

Doctor Pit Park Bedlington



Map of Doctor Pit Park



WELCOME TO DR. PIT PARK

The play area caters for all age ranges; the ball game and wheeled sports area are for older children; and the grass is for games or relaxation.

If you wish to play bowls please see the park attendant or contact us so that we can pass your name onto the bowls club.

Park opens between 7:30 & 8:30am and closes at dusk. Toilets are available.

This Park is managed and maintained by the Neighbourhood Services team of Northumberland County Council.

If you want to find out more about our parks and green spaces please contact us on 0345 6006400

HighwaysandNeighbourhoodServices
@northumberland.gov.uk

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Doctor Pit Park Management Plan

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SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A General Background to the Park

Doctor Pit Park is located in the historic market town of Bedlington in the south east corner of Northumberland. The park provides bowls, sports and play facilities as well as a quiet green space away from the hustle and bustle of the busy town.

1.2 A Brief History of the Park

The Park is named after the Doctor Pit which was sunk in the 1860's on land now occupied by Gallagher Park and the new housing estates to the west of the site.

The Park was established in the early 1930's on farmland which was purchased by the Bedlington Coal Company. The Park provided recreational facilities for local miners and their families. The Park offered bowling, football, tennis together with a play area and more formal gardens.

The management of the park was taken over by the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) in 1967 when the Doctor Pit finally closed.

In the early 1970's the Park was covenanted to Wansbeck District Council who undertook to maintain and manage the park "for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Urban District of Bedlingtonshire for recreational and sporting activities".

In April 2010 the management of the park passed to the unitary authority of Northumberland County Council. From 2015 the management of the site is the responsibility of the Green Spaces Officer for the Countryside and Green Spaces Team of Neighbourhood Services (South East Team). A copy of the staff structure is included in the Appendix

1.3 Site Details

Name: Doctor Pit Park, Bedlington.

Grid reference: NZ263 819

Area: 1.6 hectares

Tenure and legal status: Doctor Pit Park is a charitable trust covenanted to Northumberland County Council by the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO).

Access: There are three entrances into the park.

The main pedestrian/vehicular entrance is situated on Park Road which is accessed from Beech Grove, Bedlington. There are a further two pedestrian entrances next to Whitley Memorial First School and off Hollymount Square.

1.3.1 Local Facilities

There are public toilets available on site which are open during attendant hours or when the pavilion is in use.

The nearest public toilets outside of the park are located 200 metres west in the Market Place car park, Bedlington.

The pavilion has telephone facilities which can be used by park users in case of emergency; otherwise, the nearest public telephone is located 120 metres north of the park on Hirst Terrace North.

The park has good public transport links with bus stops situated on adjacent streets. The bus services provide links to many of the towns and villages of South East Northumberland as well to Newcastle upon Tyne.

There is limited public parking both in the park and on surrounding streets. There is a large free public car park to the rear of the Market Place which is located 400 metres from the site.

1.3.2 Features and Activities within the Park

Doctor Pit Park offers a variety of features and recreational opportunities which belies its compact size. Unless otherwise stated the Park features are managed by the Neighbourhood Services team of Northumberland County Council.

Play Areas: the NEAP standard play area has equipment catering for age ranges from toddler to teenager. The wheeled sports area and basketball areas prove to be particularly popular with the older children. The grassed areas in the park also provide opportunities for informal recreational activities.

Park Pavilion: the pavilion provides a focal point for park users and the local community. In 2007 a new roof, doors and windows were provided for the building. Security measures were also upgraded with the installation of automated roller shutters and an alarm system. The pavilion is being redecorated in 2022. The pavilion incorporates a meeting room, bowls room, a kitchen, office and public toilets.

Sports Facilities: the pavilion is home to the local bowling club who play on the well maintained green situated adjacent to the pavilion. On the southern edge of the park is Welfare Park, the home of Bedlington Terriers Football Club who moved there in 1966.

Green Features: the Park offers a formal garden area consisting of annual flower beds, herbaceous border, shrub planting and a rockery. The majority of the trees in the park are mature, further planting has taken place in recent years with some success.

Exercise: as with many areas of dedicated green space in the urban environment the park is a very popular site for access to exercise and enjoyment of the outdoors. Walking/walking with dogs remains the most popular form of activity in the park providing exercise opportunities for all age ranges and abilities.

1.3.3 Park Stakeholders

Doctor Pit Park is maintained and managed by the Neighbourhood Services team of Northumberland County Council in liaison with the following stakeholder groups:

- **Northumberland County Council:** Doctor Pit Park is in the freehold ownership of Northumberland County Council and is currently managed by Neighbourhood Services through the NEAT (Neighbourhood Environmental Action Team) staff and the Green Spaces and Countryside Management teams. A copy of the staff structure is in App 5.7
- **Active Northumberland:** A charitable leisure and cultural trust that manages leisure facilities and services, libraries, supports culture, helps to develop tourism, and promotes healthy lifestyles. They work in partnership with the Neighbourhood Services team and use the park has been used as a base to hold activity sessions during the school holidays.
- **West Bedlington Town Council:** Following LGR in 2008 the County Council created a number of parish and town councils within the south east area to provide customers with the means to manage their communities at a more local level as has been the case for many years in the rest of Northumberland. West Bedlington Town Council is keen to contribute towards the future development of Dr. Pit Park
- **Bedlington Dr. Pit Bowling Club** - the club is most active during the summer months and regularly holds league fixtures. The club is keen to promote bowls with the younger park users and retains close links with the other stakeholders.
- **Northumberland County Council Elected members** play an important role in ensuring the Park is protected during times of budget cutbacks. Many of the councillors have their roots in Bedlington and are aware of how important the park is to the local community. They provide much needed funding for improvements through the Member's Improvement Scheme. The creation of the new town council of West Bedlington has also allowed the local elected members to become more involved in the management of Doctor Pit Park.
- **Dr. Pit Art Group** - the group uses the Pavilion on Wednesday mornings to meet, paint and display their artwork.

2. THE VISION FOR THE PARK

To provide and maintain a well managed, clean, safe and attractive parkland environment offering the local community and visitor from further afield opportunities for play, relaxation, informal recreation and quiet enjoyment.

Doctor Pit Park provides a valuable green space and recreational venue for the community of Bedlington. It offers both formal and informal recreational opportunities for all age ranges in a clean, healthy and safe environment.

Northumberland County Council recognizes the significance and importance of Dr. Pit Park to the local community. The future management of the park will involve the development and maintenance of the park whilst enhancing those elements which will reflect the needs of present and future stakeholders.

The value of green spaces such as Dr. Pit Park to local residents is acknowledged in this plan and the Council is fully committed to further develop its potential as a focal point for the local community. We will encourage continued public use and participation in the development of Dr. Pit Park through partnership working. We will ensure that the local community and stakeholder groups are fully engaged in the maintenance and management of the park.

This is summed up in the Northumberland County Councils Corporate Plan Vision and Values Statement

- Ensuring our services are customer focussed.
- Supporting communities and staff to embrace change and innovation.
- Involving communities and staff in decisions which affect them.
- Supporting communities to feel safe
- Creating a healthy and positive working environment.

In February 2018, the council approved its Corporate Plan for 2018 to 2021. This is the council's main strategic planning document and is a clear statement of the vision, strategic aims and policy priorities of the authority.

Climate Change Plan 2021-2023

Northumberland County Council have produced a Climate Change Plan that makes it committed to tackling climate change, declaring a 'climate emergency' and working on halving the carbon footprint by 2025 and becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Priority areas are-

- Council Policy
- Engagement & Partnership
- Heating – all buildings
- Transport
- Renewable Energy Generation
- Natural Resource-Based Carbon Sequestration
- Reducing Waste

For a further information use the link

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Climate-Change/climate-faqs.aspx>

Corporate Plan 2018 -2021 - in this document the County Council has formulated seven key principles to underpin the future development and direction of all our services to the people of Northumberland -

- **HOW** - we want to be efficient, open and work for everyone.
- **LIVING** - we want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for.
- **ENJOYING** - we want you to love where you live.
- **CONNECTING** - we want you to have access to the things you need.
- **LEARNING** - we want you to achieve and realise your potential.
- **THRIVING** - we want to attract more and better jobs.
- **SUCCESS MEASURES** - we want to make a difference.

Neighbourhood Services Service Statement 2018 - 2021 - The primary purpose of Neighbourhood Services is to work with local communities and other key stakeholder organisations to improve the physical appearance and quality of life within our communities, making them more sustainable, self-sufficient and safer places. Within Neighbourhood Services the principal functions relating to this management plan are Grounds Maintenance and Parks and Urban Green Spaces.

The delivery of the service plan will ensure that the objectives of the management plan are met by working with local communities and stakeholders (local parish and town councils, community, friends and park user groups) and in turn this will contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

Trees and Woodlands Strategy – Growing Together. This document details how the council will meet its legal obligations in respect of the trees it owns or is responsible for, the use of best arboricultural practice together with a commitment to protect existing stock and programme in new tree planting across the county.

Copies of these strategies are available on the Northumberland County Council website or by contacting the Green Spaces Officer (contact details on the back cover of this management plan) Or using this link -

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/SearchResults.aspx?searchtext=policies&searchmode=anyword&searchtype=services>

Northumberland County Council website

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Home.aspx>

Dr Pit Park website

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Local/Doctor-Pit-Park-Bedlington.aspx>

3. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This plan covers the management and development of Dr. Pit Park over the next 5 years from 2021 to 2025. It is based on the key criteria outlined in the Green Flag Award Guidance Manual:

- A Welcoming Park
- A Park which is Healthy, Safe and Secure
- A Park which is Well Maintained and Clean
- Sustainability
- Conservation and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Management
- Marketing

3.1 A Welcoming Park

There should be good, clear signage in the park and surrounding area. Routes to the park should be safe and kept clean and tidy.

Access into the park should be designed in such a way that provides an attractive and welcoming experience while there should be no physical barriers which prevents equal access to all members of the community.

3.1.1 Physical Access

The park is well served by local bus routes with stops situated less than 40 metres from the park entrances. Bus services which pass the park link with local communities in South East Northumberland and the major conurbations of Newcastle upon Tyne.

There is a small car park in the grounds of the park together with limited parking opportunities on surrounding streets. At the present time parking is free. The majority of park users travel to site on foot or by cycle so parking congestion is not regarded as a major problem. Disabled parking bays are provided in the park next to the bowling green.

Roads and paths to the park are in good condition and are maintained by Northumberland County Council. There is a pedestrian crossing on Beech Grove which provides a safe route across the main road to the park.

There are no formalized cycle routes that lead directly to the park. Surrounding roads and streets are well maintained and popular as link routes with cyclists and are not seen as an impediment to safe access to the park.

There are 3 main access points into Dr. Pit Park.

- The Hollymount Square entrance is situated on the northern perimeter of the park. It is a gated and has improved surfacing and wide access for park users.
- The school entrance in the north east corner is also pedestrian access only and is gated.
- The main entrance to the park is located on Park Road and is joint use for pedestrian and

vehicular access.

