



**Draft**

**Meols Parade Gardens**  
**Management and Improvement Plan**  
**2005-2009**



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# 1) Introduction and Vision

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 Parade Gardens.

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.

Wirral Council recently commissioned a Master plan for the regeneration of Hoylake and West Kirby to capitalise on the raised profile of the area arising out of the 2006 Open Golf Championship coming to the Royal Liverpool Golf Club in Hoylake.

The plan is supported for funding by the North West Development Agency and the Objective 1 programme.

The expansion and significant improvement of Meols Parade Gardens is included in the plan as a medium term project and it is proposed would include part of the new lifeboat station and Hoyle Road Community Centre to create an area based around active recreational and leisure pursuits.

### **3) Site Information**

**Name:** Meols Parade Gardens

**Address:** Meols Parade, Hoylake, Wirral

**Size:** 1.2 Hectares

**Primary classification:** Local Park

**Ward:** Hoylake & Meols

**Tenure:**

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

**Stakeholders:**

- Friends of Hoylake and Meols Gardens and Open Spaces
- 1 x Bowling club
- Grounds maintenance staff.

**Summary of Features:**

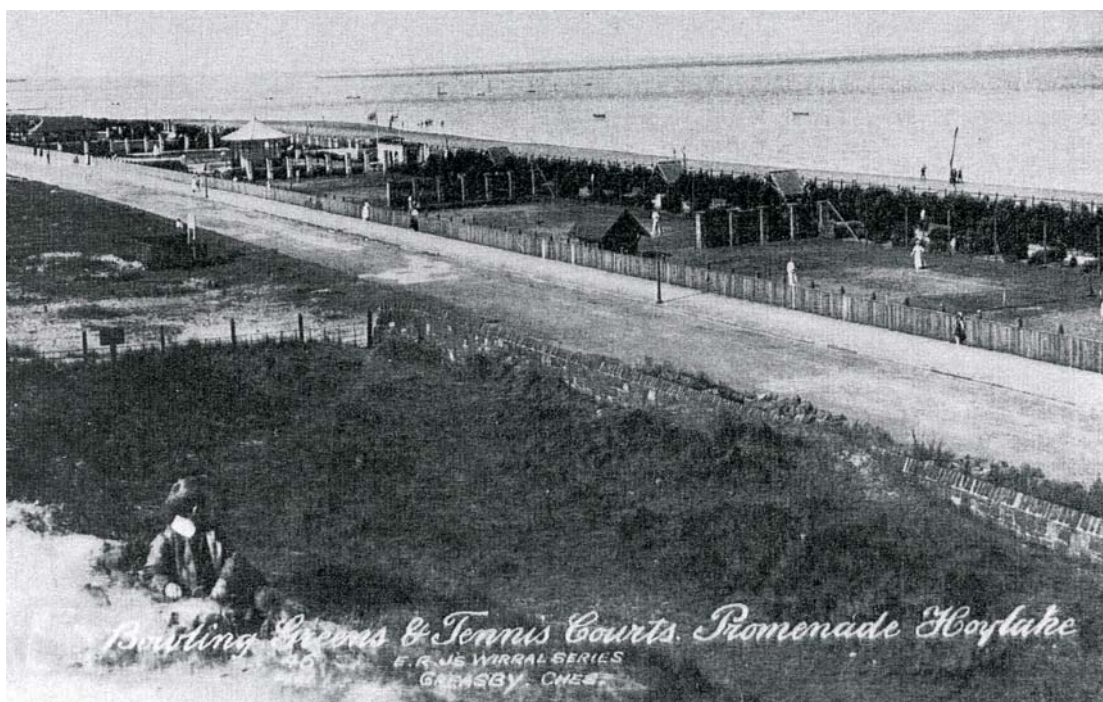
- 2 x Bowling greens and pavilion
- 2 x Hard tennis courts
- Basketball court
- Grass 5 a side football pitch
- Public toilets
- Picnic tables and seating
- Refreshment Kiosk

## Access:

The gardens are situated on the promenade at Hoylake. The main entrance is located close to the junction with Hoyle Road. There are further access points along the length of the gardens on both the road and seaward sides.

## History:

The gardens were constructed on land reclaimed after the construction of the promenade. Work started in 1908 and the gardens opened in 1909. The Bandstand was erected in 1912. A floor plan of the 1930's tea- room is held by Wirral Archive service. During the Second World War dances were held every Friday in the new, much larger bandstand, dance and café area, but ended shortly afterwards following complaints from residents of the houses opposite, between Hoyle Road and Sandhey Road. The bandstand was demolished in 1973. It took workmen more than a day to remove the first course of bricks such had been the quality of the construction.

