



Draft

Wirral Council

Department of Regeneration

Parks and Countryside Service

Walker Park

**Management Plan
&
Security Audit**

2007 – 2012



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1) Introduction and vision

Wirral Council produced this management plan. The plan is intended to provide a framework for the development and improvement of the park over the next five-year period up to 2011. The plan is intended to be a working document, which is open to new ideas at any time. We welcome your suggestions and comments for incorporation into this plan, whether you are a local resident, user or organisation. Your input will help us to develop a park that meets everyone's needs and aspirations.

If you wish to find out further information about this document or submit any suggestions please contact **Peter Whittle** in the Parks and Countryside Service at Wirral Council on 0151 666 4713 or by email at peterwhittle@wirral.gov.uk alternatively, you can contact Peter Whittle by writing to:

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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 and its relevance to the park

Wirral Borough 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 2007/08** sets out the targets for the Service within the context of the above corporate objectives and the **Regeneration Departmental Service Plan for 2007/08**.

3) Site information

Name: Walker Park

Primary classification: Local Park

Grid Reference: 330561, 385958

Address: Prenton Hall Road, Prenton

Ward: Prenton

Size: 5.405 Hectares

Existing facilities and features:

- Mature tree stock
- Open grass areas
- Five-a-side pitch
- Habitat potential

Tenure:

The site is owned and managed by the Parks and Countryside Service of Wirral Council's Department of Regeneration.

Summary of main uses:

- Dog walking
- Ball games

Partner organisations:

Merseyside Police
Wirral Council's Community Safety Team

Access:

The two entrances situated on Prenton Hall Road are unsuitable for wheelchair users. The open boundary to Golf Links Road could be used by wheel chair users subject to ground conditions.

The park is located near to a bus route with a stop located on Prenton Hall Road.

Resources:

- Area Manager and Assistant Manager (based at Arrowe Park)
- A range of horticultural machinery and tools
- Annual revenue budget
- Visiting maintenance staff and equipment
- Visiting Arboriculture team

Summary of the known problems

- Dog fouling
- Lack of local community representation

Staff and their functions

Maintenance personnel visit the park to perform volume and pedestrian grass cutting, hedge cutting, litter removal and seasonal tree work.

The Area Parks Manager and the Assistant Area Parks Manager are responsible for the management of the park. The area grounds maintenance depot is located at Arrowe Park Ivy Farm Depot, Arrowe Park Road, Landican, the contact telephone number for the area office is 0151 678 3555.

Skill gaps

The **Parks and Countryside Service Plan 2007/08** recognises that a skill gap currently exists within the division's operational staffing, in consequence three main aims have been identified in order to address the issue:

1. Review Parks Modern apprentice scheme
3. Produce a staff training action plan
4. Improve training for parks staff in biodiversity awareness

Stakeholders

- The site does not currently have a recognisable community or user group

What standards are management trying to achieve

The intention is for the park to achieve the standards as defined by the Green Flag Award Scheme.

4) Analysis and assessment

As with many parks across the country, a decline in investment in green space over previous decades has seen maintenance standards the condition of facilities and infrastructure within municipal parks decline.

The current condition of the Park has been assessed using the following criteria as defined by the Civic Trust's Green Flag Award scheme:

- i. A welcoming park
- ii. Healthy, safe and secure
- iii. Clean and maintained
- iv. Sustainability
- v. Conservation and heritage
- vi. Community involvement
- vii. Marketing

viii. Management

i) A welcoming park

The park has two entrance points on Prenton Hall Road the park is open along it's boundary to Golf Links Road. The two entrance points situated on Prenton Hall Road are currently unsuitable for access by wheelchair users.

The park does not have any welcoming signage evident to the entrance points. The main entrance opposite Glenavon Road is of a poor appearance consisting of a lop-sided field gate, provided for the purpose of maintenance vehicle access and a tubular barrier-rail; dilapidated chain-link fencing is attached to tubular uprights. Two unmatching litterbins are situated either side of the entrance on the adopted footway, these are the responsibility of Technial Services Department (Streetscene Services).