There is one information board showing the park layout and a byelaw sign in the park. There are an additional 1 smaller sign board on site providing an opportunity to advertise community activities and events. Standard ROSPA style signs are located on the entrances to the play area and there are other smaller information notices around the park (e.g., dog fouling notices).

There is currently signage on adjacent streets and footpaths guiding visitors to Dr. Pit Park. The site has currently gateway notices at entrances which would welcome visitors and identify Dr. Pit Park to visitors. An opportunity exists to provide the Park with an identity or brand through the design and installation of such features at the three entrances to the site. This will be investigated in 2022 through the Parks Enhancement Programme

3.1.2 Social Access

A key element in the success of any park is ensuring that no section of the community should feel excluded from being able to take advantage of the many health and recreational opportunities such green spaces offer.

Improvement works to the equipment and facilities ensure that as many sections of the community as possible can benefit from the park.

Improvements have been made to both the quality and range of the play equipment on site. The NEAP standard play area provides play opportunities for all age ranges and abilities. At the present time a wheeled sports area, basketball courts and an informal tarmacked kickabout area provide recreational opportunities for older children.

There is scope for additional facilities to be provided on site to widen the range of available play opportunities. The paddling pool on site is no longer available for water play for health and safety reasons and has been filled in with play bark. Funding to install an inclusive basket swing to make use of the space and provide a new play opportunity for all is being investigated in 2022.

Informal football is popular throughout the year and during the summer months is played on the grassed areas. The site of the former tennis courts is utilised as a kickabout area and also has 2 sets of basketball posts installed. This area has a good tarmac surface and has been identified as a location for a fully fenced multi use games area which will provide opportunities for both football and other ball sports.

Work has been undertaken in 2018 to improve and repair the path infrastructure and entrances. Some sections of the path network were deteriorating and were too narrow for use by wheelchairs and families with children in pushchairs. This problem is particularly evident in the mornings and evenings as the park is a popular route to the adjacent school.

The pavilion provides the focus for community use in Dr. Pit Park and is currently used by a number of groups. The replacement of the old entrance doors has improved access to park users of restricted mobility; however, the internal layout requires reviewing with regard to unrestricted movement around the building.

Public toilets are available in the pavilion; however, access is restricted to those times when the part time staff are on site or a group is using the building. There are outside accessible toilet facilities which are open daily.

A qualified NEAT Team operative is based in Dr. Pit Park who acts as a part time park keeper and his duties include cleansing and horticultural duties both on site and in the surrounding area. He also provides an important link with the local community and park stakeholders. He is an identifiable and helpful presence and lends an important sense of security to the park.

Close ties are maintained with Northumbria Police and the Bedlington Community Support Officer who patrol the Park and have used the pavilion as a meeting point for crime prevention events.

3.1.3 Objectives and Implementation

- **Gateway Features** - The design and installation of gateway features at the main entrances to the park. This work will provide the opportunity for the local community to work alongside existing stakeholders in providing strong, recognizable features to welcome visitors to the park. External and internal funding streams will be identified by Northumberland County Council as part of its Capital Parks Programme with contributions from local businesses possible as it is anticipated costs for manufacture and installation may be significant.
- **Play Area Improvements** - officers from Neighbourhood Services have begun to identify funding streams to provide a new accessible basket swing and install a Multi-Use Game Area in the Park. Subject to successful funding applications it is anticipated that the swing work will be completed in 2023.
- **Accessible Pavilion and Public Toilets** – We recognize that the layout of the pavilion is not suitable for access by park users of restricted mobility. We will commission the Northumberland County Council Property Services team to survey the building with regard to compliance with those applicable access requirements of the Equality Act 2010. From this we can seek funding to carry out recommended alterations which will make the pavilion better accessible to a wider range of user groups. Part of the brief will be to review the condition of the outside public toilets and provide costings for refitting.

In 2017 the Countryside and Greenspaces team were successful in securing £119,000 to carry out an improvement programme in Dr. Pit Park, Bedlington.

The funding for the works were secured as follows -

Funder	Amount	Details
S106	£40,274.56	For MUGA, play equipment and SONA dance arch
SITA Trust	£17,177.00	For horticultural works only
West Bedlington TC	£2,000.00	Towards play equipment
Councillor Alyson Wallace	£5,125.50	Towards SONA dance arch
NCC match SITA trust	£5,663.00	For horticultural works only
Banks Mining through Leading Link	£5,000.00	Towards SONA dance arch
NCC through the Parks Enhancement Programme	£44,000.00	
TOTAL	£119,240.06	

Consultation was carried out through the Doctor Pit Park Stakeholder Group which is made up of NCC Officers, representatives from park user groups, councillors from West Bedlington Town Council, Northumberland County Council and Northumbria Police. Additional consultation was facilitated by NCC at the nearby Whitley Memorial First School.

The Improvement Programme was carried out during the course of early 2017 and required the complete closure of the Park to the public for two months (which the locals accepted with good grace!).

The following improvements were implemented -

- Improvements to the Parks infrastructure and footpaths.
- Horticultural improvement works, selective tree removal and replanting.
- Installation of a new Multi Use Games Area on the site of the old tennis courts.
- Play area improvement works. This work included the removal of obsolete footpaths and internal barriers which were seen as an obstruction to interactive play. New play equipment including spring toys and an inclusive swing unit were installed. The item which has created most interest is the SONA interactive dance and play arch, one of the first in the country.

The improvements to the junior and toddler play areas are complete and they are a popular attraction in the park. There is a need to find a suitable site in the town for the provision of wheeled sports facilities.

The wheeled sports equipment in Dr. Pit Park was installed over ten years ago and, while maintained and usable, it is in need of replacement and upgrading. This scheme will require the identification of funding streams and we will be working with West Bedlington Town Council to achieve this objective. The local council now manages all the play areas within their boundaries (with the exception of Dr. Pit Park play area) and they have been successful in securing funding to upgrade and replace a number of them. We will work with them to develop a project to upgrade and extend the wheeled sports facilities in the Park, due to current commitments this will begin in 2022 with a projected completion date of 2024 if funding is successful.

During the refurbishment programme the path network was rationalised and improvements made to a number of them notably around the play areas making the whole park more accessible and safer. There is an issue with flooding to a section of footpath next to the skate park and a drainage scheme needs to be developed to alleviate this

The objective of improving the accessibility of the main pavilion remains incomplete at this time and it is likely it will need to be moved into 2022/2023. The signage (as recommended by the Green Flag judge when the Park was mystery shopped in 2019) for both the building and the entrances to the park has been upgraded. The pavilion continues to be used by a number of groups. The outside toilets are open to the general public during the week (including times when the pavilion is closed) and these are also in need of decoration and some improvement.

3.2 A Park which is Healthy, Safe and Secure

The key to a healthy, safe and secure Park is ensuring it is well maintained, well used and well respected.

This requires the active participation of all stakeholders to monitor the Park, ensure good lines of communication between staff, agencies and users and to address any issues or problems promptly and efficiently.

Equipment and facilities should be well maintained and safe to use. The Park should be clean, graffiti and litter free and dog fouling should be dealt with promptly.

Overall the Park should feel safe to be in and to use.

3.2.1 Equipment and Facilities

Northumberland County Council is responsible for maintaining and ensuring the safety of Park equipment and facilities. This is supplemented by external contractors who are responsible for any specialist facilities on site such as fire equipment, security provision and water systems.

All the play facilities in the park have been upgraded and installed to full EN1176 and EN1177 standards by recognized contractors.

The play area is visually inspected and cleaned on a daily basis by the NEAT Team operatives while a formal inspection is carried out on a weekly basis by a qualified play area inspector. Repairs are carried out as soon as they are reported; if this is not possible the equipment is disabled and fenced off until remedial works can be completed. The play facilities are also subject to a RoSPA annual inspection by Council appointed inspectors. Any recommendations or repairs highlighted are dealt with immediately.

The pavilion is cleaned and inspected by the park keeper who will carry out any routine maintenance tasks. Any specialist maintenance work is carried out by Council approved external contractors. In addition to this any groups using the pavilion are also responsible for cleaning the building after use.

The soft landscaping and trees are regularly monitored by the park keeper and the Neighbourhood Services team. Routine maintenance is carried out by the part time park keeper with the help of additional NEAT Team staff when tackling larger jobs. The trees are inspected annually by a Northumberland County Council Trees and Woodlands Officer and arboricultural works are carried out by in house qualified and trained staff.

The hard landscaping is subject to regular inspection by the park keeper and an annual inspection by a qualified highway inspector. Any remedial works are programmed into a schedule of works based on the risk assessment.

3.2.2 Security

The Park is enclosed on all sides by a fence and entrance gates are left open at all times excepting the bowling green gates which are locked in the evening. The recently replaced fence on the eastern side is of a more traditional vertical bar design which allows for good visibility into the grounds.



Old and New Boundary Fencing

The wooden perimeter fence and gate on the northern boundary has been replaced in 2021 due to its age and deteriorating condition. In addition, the position of this wooden fence in relation to the rear boundaries of the properties on Gladstone Terrace has resulted in a strip of unfenced land which has become an area where anti-social activities are taking place. Ownership of this strip of land has not been established as it is not on the Land Registry database – however it needs to be fenced or gated to solve this problem.

The park is enclosed on 3 sides by private properties and overlooked by surrounding houses which provides additional security to the park during the hours of darkness.

Improvements to the pavilion have seen the installation of automated roller shutters and an alarm system making it extremely secure. In addition, security lighting has now been installed on the building allowing it to be used by groups in the autumn and winter months.

Both the park keeper, Neighbourhood Services and local councillors stay in regular communication with the Police Community Support team and Council enforcement staff and exchange information relating to crime and anti-social behaviour. The presence of the part time park keeper, particularly in the summer months provides visitors with a line of communication for any concerns they wish to raise and to provide a visible deterrent for anti-social behaviour. A contact phone number for NCC is on the main information board

Any incidents that do occur are dealt with through close liaison with Northumbria Police, the local Community Beat Manager, Community Safety Team and through Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Group (LMAPS) meetings.

The main security issue which needs to be addressed in the park remains the poor condition of the wooden sections of the fence (particularly the northern boundary) which is subject to vandalism and has been damaged by Storm Arwen and will be replaced in 2022.

3.2.3 Health and Safety

Neighbourhood Services working with Northumberland County Council's Corporate Health and Safety team regularly review risk assessments relating to Grounds Maintenance works which are applicable to both the park and wider maintenance environment. A summary of a completed risk assessments has been added to the Management Plan, (Appendix 5.5.) The full risk assessments are also kept online. Accident and near miss reporting is done through the Councils ANVIL system, online

The use of chemical-based products is assessed in line with COSHH regulations and the use of those products harmful to the environment are minimised. COSHH risk assessments are carried out on products in active usage and are included in the Health and Safety file together with the manufacturer's data sheets. All COSHH regulated products are stored in the chemical safe sited in the Stakeford depot and brought to site for application.

All NEAT staff are issued with the necessary PPE applicable to their duties and they monitored to ensure that it is worn in accordance with regulations.