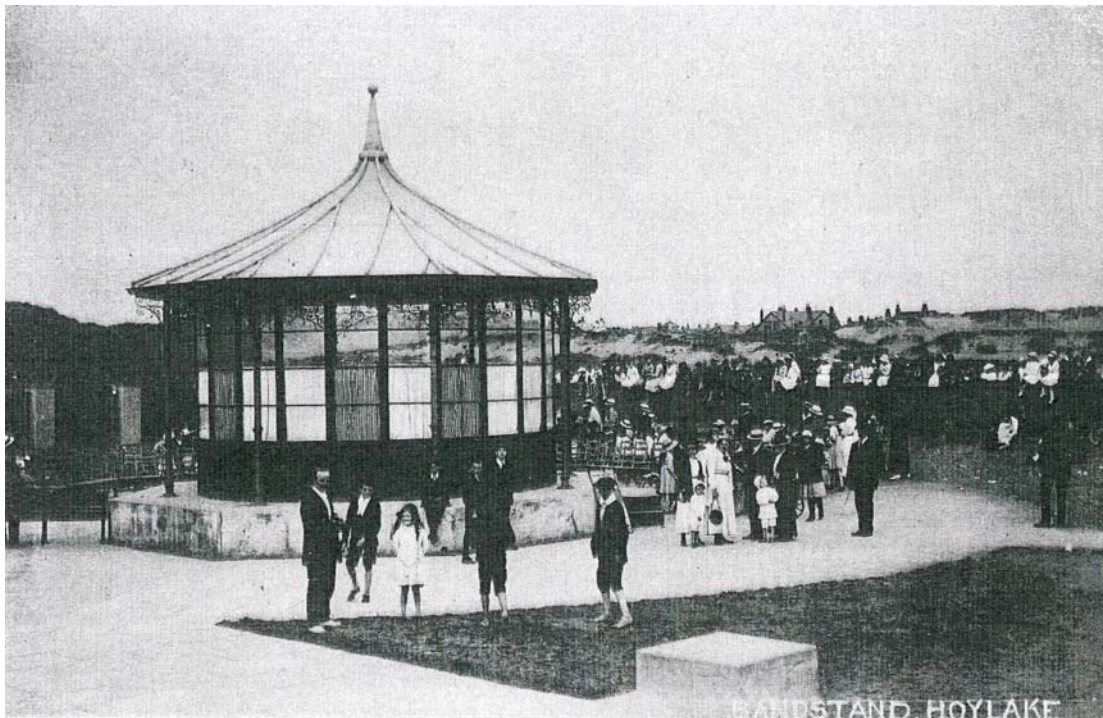


In the 1960's a new building comprising an electricity sub station, bowling pavilion and mess room was constructed at the southern perimeter. A new facilities block including public conveniences was constructed between the two bowling greens in the mid 1980's. One room within the block is to be used by the Friends for the sale of light refreshments beginning in 2006.

Fencing to the roadside boundary was replaced during the 1990's with bow- topped railings. During the late 1990's the Victorian seating shelters on the promenade boundary were removed.

The Friends were set up in 2003 with aims that include securing funding to improve the appearance and facilities offered within the gardens, the promenade and other parks and

open spaces in Hoylake and Meols. They intend to work in partnership with local residents, local organisations and the Local Authority,



#### **Resources:**

There is currently no dedicated capital budget for improvements to the gardens.

Grounds maintenance is funded from the annual maintenance revenue budget. The Area Parks Manager has overall responsibility for management of the park. A site-based member of staff supported by a gardener using a mini tractor for mowing the larger grass areas maintains the park.

## **4) Analysis and Assessment**

The decline in the quality of grounds maintenance and lack of investment over previous decades has resulted in the deterioration of Meols Parade Gardens.

The current condition of the built environment and hard landscape is poor and requires urgent investment, particularly the boundary wall along its entire length to the seaward side and the footpaths throughout the site.

Horticultural maintenance is variable with the No 1 Bowling green presentation being of an acceptable standard to the planted areas being very poor.

The formation of the Friends of Hoylake and Meols Gardens and Open Spaces has resulted in some improvements to the site including ball court fencing to the 5 a side pitch, tennis court surfacing, new seating and planting and a new notice board at the main entrance.