The lower entrance is defined as a break in the boundary hedging with tubular supports with sagging chain-link fencing attached to either side a waste bin is situated adjacent to the entrance. A tubular barrier rail is situated immediately behind the entrance. The surface of the entrance point is worn; two timber steps form revetment for the rising ground level.



Prenton Hall Road (opposite Glenavon Road)



Prenton Hall Road

The boundary to Golf Links Road is open a long it's length abutting the adjacent highway footway.



Golf Links Road boundary

A small mature wood adjoins the open grass area; a worn and unsurfaced path provides an informal route through the wood.



Informal path leads through the wooded area

No seating or picnic tables are currently provided within the park.

ii) Healthy, safe and secure

The park is covered under the Fouling of Land Act 1996; this act makes it an offence not to clean up in a public area if a dog under your control does foul. Powers to enforce £50 fixed penalty notices on offenders were extended to include Wirral's Community Patrol Officers in August 2007, a media campaign 'Don't give a dog a bad name' will be launched to highlight the new powers.

Wirral Council's policy regarding dog fouling is to encourage responsibility in dog ownership and owners are expected to clean up after their pets, dedicated dog waste bins are not provided; dog waste can be deposited into the Borough's litterbins consequently becoming incorporated with general waste this does not then entail the problems associated with disposal of faeces only bins.

The Park is designated a 'canine faeces removal area'; however dog fouling was apparent throughout the park, signs are in place at entrance points indicating the park is a 'clean it up' area. Many dog walkers use the park's litterbins for the disposal of removed faeces.

Wirral Council operates a 24 hour Community Patrol force, established to provide a response to any concern notified to them regarding anti-social behaviour occurring within Council owned land. The Patrol can be contacted on telephone number 666 5265

Parks and Countryside are represented on the Joint Agency Group (Junior JAG) a forum consisting of Merseyside Police, Community Safety, and youth workers. Issues regarding security in parks are raised at the meeting with the intention of providing a multi agency approach to addressing problems.

The park is covered by Byelaws, made under Section 164 of the Public Health Act, 1875,

It is proposed to introduce an annual site Safety Inspection Checklist, the inspection is intended to identify defects within sites that present a safety problem for staff, users and adjacent residents. The checklist requires the appraisal of the following items:

1. Paths, steps, ramps
2. Walls, fences, gates
3. Buildings
4. Furniture – signs, seats, litterbins etc
5. Soft landscape – grass, planted areas, water features etc
6. Trees

A Security Audit was undertaken by Peter Whittle, the park was assessed under the following criteria:

- a) Sight-line visibility
- b) What evidence is apparent of anti-social behaviour or undesirable activity in the park?
- c) Motor vehicles
- d) The park at night
- e) Pathways, pedestrian routes
- f) Boundaries
- g) Is the park well cared for?

a) Sight-line visibility

The larger part of the park consists of a large grass and provides open views across the site.

The grass area abutting Golf Links Road was previously used for horse riding is overlooked by neighbouring property along one side.

Visibility is restricted within the small wooded area adjacent to the park's Golf Links Road boundary.

b) What evidence is apparent of anti-social behaviour or undesirable activity in the park?

The small adjacent area of woodland, referred to above, does provide cover for misuse and evidence of drinking and fires where apparent during the audit visit.

c) Motor vehicles

No problems associated with motor vehicles accessing the site are apparent.

d) The park at night

The park does not have supplementary lighting, the only illumination available is provided by highway situated lamp columns; these shed light along the park's boundaries to both Prenton Hall Road and Golf Links Road.

Wirral Council currently neither encourages nor discourages the use of the park during the hours of darkness.

Wirral Council neither encourages nor discourages the nighttime use of the park.

Incident reports compiled by Wirral Council's Community Patrol are made available to the Parks and Countryside Service and are provided to the Area Parks Manager; no assessment is currently made of this available data in order to establish the types and frequencies of incidents occurring.

Anecdotally it is assumed that the majority of incidents associated with youths causing annoyance and anti social behaviour take place between 18:00 hrs and 21:00 hrs during Fridays and Saturdays predominately in the spring and summer months

The remains of a fire in the small wooded area and the presence of discarded cans and bottles indicates undesirable activity, possibly associated with young people drinking alcohol, this would require further enquiry in order to establish the extent of the problem.