The County Trees and Woodlands team review working practices associated with arboricultural operations to ensure compliance with Arboricultural & Forestry Advisory Group (AFAG) guidelines published by the HSE and BS 3998 recommendations for tree work. A method statement has now been adopted and provides guidelines for safe arboricultural operations in the park environment. This document is available online.

Annual health and safety reviews are undertaken and at the present time the following documents are applicable to Neighbourhood Services operations in the park. These documents are made available to all Grounds Maintenance staff (Health and Safety files are kept in all depots and at key locations such as park pavilions for easy reference). In addition, all staff are required to attend Toolbox talks which clarify and reinforce the ongoing commitment to Health and Safety in the workplace.

Policy Statement on Health and Safety at Work – summary of Northumberland County Council's commitment to health and safety in the workplace.

Environmental Maintenance Health and Safety Codes of Practice – details good working practice for staff and details safe operational procedures.

Driving Safely Policy – details good and safe practices both on and off the highway.

Tree Work Method Statement for Arboricultural Operations – details safe working practices in the public realm.

As well as being kept on site all available Health and Safety data can be found electronically on our Staff Intranet.

Within Neighbourhood Services there is a rolling programme to train Park staff.

Training includes the following:

- Chainsaw use.
- Pesticide use.
- Correct operation of machinery.
- Manual handling.
- First aid.
- Customer care.
- Dealing with difficult situations.

All Park staff are qualified to a recognized standard where applicable.

3.2.4 Control of Dogs

Doctor Pit Park is popular with dog walkers and the byelaws allow dogs in the park provided they are under control.

Section 4 (1) of the Dog Fouling of Land Act 1996 requires that owners pick up and dispose of dog faeces in appropriate receptacles.

The bins located in the park are classed as dual use so can be used to deposit both litter and bagged dog waste.

Any individuals identified as persistent offenders a report is forwarded to the Council Environmental Enforcement team for further action.

The play areas are fenced and designated as dog free areas which are indicated by signage on the gates.

The South East Area Dog Warden patrols the Park on request to deal with strays and attends community events informing dog owners of their responsibilities.

Northumberland County Council has established a programme to PACE (Police and Criminal Act) train additional members of staff who are empowered to issue fixed penalty notices for both dog fouling and litter offences. Northumberland County Council regards such training as a vital component in efforts to make parks and green spaces clean, healthy and safe. The Neighbourhood Services team works closely with Animal Welfare Officers who patrol the Park and arrange open days educating dog owners on their responsibilities and providing a free chipping service for their pets.

3.2.5 Public Facilities

Emergency first aid and phone facilities are available from the Neighbourhood Services team. The majority of staff are first aid trained and act as first point of contact in the park for any visitors who may require further information or support. They also maintain regular contact with the Senior NEAT Team Leader and other members of the Neighbourhood Services team by mobile phones.

3.2.6 Objectives and Implementation

- **Safe Equipment and Facilities** – continue through in house induction training ensure all staff working in the park are familiarized with equipment and facilities and the reporting procedures for damage and vandalism. This will provide staff with clear lines of communication and familiarisation with the management structure to ensure rapid response and remedial action. Where appropriate staff will be trained to nationally recognized standards in inspection procedures and the operation of plant and machinery. Ongoing specific training requirements will be identified by the Neighbourhood Services manager and NEAT Leaders and will be facilitated by the NCC Human Resources Training and Organisational Development Team and Neighbourhood Services. Individual staff records will be kept up to date and regularly reviewed to ensure their qualifications and training are kept up to date. Funding for training will be sourced from existing Council budgets and will continue annually as required. Risk assessments will be regularly updated by Neighbourhood Services officers supported by the internal Health and Safety team. Documents will be made available on the NCC intranet for staff access and incorporated into regular health and safety talks.

- **Security** – continue to provide park keeping services in Dr. Pit Park. While there is a recognition that budget constraints no longer make a full-time keeper a viable option Northumberland County Council recognize the value of a continued presence on site. The NEAT Team Operative based at Dr. Pit Park will fulfil a grounds maintenance function and provide a recognisable presence on site for the local community. NEAT team work schedules will be arranged to allow this function to continue for the term of this management plan. New CCTV cameras have been installed and this should be monitored for effectiveness.
- **Links with Enforcement Agencies** – Neighbourhood Services Officers will attend meetings and maintain close links with Northumbria Police, Community Support Officers, NCC Community Safety Team and LMAPS (Local Multi Agency Problems Solving Group) to ensure that any concerns raised by Park stakeholders are addressed. In addition, the Park pavilion will be made available to Northumbria Police and other safety groups to hold community consultation and drop in events.
- **Dog Fouling** - continue to raise awareness among dog owners of their responsibilities regarding care of their animals. The Park pavilion will provide an appropriate location to host drop-in sessions for dog owners to be hosted by Northumberland County Council Animal Welfare Officers. The park and pavilion remain available to the Housing and Public Protection Service to hold dog chipping and welfare sessions. Currently this being delivered using a mobile vehicle which is usually parked up in local parks. Animal Welfare Officers also continue with periodic patrols of the park to deal with issues of dog fouling. Such events have proved successful in other parks in raising awareness among dog owners of their responsibilities. Members of the public will be encouraged to report incidents of dog fouling in the park using the links on the Northumberland County Council public website. Analysis of these reports allows NCC Environmental Enforcement Officers to identify hotspot areas and to target them for further action.
- **Quality of Facilities** – equipment and facilities will be managed and maintained by Northumberland County Council to ensure all required statutory duties are undertaken. Where works are undertaken by external companies only contractors which have been approved and registered through the NCC compliance and procurement system will be employed.

3.3 A Park which is Well Maintained and Clean

A prerequisite of a well used, healthy and safe park is a high standard of maintenance and cleanliness.

3.3.1 Litter and Waste Management

The park keeper and Neighbourhood Services team are responsible for emptying bins and clearing litter from the park daily throughout the year. During the summer months the litter collections are stored in the waste disposal area on site. With the exception of litter all waste is removed to the Northumberland County Council managed Cowley Road waste transfer station in Blyth.

This site is under an Environment Agency licence and provides facilities for the recycling of all litter and waste collected from NCC managed sites including Dr. Pit Park. Northumberland County Council's waste management operations allows for the individual recycling of paper and card, green

waste, wood, metal, electrical equipment and gas bottles. General litter collected from the park is currently transported directly to the local SITA site at West Sleekburn and then moved in bulk to Teeside and used as a fuel source in an Energy from Waste plant. Recycling bins are available in the play area which allows for the separation of litter for disposal.

During the course of the year a significant amount of green waste is produced by horticultural operations in the park. Grass clippings from larger areas are left where they fall to mulch away naturally. Arisings from fine turf areas together with plant and leaf material are removed to the green waste transfer facility at Cowley Road where they are subsequently transferred to JBT Waste Services Limited, Bedlington where it is mulched and used for composting.

Green waste derived from tree operations is dealt with according to the size and composition of the materials produced. Where possible arisings are chipped on site and utilised as mulch for shrub beds. Larger branches and logs are removed from site by a local contractor for resale. This operation provides an additional income stream for the local authority.

Incidents of fly tipping are infrequent in Dr. Pit Park but when they do occur, they are investigated by the Neighbourhood Services Environmental Enforcement Officer. Legal action may be pursued if the perpetrator can be identified.

3.3.2 Grounds Maintenance



Shrub Bed and Rockery

Both the park keeper and the Neighbourhood Services team are fully committed to providing a high-quality grounds maintenance service in Doctor Pit Park. With training and guidance, the park keeper now carries out most of the horticultural duties and is supported in this by a qualified team of gardeners and horticulturalists when required. A range of horticultural machinery is now stored in a portacabin on site and the NEAT Operative who carries out park keeping duties starts and finishes at the park reducing time lost travelling to and from Stakeford Depot.

Northumberland County Council recognises the formal horticultural features on site are in need of rationalisation and refurbishment to bring colour and biodiversity into Dr. Pit Park. Work was identified as part of the Parks Enhancement Programme across the county. Northumberland County Council committed £875,000 over 3 years to improve formal parks across the county. This funding was supplemented by seeking to external funding from sources including –

Heritage Lottery Fund
SITA

3.3.3 Buildings Maintenance

The park pavilion and secure store are owned and maintained by Northumberland County Council.

The park keeper is responsible for the day-to-day cleanliness of the buildings and surrounds. In addition, all pavilion user groups are responsible for ensuring that the building is left clean and tidy when they leave.

The park keeper inspects the buildings regularly and carries out any basic repairs or repainting required.

Specialist repairs are reported to Northumberland County Council Property Services helpdesk. All requests are electronically logged and given a priority rating before being forwarded to contractors for action.

The Property Services team are also responsible for managing the following works:

- Annual security system agreement
- Annual inspection of all fire prevention equipment
- Legionella Prevention contract
- Inspections of all electrical systems within the building
- All insurances for the buildings

All inspections are fully documented and where appropriate certification is issued. Certification and documentation are stored centrally at County Hall, Morpeth.

3.3.4 Hard Landscape Features

The paths, walls and other hard landscaping features in the park are managed and maintained by Northumberland County Council.

Paths are regularly checked and where necessary swept of debris by the park keeper. Paths are edged and weeds removed on an annual basis to reduce grass encroachment.

Any graffiti is removed as soon as it is reported either by the park keeper or by the dedicated NCC graffiti removal team.

3.3.5 Equipment Maintenance and Use – Staff

All staff who work in the park are trained in the use and maintenance of small machinery and hand tools as a basic requirement. Staff that operate specialist tools such as chainsaws and spraying equipment are trained to the required standard for their safe operation.

There is a small secure store on site which houses grass cutting and other horticultural tools for use by the Park Keeper.

All COSHH registered materials are stored in a secure chemical cabinet at Bomarsund depot.

All machinery is maintained and repaired by qualified employees or by Council approved external contractors.

3.3.6 Play Area Equipment



Dr Pit Park Play Facilities

The play area is visually inspected daily by the park keeper or NEAT operatives on a weekly basis by the Council's RoSPA qualified play area inspectors.

An annual inspection is carried by the Council's appointed insurers.

All repairs are carried out by qualified persons using manufacturer supplied replacement parts.

Graffiti is removed as soon as it appears, and equipment is repainted as part of a rolling programme.

As part of a 2017 Improvement programme a survey of the existing horticultural features and trees was carried out in the park. It recognized that many of the existing horticultural features were of poor quality and difficult to manage in the light of current budgetary constraints.

As well as the horticultural survey a review was made of the infrastructure, park furniture, and hard landscaping in Dr Pit Park.

Results of the review and a programme of community consultation led to the development of a new landscape design for the park which was implemented in 2017.

A central meeting area was laid out to the south of the pavilion with new seats and a hardstanding reusing paving slabs recovered from the removal of old footpaths next to the skate park. The old leylandii hedge, which separated this area from the rest of the park, was removed which has given a more open aspect to the park and removed a feature that was a concern as encouraging anti-social behaviour. This newly created central area has been enhanced with a new soft landscaping scheme which emphasises the use of sustainable planting with insect friendly species.