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**

There are 8 access points into the gardens with 6 being on the roadside and 2 on the seaward side. The main entrance is between the two bowling greens near the junction with Hoyle Road and has good disabled access as does the access from the seaward side opposite. The main entrance has an information board but no signage indicating the site name or contacts. There is vehicular access at the entrance point opposite Wynstay Road. This requires a drop bollard or similar to prevent unauthorised access, in addition grounds maintenance vehicles currently using this entrance are driving throughout the site and damaging grass and footpaths.

There is no direction signage to the gardens from the main road or along the promenade. At present all entrances to the site are uninspiring and lacking identity.



### **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 erected at some entrances to the site, but a heavy littering of dog faeces is still evident throughout. The siting and type of waste bins requires improving as these are also used for dog waste.

The public convenience building at the site was erected approx. 20 years ago and is manned and managed by the Dept. Housing and Environmental Health. It is open 7 days a week during daylight hours. The Friends have requested the use of one room within this block to sell refreshments.

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:

**Entrances** – Walling is in need of repair and painting. Footpaths are very poor at the entrance opposite Deneshey Road with litter and dog faeces fouling most. Shrubs at the seaward entrance between the bowling greens obscure the site. No signage from the promenade at this point exists. The current state of these entrances leads to a feeling that the gardens are neglected.

**Sight lines** – The gardens are a linear site and pose no real visibility problems, however, the perimeter walling does offer some protection to graffiti artists.

**Anti-social behaviour** – Graffiti is evident throughout the site to the boundary walling.

**Vandalism** – Loose walling is being pulled down and strewn over parts of the site. Anti vandal paint has not been re-applied to the bowls pavilion roof- line. The siting of highway seating to the exterior boundary wall offers a step up to gain access to this building.

**Motor vehicles** – Grounds maintenance vehicles have caused damage to flagged footways across the site via an open entrance.

**The Gardens at night** – Street lighting surrounds the site and offers low level illumination.

**Footpaths** – No security problems are evident but surfacing is poor and uneven.

**Boundaries** – The gardens are not gated. As previously mentioned the walling is in need of structural attention. Tennis court fencing is not being maintained and is in need of attention. The site is well overlooked by private properties on North Parade but this does not always deter vandals.

**Buildings** – Anti vandal paint needs to be re-applied to the pavilion and possibly the recently sited container.

**Play areas** – *Not applicable.*

**Who was on site** – Public convenience staff and a lone dog walker.

**Maintenance** – There are no features that contribute negatively to the feeling of safety in the gardens, however, with the exception of the grass cutting, the site is not being maintained to a good standard i.e. fouling on pathways, 5 a side not re-instated, No 2 bowling green edging rotted, shrub bed weed, Fencing not repaired, walls unpainted, railings unpainted, basketball court dangerously uneven.





### iii) Clean and well maintained

There is one site- based member of staff.

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, it is apparent that 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>Park</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>By</b>	

<b>Grass</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Fine Sport		√	
Playing Fields	N/a	N/a	N/a
Ornamental	N/a	N/a	N/a
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		√	
Herbaceous	N/a	N/a	N/a
Roses		√	
Shrubs		√	
Hedges		√	
Young staked trees	N/a	N/a	N/a
Mature Trees	N/a	N/a	N/a
Woodland	N/a	N/a	N/a

<b>Hard Surfaces</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Tarmac Sport			√
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		√	
ACW / ATP	N/a	N/a	N/a

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

<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			√
Graffiti		√	

<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	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
Inspection Chambers / Covers	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
Gully pots	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>

<b>Furniture / Memorials</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Maintenance		√	
Graffiti		√	

<b>Signage</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Maintenance		√	
Graffiti		√	

<b>Lighting</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Maintenance	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>

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

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

Perimeter walling to the entire site has obvious signs of damage. There are sections of loose brickwork and cracked and missing render. Pillars and bays are out of plumb. Where render is intact, graffiti is evident and unsightly. Feather board fencing to the bays in the seaward wall is regularly vandalised and some sections have now been replaced with trench block but this is expensive.

Fencing to the roadside boundary was replaced approx. 10 years ago with bow topped railings and is in good structural condition but requires painting. Chain link fencing to the tennis and basketball courts has not been maintained well and requires straining and tying in. Where this fencing is behind the 5 a side goals it is badly 'bellied' and collapsing. Ball court fencing has been erected along one side of this pitch with money raised by the Friends.

