needs to be a precise frequency and a clear process for monitoring both maintenance and development.

The Principal Officer for Parks Management will incorporate progress on management plan actions into monthly management team meetings.

Chargehands will report back on progress or shortfalls to the Area Parks Manager after each visit.

The Area Parks Manager will carryout random inspections of the site between programmed visits.

The Area Parks Manager should carry out a monthly inspection of the site with the relevant operatives to assess maintenance standards and check against the issued work programme and specification.

The Development Officer should carry out a bi-annual site visit with the Area Parks Manager and Friends to oversee the delivery of the development plan. The target date in the five- year action plan will enable people to see how the partnership is making progress and when that action has been achieved.

## **8 Appendix**

### **1. Site Plans**