The old horticultural features at the main entrance and on the borders of the park have also been reinvigorated with new sustainable planting and many of the beds are mulched with bark to reduce maintenance costs.

One of the biggest changes in the park was the removal of the old concrete graffiti wall at the end of the tarmacked area. This removal allowed for the landscaping of the earthen mound to the rear which

was reshaped to create a gently sloping grassed feature. This work has given this area a more open aspect and has dealt with the safety concern which consultees had of an unprotected steep drop from the top of the concrete wall onto a hard surface.

The footpath network throughout the park has been rationalised during the Improvement Programme. A number of redundant, little used paths have been removed and the retained ones have been resurfaced. In addition to this work the footpath from the Whitley Memorial School entrance through the play area has been widened to better accommodate pushchairs and buggies.

3.3.7 Objectives and Implementation

- **Litter and Waste Management** - Neighbourhood Services staff will continue to empty bins regularly and carry out litter sweeps of the park during busy periods. At peak times in summer this will be daily gradually reducing to twice per week in the winter. Neighbourhood Services staff will remove graffiti as soon as it appears. Incidents will be reported to the South East Area Environmental Enforcement Officer who will attempt to identify and prosecute offenders. This work is carried out when required. All compostable materials will be collected and transported to the Northumberland County Council Waste Transfer facility for mulching. As there are few formal horticultural features in Dr. Pit Park the requirement for compost is limited and there would be little benefit derived from an on-site facility.
- **Grounds Maintenance and Horticulture** - continue Neighbourhood Services commitment to provide high quality, sustainable grounds maintenance in the park by ensuring staff are properly qualified and trained. Northumberland County Council will provide young people with opportunities to train and qualify in Horticulture. The Neighbourhood Services team have worked in partnership with Northumberland College to provide practical experience to apprentices in grounds maintenance and horticulture. As well as receiving practical experience through working alongside skilled NEAT operative apprentices attend classes and assessment at Kirkley Hall College leading to a qualification in NVQ Level 3 in Horticulture. The scheme is proving to be very successful in introducing young people to Horticulture. During the Covid pandemic this was suspended but will be re-instated in 2022
- **Horticultural Improvements** - We will seek to establish links with local community groups and schools to encourage them to become involved in the works on a practical level.
- **Building and Infrastructure Maintenance** - paths will be checked daily by park staff and inspected annually by a qualified Highways inspector. All defects will be recorded and any required remedial works will be carried out by the Highways team or their chosen sub-contractor. All statutory safety checks and maintenance to buildings will be carried out through the Property Services team and their approved sub-contractors. All records of inspection to be retained centrally for reference when required.
- **Equipment Maintenance** - all mechanical equipment to be maintained and serviced by qualified members of the Fleet Management team at County Council workshops.

3.4 Sustainability

Those who administer parks and green spaces have a responsibility to manage and maintain them in an environmentally sustainable way. Such facilities should also educate and inform the wider community of the benefits and necessity of adopting a more sustainable lifestyle.

Many of the operations we carry out are in line with the Northumberland County Council Waste Management strategy.

3.4.1 Chemical Use

Neighbourhood Services and Northumberland County Council recognizes the importance of reducing chemical use to protect the health of Park users, staff and the biodiversity of the park.

Changes to working practices and new legislation have led to a reduction in the application of chemicals in Dr. Pit Park.

The Neighbourhood Services team uses chemical means to suppress weed growth on hard surfaces and around tree bases. Pesticides and herbicides are currently used for bowling green maintenance, where possible non residual chemicals are utilised. While this limited use is considered necessary for the present the Neighbourhood Services team are committed to explore innovations in new sustainable chemical treatments and methods for weed suppression.

At the present time weed encroachment through paths and other hard surfaces is dealt with by chemicals as mechanical means would cause significant damage. The use of chemicals for this purpose will be significantly reduced with improvements to the path infrastructure as discussed earlier in the Management Plan

Chemical use on herbaceous and shrub beds has now been eliminated by the introduction of a mulching programme to deal with weed suppression and where possible mulch from grounds maintenance works carried out in the park is used.

All pesticides are COSHH registered and stored in an approved secure container at the Stakeford depot with the NEAT Team Leader being responsible for the issuing and recording of all chemicals used. Only staff who are qualified to PA1 and PA6 standard use COSHH registered materials.

The resurfacing and rationalisation of the path network means that potential weed growth in cracks and along the sides has been reduced, again this allows for more effective edging and maintenance by hand without the need to use chemicals.

3.4.2 Plants and Materials

Annual bedding for Dr. Pit Park is grown at the Northumberland County Council horticultural unit based at Stakeford where plants are brought on from commercially sourced plugs or seed. At the present time peat is the favoured medium for growth as it remains both cost effective and reliable in ensuring quality plants. As the unit is only 3 miles away from the park transport costs are kept to a minimum.

In preparation for planting the annual beds conditioners such as mushroom compost are now regularly used and during the growing season any fertilizers applied are organically based.

Neighbourhood Services will continue to investigate alternative growing mediums in order to reduce the dependence on peat while ensuring that the current high standards in horticultural management in Dr. Pit Park are maintained. In addition, green waste produced in the park will, where possible, continue to be recycled and reused. Local contractors and suppliers will be used to provide goods and services to minimize transport costs, reduce pollution and sustain the local economy.

3.4.3 Arboricultural Management

The arboricultural features of Dr. Pit Park are managed by the Northumberland County Council Trees and Woodlands Officer who has a dedicated and trained squad to carry out all required maintenance operations.

Maintenance works are normally carried out in the autumn and winter months to minimise disruption to local flora and fauna.

The tree stock is surveyed every two years and results are recorded on the central 'Treewise' database. In addition to this the local NEAT staff who operate in the Park are encouraged to visually check the trees and report any issues they observe. From this information the Trees and Woodlands Officer formulates an annual maintenance and selected removal programme as well as managing the planting of new tree stock.

The tree stock in Dr. Pit Park is a mixture of coniferous and deciduous, the majority of which are now mature. Recent surveys have shown that a number of the lime trees on the western boundary are in a deteriorating condition and further work was carried out in 2016. There was a stand of Leylandii on the northern boundary which were very large and are regarded as a problem as they act as an attraction for anti-social behaviour. Their removal was part of the horticultural improvement works. The Cedar tree, which is a distinctive feature of the park, was damaged by Storm Arwen, hopefully a new cedar will be planted in 2023. A survey of the tree stock was made prior to the commencement of the improvement works in 2017 and an arboricultural improvement programme was subsequently implemented. A number of large, overgrown conifers along the Gladstone Terrace fence boundary were removed which allowed for more light into adjacent residential properties and removed an area which was identified as being an anti-social behaviour hotspot. A number of other trees which were assessed as being in decline were removed and a new tree planting scheme has been introduced which emphasises the introduction of native species which best support native wildlife. Unfortunately, the site has suffered from vandalism of newly planted trees and a new solution to the problem is needed.

3.4.4 Pollution Reduction

Because of the size and location of Dr. Pit Park engine pollution from vehicular use is not considered excessive. Machinery for grounds maintenance operations is housed in the on-site portacabin meaning travel to and from the site is kept to a minimum. There is a requirement for vehicles to be in the park to drop off larger supplies of plants and materials, NCC is now bringing in a fleet of electric vehicles and in most cases the deliveries are from the local depots at Cowley Road and Stakeford. Due to the requirements of efficiency grass cutting operations will be carried out by motor powered machinery.

All machinery in the Neighbourhood Services fleet is regularly maintained and serviced to ensure they operate efficiently and economically. In the majority of cases machinery is serviced at the local Council depot or by a local contractor. All staff are trained in the correct use of machinery including

proper filling techniques and how to properly deal with spillages should they occur. Policy is looking at the replacement of petrol driven machinery with battery if suitable

3.4.5 Water and Energy Efficiency



Bowling Green Irrigation System

The bowls club have been successful in securing funding for a new irrigation system which is now installed and working. The system is on a timer system and operates for a short period at night-time which reduces evaporation rates and therefore consumption.

Improvements in the pavilion have included a new insulated roof and the installation of UPVC double glazing to improve energy efficiency.

The exterior security lighting uses low energy bulbs and is also on a timer system which allows for activation at specific times to ensure energy is not being wasted.

3.4.6 Objectives and Implementation

- **Chemical Use** – Through sustainable working practices Neighbourhood Services will continue to minimise the use of chemicals in grounds maintenance operations. Where possible non residual chemicals will be selected to reduce damage to the environment. NEAT Team Leaders will stay in regular contact with suppliers and where appropriate use the latest biological and organic control methods.
- **Alternative Working Methods** – where appropriate NEAT teams will use non-chemical methods for weed suppression and removal. Where required on site mulching of herbaceous and shrub beds will be used to manage weed control and suppression. Path edging and the removal of weeds in hard surfaces will be carried out by hand or mechanical means.
- **Arboricultural Management** – in 2022 the Trees and Woodland team will carry out selective pruning and removal works in Dr. Pit Park following the damage by Storm Arwen. This work

will deal with those trees that are in decline and also in support of the horticultural improvement project in the park. Generally, the Trees and Woodland Officer will continue with the biennial inspection of the tree stock recorded on the 'Treewise' database. The tree replacement programme will be implemented in line with Northumberland County Council Trees and Woodlands Strategy.

- **Water and Energy Efficiency** - Neighbourhood Services will consult with the Council Energy Management team to monitor electric and water bills to identify any areas of high consumption. The Energy Management team is responsible for ensuring the most economic tariffs for energy consumption in the marketplace are secured. The Property Services team will ensure that buildings are maintained in such a way as to reduce unnecessary energy and water consumption. This would include possibility of alternative heating sources in line with the Climate Change Action Plan on heating of all NCC buildings

3.5 Conservation and Heritage

Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of

- **flora and fauna**
- **landscape features**
- **buildings and structural features**

3.5.1 Natural and Landscape Features

While compact in size there are a number of improvements which can be made to improve the biodiversity and conservation opportunities within Dr. Pit Park. An audit of the current flora and fauna in the park was undertaken to establish baseline information prior to the development of a conservation programme for the park and ways to incorporate more biodiversity

There are a number of shrub and tree species which are attractive to wildlife already growing in the park. The refurbishment of the horticultural features in the park provided more diverse plant species attractive to wildlife. The shrub beds at the vehicular entrance to the park were sparse and provide little environmental value. They were enhanced by understory wildflower planting to provide colour in the spring and are attractive to insects. Working with the local school a program of spring bulb planting will be implemented in 2023/24 and this work will be enhanced by the redevelopment of the rockery and shrub beds in the western area providing sustainable and colourful species into the park. Successional bulbs are planted in the park to increase colour and diversity.

The gardens in the surrounding properties and the natural cover provided by the park's trees are attractive to bird species and where feasible we will introduce nesting boxes in quieter areas of the park and small-scale feeding stations for use in the winter months.

3.5.2 Local History and Interpretation

The Park has no historic buildings although it does have an established social history within the local community.