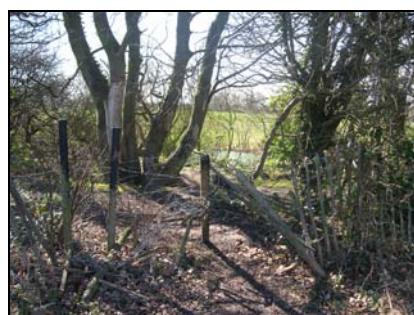
e) Pathways, pedestrian routes

There are no formal footpath routes within the park

f) Boundaries

The owners of some properties situated in Fairways have taken precautions to deter access into their properties from this field and signs indicate private security protection measures are in place. Self-sown tree species in the park are growing in close proximity to some boundary walls of these properties providing the potential for use as ingress points.

The park shares a boundary of 96 linear meters with Prenton Golf Club this is defined by a tree-belt and post and wire fence; an unauthorised access point between the park and the golf course has been made.



The boundary fencing of sixteen properties located in Prenton Farm Road forms the western boundary of the park, various types of timber garden fencing extend along the length of this boundary.

The park's frontage to Prenton Hall Road has a thorn hedge along the entire length (approximately 153 linear meters); an old chain-link type fence is incorporated within the hedge.

The boundary to Golf Links Road is open along its length of approximately 120 linear meters.

G) Is the park well cared for?

iii) Clean and well maintained

Horticultural maintenance is carried out in accordance with a frequency based work programme allied to a specification. The work programme or "job card" is issued to staff on a quarterly basis; these are used for identifying all maintenance operations on the site for the period. Currently these documents are not being fully utilised and are under review.

The maintenance regime is carried out to meet general standards set out in a Borough-wide grounds maintenance 'frequency based' specification. The specification sets out corporate standards of maintenance.

There are no site-based members of staff, however, a mobile team carry out operations within the park, supported by a swing fitter operative.

The Senior Parks Development Officer has carried out an assessment of the current maintenance condition of the park under the following 13 headings. The facilities and features are simply categorised as good, fair or poor and can only represent findings at the time of writing.

Grounds maintenance site checklist

Park	Walker Park
Date	2006

Grass	Good	Fair	Poor
Fine Sport	N/A	N/A	N/A
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

Planting	Good	Fair	Poor
Annual	N/A	N/A	N/A

Herbaceous	N/A	N/A	N/A
Roses	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shrubs	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hedges	√		
Young staked trees / semi-mature trees	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mature Trees			√
Woodland			√

Hard Surfaces	Good	Fair	Poor
Tarmac Sport	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hard Porous	N/A	N/A	N/A
Footpaths	N/A	N/A	N/A
Drives	N/A	N/A	N/A
Car Parks	N/A	N/A	N/A
ACW / ATP	N/A	N/A	N/A
Steps	N/A	N/A	N/A

Play Areas	Good	Fair	Poor
Maintenance	N/A	N/A	N/A

Litter	Good	Fair	Poor
Collection		√	
Bins		√	

Buildings	Good	Fair	Poor
Repair / Maintenance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graffiti	N/A	N/A	N/A

Fencing	Good	Fair	Poor
Repair / Maintenance		√	

Walling	Good	Fair	Poor
Maintenance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graffiti	N/A	N/A	N/A

Drainage	Good	Fair	Poor
Ditches			√
Inspection Chambers / Covers	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gully pots	N/A	N/A	N/A

Signage	Good	Fair	Poor
Repair / Maintenance		√	
Graffiti		√	

Furniture / Memorials	Good	Fair	Poor
Repair / Maintenance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Graffiti	N/A	N/A	N/A

Lighting	Good	Fair	Poor
Maintenance	N/A	N/A	N/A

Water	Good	Fair	Poor
Maintenance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Safety	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

Principal Officer Parks Management/LF to analyse and report

Drainage is poor, particularly to the northern end of the site, a drainage ditch dividing Golf Links Road field from the main field is choked with vegetation and debris.