There are a number of footpath surface treatments used throughout the site but the majority is flagstone. This surfacing is now uneven and many units are cracked and broken. Grass and weed has contaminated the pointing and with the former could present a slip or trip hazard. In the area of the old bandstand the surfacing is crushed brick that is not attractive and very loose. In addition the pathways are very narrow at this location. Elsewhere a mixture of tarmac and concrete ramps exist.

New seating and picnic tables funded by the Friends are being installed on a rolling programme as funds allow. Existing terraced seating to the bowling green area is mounted on reinforced concrete pillars which have failed due to age and need replacing soon.

The two tarmac tennis courts have had their surfaces cleaned, treated with a resin binder and painted, however, this will only prolong the life of the court for approx. 5 years as the surface is fretted and eroded.

The basketball court is in poor condition being badly rutted and fretted with no court markings.

The grass 5 a side football pitch is bare and badly worn to the goalmouths and central area. Backboards to the goals are in need of replacement to one end and have not had timber treatment to prolong their life.

The two bowling greens are maintained to different standards with No 1 green being mainly weed free with a dense and healthy sward and No 2 green being poor with bare patches and a weak yellowing sward. It also requires new edging boards.

Grass cutting to the larger areas throughout the site is acceptable but needs associated planting to add interest as it currently looks bleak and windswept.

Shrub beds are full of weed and need remedial pruning of dead, diseased and crossing branches. Where pruning has taken place it has left individual plants looking like lollipops and this is not good horticultural practice.

Hedging to the seaward boundary wall is not cut to frequency. Annual bedding maintenance was variable with weed dominating the bed to the main entrance.

Maintenance of the buildings within the gardens is carried out via the day to day repair system administered by Technical Services Department.



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 should include staff management (i.e. motivation, supervision, training) coupled with the issue of resourcing (i.e. revenue funding, machinery and materials).

*Principal Officer Parks Management/LF to analyse findings and report*

#### **iv) Sustainability**

Wirral Council has an Environmental Policy that the Parks and Countryside section must adhere to.

Currently green waste is being dumped en masse in a shrub bed between the bowling greens.

Brash from shrub pruning is currently left on footpaths awaiting clearance. This is unsightly and presents a trip hazard.

One room within the toilet block is currently used as a mess-room for grounds staff. The storeroom integral to this is being used to store chemicals and this breaks Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations and is wholly unacceptable.

Annual bedding used on site is produced using reduced peat compost.

The Gardens are well served by cycle routes along the promenade and public transport infrastructure.

#### **v) Conservation and Heritage**

*Bio-diversity report to follow*

Much of the built environment from the creation of the gardens in 1909 has now been lost. Most recently the removal of the shelters along the seaward wall, due to pressure from local residents was, with hindsight, a bad idea.

The seaward boundary wall requires an assessment by a structural engineer.

The site of the old bandstand is a particularly poor area of the gardens. The area between the old bandstand and the No2 bowling green has been requested by the Friends for the construction of a sensory garden.

## **vi) Community involvement**

Meols Parade garden has an active Friends group who organise events to raise funds for improvements to the site.

The Friends have involved the local primary school (Hoylake Holy Trinity) in designing a mosaic as the centre- piece for a proposed sensory garden, once funding is available.

5 aside soccer games have been organised by the friends in conjunction with the local community police officers.

## **vii) Marketing**

Wirral Council has a web site that has links to the Parks and Countryside information. This is at present hard to find and has no information on Meols Parade Gardens. The Friends are currently engaged in improving their own website.

The information board at the main entrance to the gardens does have current information on local events.

The Friends produce a quarterly newsletter keeping the community abreast of their vision for the site and progress to date.

As previously mentioned the Friends have requested the use of one room in the facilities block (currently used by ground-staff) to sell refreshments at weekends and raise further funds for the gardens.

## viii) Management

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 gardens.

## 5) Aims and Objectives

**Aim:** To encourage people into the gardens and to make them more welcoming.

**Objectives:**

1. Provide direction signage from the local Merseyrail stations and Market Street in Hoylake.
2. Provide a good quality sign in the gardens indicating site name, managing organisation and contact numbers.
3. Assess the need for the numerous entrances to the gardens and reduce if necessary.
4. Improve those remaining entrances with better footpath surfacing and associated planting.
5. Supply and erect a drop bollard to the vehicular entrance and inform ground staff to refrain from driving over the site.