The Park was originally established in the early twentieth century to provide a green space and a recreational area for the mining community and its development over the years has reflected this role. There is an opportunity to research the development of Dr. Pit Park and its role in the local

community with the objective of providing a database of historical information to be made available online.

Bedlington Terriers Football Club, who are located immediately to the south, have their own sporting history and ties with the park remain close.

There is an opportunity to reflect the mining and social history through research and interpretation in public arts projects. The history of the community it is hoped will be reflected in the 3 entrance arches for the park, designed locally and a bid is to be put into the Parks Enhancement programme in 2022. In 2016 we worked with Northern Butterflies to introduce a sculpture into the park. This group works within the community providing those with special educational needs the opportunity to develop skills through the artistic medium. The group has already been working successfully in providing artworks for Ridley Park and Holywell Dene in the local area.

3.5.3 Objectives and Implementation

- **Conservation of Natural Features** – From the tree audit a plan for the native flora and fauna. Future management of the tree stock focuses on identifying opportunities to improve the biodiversity of the site and to develop habitats which will prove attractive to nature. Storm Arwen damage has meant that this will be re-evaluated to replace lost tree species types
- Improvements to the shrub beds in 2017 has meant that they are now more sustainable and require less maintenance which in turn has freed up the NEAT staff for other duties. Many of the beds have now been mulched using materials derived from the tree works which has provided a method of naturally suppressing weed growth resulting in the elimination of herbicide use. Shrubs have been planted which are insect friendly and provided food for winter wildlife, they also require less pruning and therefore reduce maintenance times. Spring bulb planting has also been undertaken in the beds next to the main entrance gates will also provide much needed Spring colour. However, with the new fence line there is scope to improve the planting scheme to enhance biodiversity in this area and from 2022 a 1 metre wide strip will not be cut on two of the boundaries to encourage greater biodiversity
- **Local History and Interpretation** - Utilising the Woodhorn Archives and Local History Societies develop a project to research the history of Dr. Pit Park and its role in the development of the community of Bedlington. The work will focus on the mining history of the area in the context of the South East Northumberland Coalfield and the history of the Bedlington Terriers Football Club. This work will be facilitated with the support of local schools and stakeholders who can provide a valuable link to the local community. Together with archived information there is a wealth of information from local people who have memories of the site and which will be accessed through the project. Possibly re-establish links with Northern Butterflies group to install new public artwork in Dr. Pit Park in the future depending on funding streams.
- **Conservation of Landscape and Heritage** - Based on the information derived from the local history project develop an online resource which will cover both the conservation of natural features and the social history of Dr. Pit Park. This resource will be made available to the local community and education groups on the Northumberland County Council website. This work will be undertaken by the Parks and Green Spaces team supported by Northumberland County Council's IT department and from this we can develop an interpretation board trail around the park. Funding sources will need to be identified alongside officer time

3.6 Community Involvement

Community involvement will provide the driving force for the future development and management of Doctor Pit Park.

Successful involvement can make the Park a focal point for the local community and ensure that it is well respected and used to its full potential.

Community involvement can be developed on a number of levels and involve all Park users.

3.6.1 Community Participation and Stakeholders

A close and effective working relationship between stakeholder groups, the Parks and Countryside team, Neighbourhood Services and Northumberland County Council departments is a key to the future development of Dr. Pit Park. Active Northumberland previously had Sports Development Officers; however, this function has been lost and is now picked up where possible within other officer roles. The development of strong links and successful community consultation will provide the impetus for the successful implementation of the Management Plan.

Dr. Pit Park has always been a key recreational facility in Bedlington and as such attracted a lot of community interest and support. Due to the significant and continuing changes that now drive local government links, including budget cuts, between the owners and managers of the park and the local community have provided a challenge which this Management Plan will hope to address.

- Officers from Neighbourhood Services and Active Northumberland
- Councillors from West Bedlington Town Council
- Bedlington Dr. Pit Bowling Club/Art Club/ Local schools
- Northumberland County Council Elected Members
- Representatives from Northumbria Police

The establishment of a group involving the above would act as a focus to future community involvement in Dr. Pit Park. It is intended that this group would act as a catalyst for the formation of a Friends group which will give interested members of the community the opportunity to be involved on a practical level in the management and maintenance of the park. The Friends group would operate independently and could access funding streams which are not available to The Council.

A further key objective will be to ensure our consultation and engagement reaches a diverse range of stakeholders and those marginalised who do not currently participate in Park activities. In order to achieve a framework for community consultation with the Stakeholder Group as a starting point needs to be established to identify and engage with these groups.

3.6.2 Community Facilities within the Park



Northumberland County Council is committed to the future of Dr. Pit Park as a centre for community activity in Bedlington and as such we maintain all our facilities to the highest standard. These facilities will either be free, or if charges are applicable, will be low cost to ensure that continued public usage is not compromised.

The main community facility within Doctor Pit Park is the park pavilion. The park and pavilion remain available to the Housing and Public Protection Service to hold dog chipping and welfare sessions. The pavilion is utilised as a polling station for both local and general elections. In addition, it continues to be used by the local Arts Group and bowling club.

It has now been refurbished with a new roof, UPVC windows, doors and kitchen facilities. The layout of the building provides a community room, bowls club room (which also doubles as a second community room if required), kitchen, toilet facilities, office and storage room.

While it is used by a number of council and local groups there is opportunity for wider community usage and the development of a robust marketing strategy will be the means by which the park and pavilion can be advertised and promoted.

There are further opportunities within the park to improve existing community facilities especially with the new programme of horticultural, infrastructure and play improvements which is now underway. Both the park and pavilion continue to be used by the local community for both formal and informal recreation. Northumberland County Council recognises its value to the community of Bedlington rather than being a destination park for those travelling further afield. Therefore, the current management of the park reflects this local importance. Currently consultation with local stakeholders is on a more informal basis since the demise of a Dr. Pit Park Stakeholder Group. At this time there appears to be little local interest in creating a more formal group so we propose to manage the park

on that basis. We will continue to engage with West Bedlington Town Council and local County Councillors to support any informal users should they wish to take a more formal role in the management of Dr. Pit Park.

3.6.3 Education

Dr. Pit Park has potential to provide educational facilities to the local community and schools. The Park has scope to provide outdoor educational opportunities to local schools as part of their environmental curriculums and the pavilion can act as an indoor classroom as required. At the present time these opportunities have not been fully explored or implemented due to Council staff shortages. The location only a short distance away of Plessey Woods Country Park and Gallagher Park means that most schools utilise the extensive habitats and facilities there instead with an organisation called Footsteps on the Moon, a forest school at Plessey Woods.

Through the possible establishment of links with local schools and community groups we will encourage participation in the conservation and heritage objectives of the management plan. This will be achieved through practical work alongside the Neighbourhood Services team and community organisations together with establishing local history and conservation research projects linking in with current school curriculums.

3.6.4 Objectives and Implementation

- **Community Consultation and Participation** - Northumberland County Council to look at the possibility to develop and support a Dr. Pit Park Users Group if the need is identified in the community. This Group would provide the initial link to community involvement in the development and future management of the park.
- We will work with the Group, local councillors and other Council departments to identify target markets including local residents, families, students at local educational establishments, older people, the unemployed, those with special needs and minority ethnic groups.
- From this engagement we will work with the stakeholders to set up events with the target groups to identify the aspirations and needs they have and how these can be facilitated within the park. A key element of this will be to identify what barriers there may be to some target groups not making use of the park. From this information we will be able to develop a programme to engage with these excluded groups and encourage them to make use of the park.
- **Promotional Opportunities In the Community** - Increase community awareness and use of the park by allowing other outside bodies to host events, to help promote the facilities through websites, the local press and promotional materials.
- **Educational Opportunities** - We will engage with Northumberland County Council Education Services to promote the park in local schools and colleges. The pavilion can provide an excellent indoor classroom while the Park itself is ideal as an outdoor educational facility.
- **Appropriate Provision for the Community** – The Neighbourhood Services team will continue to actively support the training of young people in horticulture and associated skills through the Apprentice Scheme which provides the opportunity for permanent employment with the authority. This scheme was suspended in 2020 due to Covid restrictions, currently being assessed moving forward into 2022.

3.7 Marketing Strategy

Marketing for Doctor Pit Park will be incorporated into the overall development of a strategy to promote all Northumberland County Councils leisure and cultural facilities.

Northumberland County Council aim to promote their formal parks to residents, schools, community groups, local businesses and visitors to the county highlighting the unique features of each park. The focus is on the availability of activities, events, volunteer activities and Friends of groups which enable visitors to make informed decisions about how to access the park and to attract new visitors and to encourage multiple repeat visits.

Our communications and marketing plan aims to do three things:

- Raise awareness of our formal parks to residents, visitors, community groups and businesses to encourage first and repeat visits.
- Encourage people, groups, schools and businesses to get involved in the parks through events, volunteer activities and Friends groups.
- Find out what people think of our parks and use ideas, suggestions, comments and complaints to inform our management decisions.

Northumberland County Council has 13 formal and country parks, eleven of which hold Green Flag Award status in 2021.

We have the opportunity to combine the best of each of the park's current means of promotion and to create a countywide communication and marketing plan for all of our formal parks ensuring a consistency in delivery of service across the county.

The marketing work communicates the following -

- In Northumberland we are committed to valuing and improving our parks.
- Our parks provide free access to nature, floral displays, events, walks, play and sporting activities and much more.
- Our parks are important places as, according to annual access to the countryside surveys done by Natural England, public parks are the most visited green spaces in the country.
- Access to the natural environment improves health and wellbeing, prevents disease and helps people recover from illness.
- We want more people to enjoy our parks, especially through events and activities.
- We want people, groups and businesses to volunteer in our parks.
- We want to know what you think of our parks, this can do this by contacting the Countryside and Green Spaces team as follows -

Contact the Green Spaces Officer for your area –

South East – Jimmy Reith 01670 620048 jimmy.reith@northumberland.gov.uk

West – Sam Talbot 01670 625583 sam.talbot@northumberland.gov.uk

North – Frances Povey 01670 623509 frances.povey@northumberland.gov.uk

Contact us via the website www.northumberland.gov.uk

Our target groups for marketing include

- Internal audiences: staff at the council, schools and children's' services, adult services and healthcare providers, councillors and board members, customer service staff within the council.
- Residents.
- Visitors to the county.
- Businesses and community groups, including scouts, guides, U3A, gardening clubs, etc.

A variety of communication methods are used as follows

- Northumberland Life Events listings.
- Northumberland County Council website and partner websites.
- NCC Social networking profiles (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Targeted local poster campaigns (events, Friends of groups and activities) in libraries, shops, tourist accommodation and Tourist Information Centres
- North East based radio station with good coverage of Northumberland. Koast Radio, BBC Radio Newcastle.
- Northumberland News.
- Press release to local press and media.
- Staff room and internal communications channels for staff and members.
- Relevant and targeted online advertising.
- Relevant parish and local magazines.