Timber fencing erected parallel to the drainage ditch has some missing horizontal cross rails.



A section of the scrub growth, which under-stored the mature wooded area fronting Golf Links Road, has been cleared during spring 2006.



Whilst making the area more accessible and improving the appearance a loss of habitat for small mammals, insects and invertebrates has resulted.

Self-sown weed tree species have become colonised close to the neighbouring boundary with Fairways (see *f. boundaries above*), this is undesirable in the long term to the wall's structural condition.



iv) Sustainability

Green waste generated at the park is not currently composted and reused on the site other than tree brash, which is chipped and stored at Ivy Farm depot for reuse as mulch.

Pesticide usage at the park is confined to non-residual Herbicide for the control of weed growth on pathways.

C.O.S.H.H. (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessment records of the chemical based products used within the park form part of the Departments Quality Assurance procedures. Pesticide records are retained at the district depot (Ivy Farm). Chemical storage and usage within the park complies with the requirements defined within the current pesticide handling legislation.

Motorised mowing equipment used at the park is checked for emission levels.

v) Conservation and heritage

A short report on the biodiversity potential of the site to be produced by the Parks Development Officer

The mature tree stock represents the main heritage feature of the park. There has not been any assessment made of the condition of the park's trees, the tree stock is largely overly mature with thorn (*Crataegus* species) predominant within the main tree groups and Ash, Oak and Sycamore occurring. A phased programme of replacement planting with native species in differing stages of maturity should be considered. The existing stock should be appraised and remedial action undertaken as required, all dead trees should be rendered safe and where possible retained in an upright position in order to create an increase in habitat potential.

vi) Community involvement

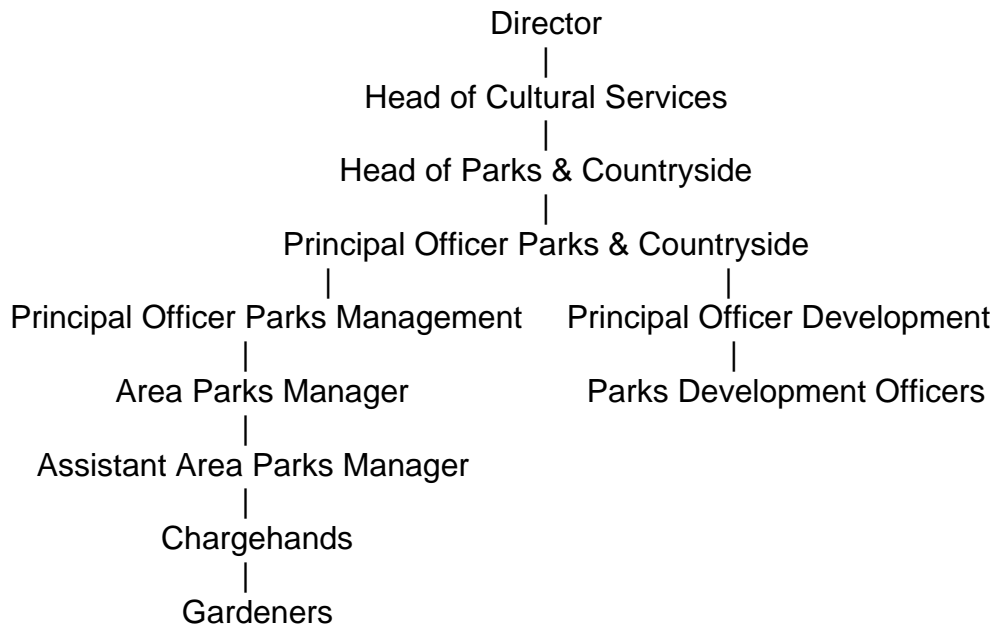
The Park does not currently have a recognisable user or 'friends of' group.

vii) Marketing

The Wirral Council's internet web site has links to the Parks and Countryside Service's information. No information regarding Walker Park is presently available on the site. The site is not currently marketed.

vii) Management

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



5) Aims and objectives

Aim: To make the park more welcoming

Objectives:

- Provide signage at entrances
- Improve the two entrance points on Prenton Hall Road
- Install ramp/steps with handrail to entrance
- Provide seating and associated litter bins

Aim: To make the park healthy, safe and secure

Objectives:

- Undertake annual 'Site Safety Inspection'
- Ensure all incidences of anti-social behaviour are reported to Merseyside Police
- Raise ongoing problems with Junior JAG
- Provide contact information on the park signage
- Improve the problem of dog fouling
- The usage of the site at night requires further investigation as signs of undesirable behaviour are apparent
- Monitor incident reports to ensure an adequate level of response is provided to problems

Aim: To ensure the park is clean and well maintained

Objectives:

- Achieve the standard as defined by the Green Flag award scheme
- To bring the maintenance standards to good within the plan period
- Clear-out drainage ditches to improve movement of surface water
- Repair timber post and rail fencing

Aim: To improve environmental sustainability within the park

Objective:

- Compost all green waste generated at the site
- Undertake an environmental audit
- Review waste handling methods

Aim: To improve the conservation value of the park

Objective:

- *To be informed by the relevant Parks Development Officer*
- Compile a woodland management plan

Aim: To increase local community involvement in the park

Objective:

- Explore opportunities to assist the local community to establish a park friends group
- Encourage use of the park for community initiated events

Aim: To improve the marketing of the park**Objectives:**

- Improve the park information available on the council's internet website

6) Action Plan

	Action	Responsibility	When	Financial
1. To make the park more welcoming				
1.1	Install appropriate style signage with information and contact details (Wirral Community Patrol etc) at the two entrance points situated on Prenton Hall Road.	Parks Development Officer (PDO)/Area Parks Manager (APM)		Requires additional funding (RAF) £5K
1.2	Undertake modifications to the two entrances on Prenton Hall Road to make suitable for access for all, include provision of ramp for wheelchair users/Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance.	PDO/Landscape		RAF £7K
1.3	Install seating and associated litter bins	APM/PDO		RAF £12K
2. To make the park healthy, safe and secure				
2.1	Report all incidences of anti-social behaviour to Merseyside Police	APM		WER

2.2	Report ongoing problems via Junior JAG	APM		WER
2.3	Undertake annual 'Site Safety Inspection'	APM	2007 Ongoing	WER
2.4	Raise awareness re problems associated with dog fouling, leaflet users, appropriate signage etc	APM/Partners	Ongoing	
2.5	Liase with Community Safety and Merseyside Police Community Officer in order to establish the level of response made to night-time anti-social behaviour within the site	APM/Partners	Ongoing	WER
3. To ensure the park is clean and well maintained				
3.1	Achieve the standard as defined by the Green Flag award scheme	PDO/APM		RAF £5K pa
3.2	Achieve a good standard of horticultural maintenance within the period of the plan	APM	By 2012	WER
3.3	Clean out blocked/choked drainage ditches and water courses	APM		WER
3.4	Repair timber post and rail fencing	APM		WER
4. To manage the park in a sustainable way				
4.1	Separate and compost all green waste generated at the park	APM		
4.2	Undertake environmental audit	Partners		WER
4.3	Review waste handling	APM		RAF £1K pa

5. To improve the conservation value of the park				
5.1	<i>Parks Development Officer to report on biodiversity</i>			£1K pa
5.2	Produce a tree/woodland management plan	APM		RAF £5 K
6. To increase community involvement in the park				
6.1	Develop opportunities for community representation in the park's management	PDO		Additional resources may be required
6.2	Promote the park as a venue for community initiated events			Additional resources may be required
7. To improve the marketing of the park				
7.1	Improve available information regarding the park on the Wirral Council Internet web site	Parks Officer		WER

7) Monitoring and review

There will be a precise a clear process for monitoring both maintenance and development.

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

Charge hands 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 monitoring visits.

The Area Parks Manager will carryout a quarterly inspection of the site with the relevant gardeners to assess maintenance standards and check against the issued work programme and specification.

The Parks Development Officer will carryout a bi-annual site visit with the Area Parks Manager and Friends representatives to oversee the delivery of the Management Plan. The target dates 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. Aerial Photograph Walker Park