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

**Objectives;**

1. Re-erect dog 'clean it up' signage to entrances.
2. Re-position and standardise type of waste bins to entrances.
3. Masonry paint over graffiti on walls when it occurs.
4. Apply anti vandal paint to building roof- lines.
5. Remove dog faeces on site and regularly brush and litter pick pathways.
6. Repair damaged fencing and walling as it occurs.
7. 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 gardens.

**Objectives;**

1. Instruct a structural engineer to assess the condition of the seaward boundary wall.
2. Improve the quality of grounds maintenance throughout the gardens.
3. Produce winter work programmes to include annual tree/shrub planting to create windbreaks and other works to reflect this document.
4. Begin a rolling programme of footpath re-surfacing.
5. Begin a rolling programme of ball court fence installation.
6. Replace edging boards to No 2 bowling green.
7. Re-lay tarmac wearing course to both tennis and basketball courts with associated line marking.

8. Continue rolling programme of seat replacement.
9. Replace and stain damaged backboards to 5 a side and re-instate grass.
10. Install all weather surface to 5 a side arena if funding can be sourced.

**Aim:** To improve sustainable work practices relevant to the gardens.

**Objectives;**

1. Implement improved waste management / recycling procedure for site.
2. Mulch shrub beds.
3. Implement correct chemical storage procedures on site.
4. Install cycle racks to site to encourage sustainable transport.

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

**Objectives;**

1. Re-develop the old bandstand area utilising the Friends proposals.

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

**Objectives;**

2. Continue to capacity build with the Friends group.
3. To work in partnership with the Friends to apply for and achieve Green Flag status.
4. Support the Friends with their annual events programme for fund raising.
5. Assist the Friends in their request for the use of the refreshment kiosk on site.

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



**Objectives;**

6. Improve the Wirral Council website.
7. Assist the Friends in the production of their newsletter.
8. Improve site interpretation and signage.

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

**Objectives;**

1. To gain funding to make as many quality improvements to the gardens as possible.
2. To create mechanisms to actively review both maintenance and improvements.

## 6) Action Plan

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Funding source</b>
Decide locations for and provide road signage	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Provide good quality sign to gardens entrance	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources / Friends
Reduce number of entrance points	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Renovate remaining entrances	Area Parks Manager	2007	Funding to be sourced
Supply / erect drop bollard to vehicular access	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Standardise and re-position waste bins	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Begin Annual Site Safety Inspection	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Masonry paint all internal walls	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Apply anti vandal paint to building roof-lines	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Remove dog fouling and litter	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources

from pathways and brush more frequently			
Instigate repairs to damaged fencing and walling as it occurs	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Arrange structural survey of seaward boundary wall	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Improve grounds maintenance ratings to good throughout the gardens	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Produce annual winter work programmes for site	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Begin footpath resurfacing	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Provide ball court fencing to 5 a side	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Re-edge No 2 bowling green	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Re- surface tennis courts	Development Officer / Friends	2010	Funding to be sourced
Re-surface / improve basketball court	Development officer / Friends	2007	Funding to be sourced
Replace and standardise seating	Area Parks Manager	Ongoing / 2010	Funding to be sourced / donations
Renovate 5 a side pitch	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Install all weather surface to 5 a side	Development Officer / Friends	2010	Funding to be sourced
Install site composting facility	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Begin mulching of shrub beds	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources

Implement COSHH procedures on site	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Install bicycle racks	Development Officer	2007	Funding to be sourced / Friends
Landscape old bandstand area	Development Officer / Friends	2010	Funding to be sourced
Support and work in partnership with the Friends	Development Officer / Area Parks Manager	Ongoing	
Apply for Green Flag Award	Development Officer	2010	From existing resources
Produce annual event programme	Friends	2006	From existing resources
Utilise kiosk for refreshments	Friends / Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Improve Parks website		2006	From existing resources
Produce newsletter for gardens	Friends	Ongoing	Friends
Improve site interpretation and signage	Development Officer / Friends	Ongoing	From existing resources / Friends
To work with Friends to gain external funding	Development Officer / Friends	Ongoing	Funding to be sourced
Create system to monitor grounds maintenance quality	Area Parks Manager	2006	From existing resources
Create system to review improvements	Area Parks Manager / Development Officer / Friends	2006	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) Appendices**

### **1. Site Plans**