Our objectives in implementing this marketing strategy are to

- Create and publicise a web-based parks survey.
- Develop an evaluation form for events, activities and volunteer tasks.
- Analyse findings from surveys and evaluation forms and use them to inform park management decisions.
- Ensure all parks are listed on Northumberland Life to promote events and activities.
- Compile relevant local lists for advertising parks events through posters and leaflets.
- Develop, plan and style for production of park promotional leaflets and interpretation panels.
- Identify content for the website and liaise with the web team.
- Cost any photography, design and production of leaflets or panels needed for the plan.
- Secure budget for graphic design for parks brand and publicity material.

4. Monitoring and Plan Review

- This management plan has been drafted in 2021 and will act as a working document for the development of Doctor Pit Park over the next five years. Appendix 5.3 lists the objectives and plans moving forward
- The development and management of the park will be regularly monitored by the Neighbourhood Services team, any potential friends' group and Park stakeholders.
- The plan will be reviewed annually to reflect developments and improvements in the park.

Links to the policies relevant to the implementation of this management plan can be found on the

Doctor Pit Park webpage. Visit www.northumberland.gov.uk and follow the parks link in the A-to-Z index or search for Doctor Pit Park.

5. Appendices

Appendix 5.1 Maintenance Duties

TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
BOWLING GREEN MAINTENANCE													
Cut bowling green maximum height 5mm using pedestrian mower with grass collection facility	Park Keeper			2	6	8	8	8	8	8	2	1	
Mow bowling green surrounds maximum height 10mm using pedestrian mower with grass collection facility	Park Keeper			1	4	4	4	4	3	2	1		
Edge surrounds	Park Keeper			1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1		
Remove dew with switch	Park Keeper												
Apply spring/summer fertilizer	Fine turf Team			1									
Apply autumn/winter fertilizer	Fine turf Team									1			
Apply approved selective herbicide	Fine turf Team										1		1
Apply approved fungicide	Fine turf Team		1										
Apply mosskiller/lawn sand	Fine turf Team			1									
Scarification works	Fine turf Team			1						1			
Hollow/solid tining	Fine turf Team									1			
Reseeding and turfing works	Fine turf Team									1			
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE													
Cut grassed areas - pedestrian mower maximum height 10mm	Park Keeper/NEAT Team			1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1		
Cut grassed areas - ride on mower with grass collection facility - maximum height 30 mm	Park Keeper/NEAT Team			1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1		
Edge paths and remove weeds	Park Keeper/NEAT Team											1	

TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
HORTICULTURAL FEATURES AND TREES													
Prune shrubs	NEAT Team												1
Strim edges of beds and borders	NEAT Team			1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1		
Remove litter and weeds from shrub beds	Park Keeper												
Apply mulch to shrub beds	NEAT Team			1									
Prepare flower beds	NEAT Team						1				1		
Plant spring bedding	NEAT Team										1		
Remove spring bedding and prepare beds	NEAT Team						1						
Plant summer bedding	NEAT Team						1	1					
Remove summer bedding and prepare beds	NEAT Team						1	1					
Remove litter and weeds from flower beds	Park Keeper												
Hedge pruning works	NEAT Team											1	
Annual tree inspection	Tree Inspector										1		
Tree works	NCC Tree Team	Occ.										Occ.	Occ.
OTHER OPERATIONS													
Litter sweep park and empty bins	Park Keeper	Daily	Daily		Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily
Inspect equipment and facilities	Park Keeper	Daily	Daily		Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily
Clean building and toilets	Park Keeper	Daily	Daily		Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily
Inspect play equipment	Play Area Inspector	4	4		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Repair play equipment	Play Area Inspector	Occ.	Occ.		Occ.	Occ.	Occ.	Occ.	Occ.	Occ.	Occ.	Occ.	Occ.

Appendix 5.2 Key Roles and Responsibilities and Useful Contacts

Activities	Staff	Frequency
Supervision of Park Keeper and NEAT Team	Senior NEAT Team Leader	Daily
Emptying litter bins throughout park	Park Keeper and NEAT Team	Daily
Litter pick throughout park including play areas	Park Keeper and NEAT Team	Daily
Checks/removal of graffiti	Park Keeper and Neighbourhood Services staff. Tags photographed by Environmental Enforcement Officer for identification. Small amounts removed by Park Keeper, large amounts by NEAT team.	As required
Fly tipping removal	All fly tipping reported to local Environmental Enforcement Officer for investigation. Small amounts of fly tipping removed by Park Keeper, larger amounts by area NEAT teams.	As required
Dog Fouling enforcement duties	NCC Public Protection team	As required
Check perimeter fencing and gates	Park Keeper and Neighbourhood Services staff	Daily
Check footpaths and maintenance works	Park Keeper and Neighbourhood Services staff. Major repairs carried out by Highways team.	Daily/As required
Inspection of play equipment	Daily inspection by Park Keeper, detailed recorded inspection by Play Area Inspector	Daily/weekly
Play equipment repairs	Play Area Maintenance Operative	As required
Inspection of park seats and bins	Park Keeper and Neighbourhood Services staff	Daily
Painting of seats and bins	Park Keeper/External Contractors	Annually
Grass cutting throughout park	Park Keeper and NEAT Team	10 working days
Bowling green maintenance works	Park Keeper and NEAT Fine Turf Team	Twice a week in summer, otherwise as required
Tree Surveys and arboricultural operations	Trees and Woodlands Officer and Arboricultural team	As required – winter works
Irrigation system operation	Bowls Club	As required

Activities	Staff	Frequency
Pavilion opening and closing	Park Keeper	Daily
Pavilion and toilet cleaning duties	Park Keeper and user groups	Daily
Facilities Bookings	Parks and Green Spaces Officer	As required
Coordination of Green Flag Award application	Parks and Green Spaces Officer	Annually
Liaising with partner agencies and user groups.		As required
Event planning and facilitation	Parks and Green Spaces Officer and stakeholders	As required
Interpretation, promotion and marketing	Countryside and Green Spaces team, NCC Communications team	As required
User group and stakeholder support	Countryside and Green Spaces and NEAT teams	Meetings held 4 times a year
Secure external funding to develop Doctor Pit Park	Countryside and Green Spaces team	As required
Maintenance and repair of park buildings	NCC Property Services team	As required
Annual Legionella testing programme	NCC Property Services team	Monthly
Fire and Intruder alarm servicing	NCC Property Services team	Annually
Fire equipment inspection	NCC Property Services team	Annually
Pavilion Fire Risk Assessments	NEAT Team Leader	Annually

Appendix 5.2 – Management Plan 2021 – 2025 Objective Summary

DOCTOR PIT PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021 - 2022 OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
CONSULTATION							
Regular Group Meetings	Green Spaces and Countryside Team/local councillors/groups	NCC		Try to re-establish community links			
Identify target groups and those who do not currently use the Park	Green Spaces and Countryside Team	NCC		To establish through group members	Work to continue		
Events programme to establish links with target groups	Green Spaces and Countryside Team/	NCC /outside agencies		Research options and feasibility			
BUILDINGS							
Establish usage of water and electricity in park and pavilion	Green Spaces Officer NCC Finance team	NCC		Identify costs involved	Review energy saving techniques		
Consider upgrade to external toilets	NEAT Team and external contractors/community groups	NCC		Review issues re vandalism	Identify funding stream		
Paint interior features of pavilion	Contractor	NCC		To be completed in 2022		Refresh as needed	

TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
INFRASTRUCTURE							
New irrigation system for the bowling green	NCC Officers Bowls Club	NCC	Inspect and maintain	Inspect and maintain	Inspect and maintain	Inspect and maintain	Inspect and maintain
Provide park notice boards	NCC Officers	NCC		Identify how up to date information is and renew if needed	Ensure information is kept up to date	Ensure information is kept up to date	Ensure information is kept up to date
Improve lighting to pavilion	NCC Highways team Park users	NCC	Inspect and maintain	Inspect and maintain as required	Inspect and maintain as required	Inspect and maintain as required	Inspect and maintain as required
Provide gated access to bowling green from road	NCC Officers Park users	NCC		Completed in 2012 – funding from the Youth Partnership	Inspect and maintain as required	Improve surface as part of car parking improvement works	Inspect and maintain
Improve the play provision – inclusive play	NCC Officers	NCC		To re establish a 'nest type swing' and inclusive swing	Review use of MUGA, skate park, possible improvements		
Improve information and interpretive signage within the park	NCC Officers Graphics Design team			Assess what extra needed & progress			
Paint park furniture	Park Keeper	NCC		To be completed if required	To be completed	To be completed	To be completed
Inspect Footpaths	NCC Officers Highways team	NCC		Annual inspection	Annual inspection	annual inspection	annual inspection

TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
SOFT LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS							
Carry out further improvements to the green waste facilities	NCC Officers and staff	NCC	Recycle green waste	Recycle green waste	Recycling of green waste continuing	Recycling of green waste continuing	Recycling of green waste continuing
Reduce pesticide usage in the park	Green Spaces Officer NCC staff	NCC	Pesticide only used on the bowling green to deal with turf diseases	Pesticide only used on the bowling green to deal with turf diseases	Pesticide only used on the bowling green to deal with turf diseases	Pesticide only used on the bowling green to deal with turf diseases	Pesticide only used on the bowling green to deal with turf diseases
Carry out improvements to horticultural features within the park	Park Keeper NCC staff Park Users	NCC	Continue looking at horticultural improvements to increase biodiversity	1 metre wildflower borders on boundary edges to be initiated in the cutting regime	Rake and remove. Check to extend the area	Check and add to any wildflower planting Rake and remove	Rake and remove
Carry out full tree survey of the park	NCC Trees and Woodlands Officer	NCC	Trees reviewed in light of storm Arwen	Full survey to be completed by Trees and Woodlands Officer – to be reviewed every 3 years	Routine visual inspections to identify hazardous trees	Routine visual inspections to identify hazardous trees	Full survey by Trees and Woodlands Officer
Implement tree management works from survey	NCC Trees and Woodlands Officer and team	NCC		Replacement trees needed in light of Storm Arwen significant trees lost	Replacement tree programme	Removal of dead and hazardous trees. Replanting works to replace removed trees	Replacement tree programme

TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
NATURE CONSERVATION							
Implement works to improve nature conservation in the park	Local Conservation Groups Green Spaces Officer		Add to plans to increase biodiversity	Discuss options re biodiversity with local groups	Review	Review	Review
MARKETING AND STRATEGY							
Review the parks information on the existing NCC website. Redesign site to provide external links, survey forms and feedback opportunities	Green Spaces Officer NCC IT team	NCC	Check website information is current and ask Comms to provide links to feedback forms	Review site	Review site	Review site	Review site
Review need for other park interpretation ie local history project	Green Spaces Officer Park Users Group Graphic Design team	NCC/sponsorship	Contact to be found for local history groups	Check budget for projects			
Review management plan and update	Green Spaces Officer		Complete	Update plan	Update plan	Update plan	Review plan for next 5 years

Appendix 5.3 Directions to Dr. Pit Park

From the A1: -Take the Seaton Burn turn off and at the roundabout take the second turn off (A1088).

At the next roundabout, take the first turnoff to pass Aesica on the left.

Straight over at the next roundabout. you will go down a dip, over a bridge and back up the other side, do not turn off, continue on the same road until you come into Bedlington.

At the top of the bank there is a roundabout outside the Red Lion pub, go straight over.

Down the hill there is another roundabout at the Netto shop, take the second turnoff (turning right).

Follow the road past the Police station and Law courts and the road bends sharply to the left.

Continue around the corner, take the second right.

Dr. Pit Park is signposted from here.

From the A189: - Follow the signs to Ashington. Branch left at the 3 Horse Shoes turn off (junction with the A192/B1505) sign posted Morpeth.

Take the second exit from the roundabout sign posted B1505 to Bedlington.

Take no turn offs and you will go down a hill with sharp turns, cross a bridge and climb a steep hill (11%).

Go along the street until the church is on your left and there is a junction on your right next to the Northumberland Arms.

Take the turn off to your right and at the junction, turn right.

Go round the corner and take the second right.

Dr. Pit Park is signposted from here

5.5 Copy of Risk Assessment

Directorate: <i>Local Services</i>	Service: <i>Neighbourhood Services/Countryside</i>	Reference: <i>CA23</i>
Activity: <i>Use of hand tools</i>	Site: <i>Various countryside sites throughout the county</i>	
People at Risk: <i>Field Teams, staff, trainees and volunteers</i>	Additional Information:	
Contact Person: <i>Mike Jeffrey</i> Job Title: <i>Countryside and Green Spaces Manager</i> Date: <i>July 2019</i>		Review Date: <i>July 2024</i>

Risk Evaluation

Hazard	Risk	Initial Rating (L, M, H,)	Existing Control Measures	Final Rating (L, M, H,)	Additional Action Required (action by whom and completion date)
Use and handling of hand tools	Injury from blows, cuts, worn and damaged tools	L	Tools stored safely and correctly. Site staff are experienced and are cascade trained in tool use, care and maintenance. Volunteers are given demonstration of correct usage and supervised as required. First aid training and first aid kits provided	L	
Loose hammer heads	Eye & limb injuries	M	Tools are inspected before use by competent user, faulty tools are repaired or replaced.	L	
Chisels with mushroom	General cuts & bruises	M	As above	L	

Screwdrivers with split handles or damaged/worn blades Files with loose or missing handles	Hand/arm injuries from damaged tools	M	As above	L	
Blunt cutting tools	Hand/arm injuries from damaged tools. Cuts Muscular skeletal injuries	M	Tools are inspected before use by competent user. Only use tools that are sufficiently sharp. Cascade training in storage, use, sharpening of general care of hand tools.	L	
Sparks	Fire if flammable materials are present.	M	Remove flammable materials.	L	
Tools used for wrong purposes	General cuts & bruises	M	Staff training.	L	

Appendix 5.6 Green Flag Responses



Green Flag Award 2020

Name of Site: Dr Pit Park, Bedlington

Managing Organisation: Northumberland County Council

Desk Assessment Feedback (Management Plan and supporting documentation)


Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations	Response
Presentation	<p>A different version of the Management Plan is on the website to the one provided to judges.</p> <p>Presentation of the plan is clear, simple plans, well laid out. Links closely to the Green Flag criteria.</p> <p>Good to see the management plan has received an update and commentary, there are stated improvements to the toddlers play area, improved toilet opening hours and there are further planned improvements including drainage improvements path refurbishment and improved accessibility.</p> <p>Also updates are included in the management plan objective summary in the appendix</p> <p>The detail in the management plan is extensive.</p> <p>Good links provided</p>	<p>A full revision of the management plan is expected for 2021 to ensure the document is fully updated and considers the recent improvements and required improvements. It does not appear to have been fully reviewed since it was written in 2016.</p>	<p>The management plan has been revised for 2021-2025</p>
Health, Safety & Security	<p>The plan states an inspection regime is in place and managed through the Park Keeper which is good. There are annual inspection regimes in place for the trees, fire equipment etc.</p>	<p>The objectives and implementation section require a progress update</p>	<p>As above the management plan has been revised in light of</p>

	<p>The additional security provided by the overlooking properties can only assist. Close liaison with the Police and other NCC services are mentioned. Boundary fencing still requires improvement.</p> <p>Staff receive Tool Box Talks and follow corporate health and safety policies and receive appropriate training.</p> <p>Progress relating to the aspirations over the last few years appears to have stalled.</p>	<p>under each heading, the document feels out of date and there appears to be a lack of ownership of the aspirations listed. Judges are not aware of what has been achieved overall except for the short 2020 updates provided. A general refresh / rewrite of the entire document is required</p>	<p>comments from Green Flag judges</p>
Maintenance of equipment, buildings & landscape	<p>Toddler equipment has been improved. Buildings are being maintained and inspected.</p> <p>The Park Keepers role in the inspection and reporting process is key.</p> <p>There is no 2020 update only the previous 2018.</p>	<p>Provide up to date information. The management plan provides general descriptions which may well now be out of date.</p>	<p>Updates as required in the management plan</p>
Litter, cleanliness, vandalism	<p>Litter is managed according to need, more frequent collections and picking occurs during peak periods e.g. summer.</p> <p>Graffiti is addressed on site by the Park Warden</p> <p>Fly tipping is infrequent</p>	<p>The apprentice scheme is said to have been extended to 2017. Is it still operating?</p>	<p>Apprentices were suspended during Covid, this is being re-visited in 2022</p>
Environmental Management	<p>An environmental audit mentioned in 2018 in the judges feedback has been moved to 2020.</p> <p>There is no 2020 update</p>	<p>The environmental audit needs to be given greater priority. What further progress has been made towards reduced peat and chemical use?</p> <p>What progress has been made towards horticultural improvements?</p>	<p>The review of peat and chemical use is being reviewed annually and due to our current Climate Change pledge, discussed in plan</p>
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage	<p>The proposals for the research project in relation to the history of Dr Pit park seems to have stalled. It is now being questioned as to the validity of such a project. Surely there is an interesting heritage to be told?</p> <p>There is no 2020 update</p>	<p>There are aspirations mentioned in the management plan, however very little detail relating to existing heritage eg: wildlife and history</p>	<p>All projects stalled during the covid pandemic and there has been a change in officer and staff structure. Its is hoped to pick this back up</p>

Community Involvement	It is good to hear that the Pavilion continues to be used as a community resource for formal and informal recreation. The stakeholder group is no longer but there is mention of the local community making good use of the park and its facilities. The events in the park are no longer organised by the authority but dependent on the users, detailed information is lacking.	Disappointing that there appears to be a loss of momentum in relation to the community. The memories of the local population need to be sought in relation to the heritage of the park, local photographs requested and researched before the information is lost.	As above the pandemic has affected a lot of community aspects and the picture should become clearer in coming years
Marketing & Communication	Much of the detail provided in the management plan appears to be out of date. It states the focus is on the availability of events, volunteer activities and Friends of Groups this does not appear to be evident in Dr Pit Park	Review and improve the communications plan in relation to the park to improve its promotion and use.	Reviewed
Overall management	It is evident that the park continues to be managed, however there appears to have been a loss of general momentum and the initial exciting aspirations that were included in the 2016 management plan have stalled in the most recent years. General management of the park continues.	The field assessment should determine the current parks standards, but it does appear to have experienced a decline.	Again factors have included staff changes, covid etc. A clearer picture is anticipated soon

Additional comments

There is a need for a review, refresh and rewrite of the management plan. The plan is not current and some of the aspirations and plans have faltered or been lost. This may be due to funding issues and changes within the authority. However, the issue needs to be recognised and the park given the attention it needs to ensure the previous standards are maintained.

 <h2 style="text-align: center;">Green Flag Award Mystery Assessment</h2>			
Name of Site	Doctor Pit	Managing organisation	Northumberland County Council
Weather	Cold with sunny intervals		





Conditions																
Date of assessment	3.11.20	Time (from – to)	14:30 – 15:30													
Result: (✓)	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: green; border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> </div> <div> Is the site of Green Flag Award Standard? Green Amber Red </div> </div>															
Grading		Comments and Recommendations														
Please mark each section as Green, Amber or Red If there is no evidence or the section is not applicable mark as NG (not graded) and provide an explanation		Comments should be provided to support each grading *Please include photographs to support your grading where applicable **Please refer to Raising the Standard manual if necessary														
A Welcoming Place																
1. Is the site welcoming?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>G</td> <td>A</td> <td>R</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N	G	A	R	G						✓		The park has good external signage. The entrance is obvious and inviting having the car park just beyond the entry gates. The contents of the noticeboard is minimal and out of date, the notices are in a tatty state - Response – notice board will be updated		
N	G	A	R													
G																
		✓														
2. Is the site easy to find?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>G</td> <td>A</td> <td>R</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N	G	A	R	G					✓			Yes, very easy to locate using the postcode and very well signed up		
N	G	A	R													
G																
	✓															
3. Is signage in good condition?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>G</td> <td>A</td> <td>R</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N	G	A	R	G					✓			Yes, signage is in relatively good condition some of the signs are old, but they are wearing well. The park is let down by the underutilisation of the noticeboards Response – there are limited community events now and especially during 2020 so no notices have been available		
N	G	A	R													
G																
	✓															
4. Is the site accessible to all users?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>G</td> <td>A</td> <td>R</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N	G	A	R	G					✓			Yes, the park is accessible for all, the parts are level only one area has a tree root uplifting the path.		
N	G	A	R													
G																
	✓															
Healthy, Safe and Secure																
5. Are facilities on site in good and safe condition?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>G</td> <td>A</td> <td>R</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	N	G	A	R	G						✓		The facilities were in a safe condition. One exception was the play swings where the seat was badly worn and split which could cause injury to a child. This needs replacement. The seats had been removed from another swing; I assume for safety reasons. There are many seats available all of which were in a good condition many little bins were available		
N	G	A	R													
G																
		✓														

6. Did you feel safe during the visit?	<div> <div>N</div> <div>G</div> </div>	<div> <div>G</div> <div>✓</div> </div>	<div> <div>A</div> <div></div> </div>	<div> <div>R</div> <div></div> </div>	Yes, I felt safe using the park, it is used as a cut through to the school and the children use the playpark when they come out of school supervised by parents. It ended up as a very busy park during my visit. The park is also overlooked by local housing on one side	
7. Are dogs being controlled and the site free of dog fouling?	NG	G ✓	A	R	There was no evidence of dog fouling. Dogs were kept under control during my visit. Good to see the use of the Bedlington terrier image within the park reinforcing some heritage of the area	
Well Maintained and Clean						
8. Is litter, waste and recycling managed?	NG	G	A ✓	R	Yes, there is recycling bins on site and there are many suitable receptacles for litter. The open litter bins Are susceptible to litter removal by the large birds. However, there was a lot of litter scattered around the park mainly around seating areas but also some entrance points. The litter was mainly cans disposed after drinking and bottles. It was evident the litter had not been picked for a few days at least. More frequent litter picking is required.	Response – litter will be addressed by more frequent visits

9. Is there a good standard of horticulture maintenance?	NG	G	A	R	<p>Much of the planting is relatively young and it is establishing well. It is evident that shrubs are pruned at least once per year. Weeds are evident in many of the border's maintenance should be more frequent. However good to see the young planting becoming established despite the park being heavily used</p> <p>Response – weeding more frequently will be addressed</p>
		✓			
10. Is there a good standard of arboriculture maintenance?	NG	G	A	R	<p>There is evidence of the trees being maintained. I did not see deadwood within the trees, and they all appeared to be in a safe condition</p>
		✓			
11. Are buildings and infrastructure such as walls, paths, steps and structures in good condition?	NG	G	A	R	<p>The buildings were in a good condition the pavilion had shutters the gutters were all intact and the toilets were being well maintained. However, they closed just before the school children came to use the playpark, which was unfortunate, the timing should be reviewed</p> <p>Response -Opening is in line with NEAT staff operating hours but will be reviewed</p>
		✓			
	NG	G	A	R	

12. Is equipment used by the public and staff in good condition?			✓		<p>Play equipment is in good condition overall, swing seats need to be replaced. Seats are in good condition and are obviously used.</p> <p>Response – funding will be acquired for seat replacement</p>
Environmental Management					
13. Is there evidence that the site is managed to have a positive impact on the environment?	NG	G	A	R	<p>The park is small and is relatively well maintained overall, the grass is cut to an adequate length. There is little evidence of the encouragement of wildlife. However, the new planting will provide some cover for birds and boundary hedging will do the same</p>
		✓			
Landscape and Heritage					
14. Are heritage and/or landscape features in good condition?	NG	G	A	R	<p>There are no major heritage features to speak of. However, the parks heritage could be interpreted on the site. An opportunity missed. Comment has been made of the Bedlington terrier on litterbins already. The general landscape is in good condition.</p>
		✓			
Community Involvement					
15. Is there evidence of community involvement and engagement?	NG	G	A	R	<p>There was no evidence of community involvement during my visit however I assume the park is used by a bowling club and I assume the pavilion continues to be used</p>
		✓			

					by the community pending COVID Response – there is an art club currently using the pavilion, others will be explored
16. Is user feedback positive?	NG	G	A	R	Yes, parents spoke well of the park particularly the play area. Parents use the playpark after school
		✓			
Marketing and Communication					
17. Is there evidence of marketing and promotion, including events? e.g. notice boards, in buildings, website & social media.	NG	G	A	R	A small amount of information is provided on the Northumberland County Council website and some Facebook presence was noticeable. Noticeboards are not being properly utilised a wasted opportunity for community information to be displayed. Summary heritage interpretation could be included within these boards with minimal cost
			✓		
18. Is the correct year flag flying and certificate on display?	NG	G	A	R	A 2019/2020 flag is flying, and a 2019/2020 certificate is displayed. These have not been updated this year and need to be. The achievement of the green flag was celebrated in a Facebook post Response – flag and certificate will be updated
			✓		
Overall Result (✓)	<div><div></div><div></div><div>✓</div></div>				Is the site of Green Flag Award Standard? Green Amber Red
	Green Amber				
Additional comments: Since a previous visit some years ago it is good to see the park has received investment in the Play area and the general quality of the park has improved. My visit was let down by the presence of litter, weeds and a small amount of damage in the play area. However, a good resource overall that is well used by the community.					




 Green Flag Award Mystery Shop Assessment					
Name of Site	Dr Pit Park		Managing organisation	Northumberland County Council	
Weather Conditions	Sunny intervals				
Date of assessment	6.12.21		Time (from – to)	2:30 – 15:30	
Result: (✓)	Is the site of Green Flag Award Standard? <div> Green Amber Red </div> <div>    </div>				
Grading			Comments and Recommendations		
Please mark each section as Green, Amber or Red If there is no evidence or the section is not applicable mark as NG (not graded) and provide an explanation			Comments should be provided to support each grading <small>*Please include photographs to support your grading where applicable</small> <small>**Please refer to Raising the Standard manual if necessary</small>		
A Welcoming Place					
1. Is the site welcoming?	NG	G	A	R	The main entrance is well signed and inviting. There is a car park which is in good view when approaching the park. The point of entry was well maintained. There were 2 smaller entrances one at the end of an alley way which looked attractive and the gate / railing / sign at the end of the path was in good condition. The other entrance had been severely storm damaged, but it had been made safe and temporary Heras fencing was in place. The notice board at the main entrance is in real
		✓			

					need of tidying up and given a refresh with relevant information		
2. Is the site easy to find?	NG	G	A	R	Yes, the site is signed from the main road with brown tourism signs and is recognised on Google maps. Entrances are well signed.		
		✓					
3. Is signage in good condition?	NG	G	A	R	<p>Yes, the majority was. Entrance signs were bright, readable and had contact information on each one. There was a good general information sign at the entrance. Dog fouling signs were fading in some places. Good to see temporary (but quality) signs had been placed informing the public that work was in progress to address the storm damage. One community / public noticeboard was in need of a lick of paint and the information within was crumpled, faded and of little use. These must be refreshed more frequently.</p> <p>Response – new dog signs will be provided. We are removing one notice board as it is poor and not warranted in such a small park</p>		
		✓					
4. Is the site accessible to all users?	NG	G	A	R	Yes, there is good access to the site, an adjacent school makes good use of the Park after school. The paths were level and in good condition. There were a number of push chair users in the Park. There are parking spaces designated for the disabled.		
		✓					
Healthy, Safe and Secure							
5. Are facilities on site in good and safe condition?	NG	G	A	R	Yes, play equipment appeared safe, toilets were well maintained. One piece of play equipment had been removed and storm damage had been made safe. The Sona arch located within the play site proves to be very popular with the children and provides an interactive activity.		
		✓					
6. Did you feel safe during the visit?	NG	G	A	R	Yes, very safe. There was what appeared to be newly installed CCTV, there were many park users, sight lines into the Park and within the Park were good. Users were friendly and acknowledged each other, it felt like a good community park.		
		✓					
7. Are dogs being controlled and the site free of dog fouling?	NG	G			A	R	Yes, there was no evidence of dog fouling and the dogs I saw were all on a lead.
		✓					
Well Maintained and Clean							
	NG	G			A	R	

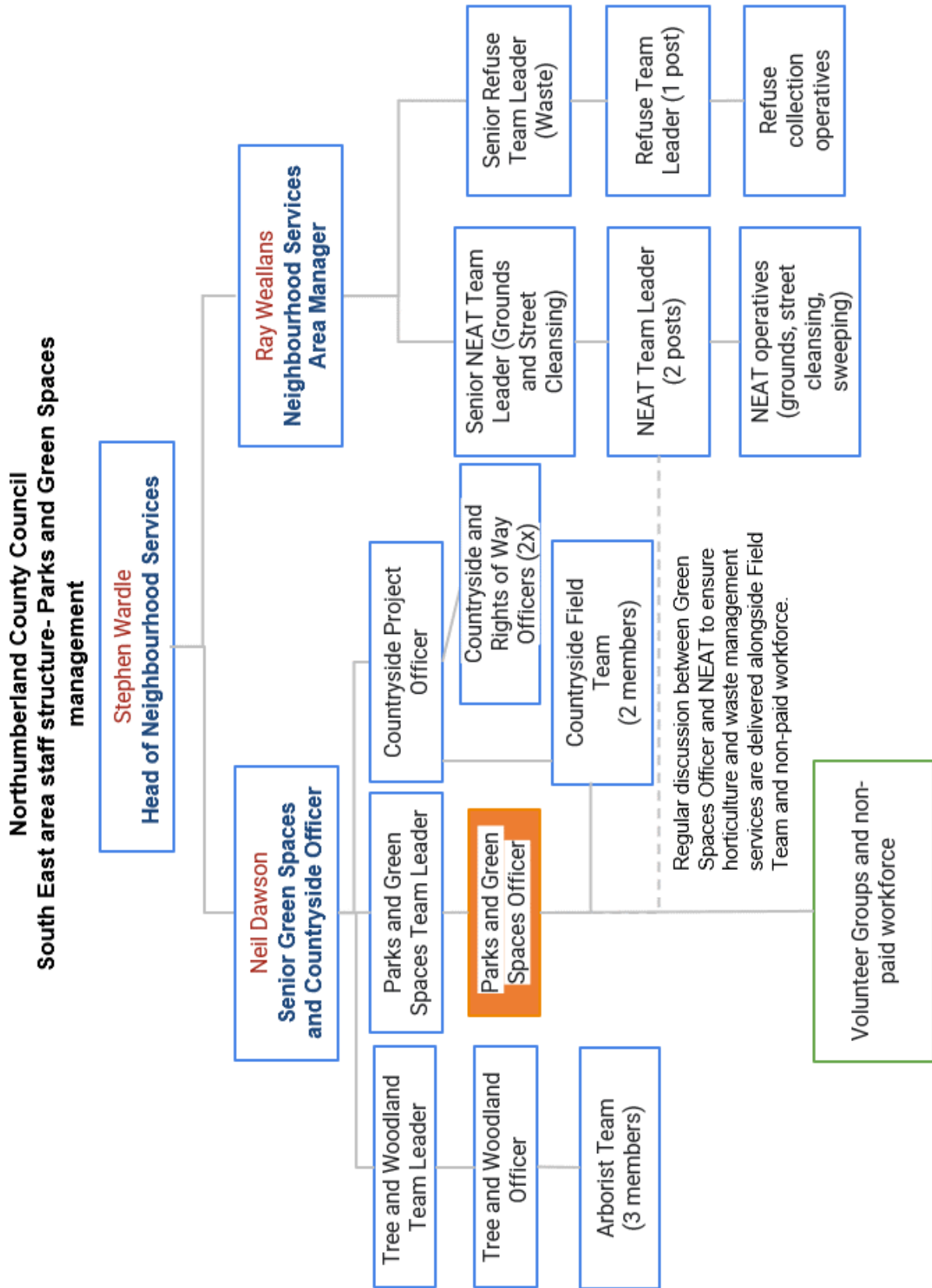
8. Is litter, waste and recycling managed?		✓			<p>Yes, there was a minimal amount of litter which was recent, there is a recycling bin whether it is properly managed I do not know. Green waste is tipped on site in a bay. One dog walker said the responsiveness to broken glass was not as good as it used to be since a permanent staff member has been taken out.</p> <p>Response – the recycling bin is properly managed. Staff cutbacks cannot warrant a full time member only covering this park. There is also contact information on the board to report issues</p>
9. Is there a good standard of horticulture maintenance?	NG	G	A	R	<p>Yes, the shrubs had recently been pruned (perhaps a little excessively) if the sides were left the shrub borders would be fuller. However, a good variety of planting. There was one bedding border within the bowling green area which was planted up with winter bedding. Grass was of an appropriate length and the bowling green was well maintained. Borders had been mulched with wood chip</p>

						Response – pruning will be addressed
10. Is there a good standard of arboriculture maintenance?	NG	G	A	R		There were a number of fallen trees due to the storm, they had been made safe. Trees on site looked as if they were appropriately maintained.
		✓				
11. Are buildings and infrastructure such as walls, paths, steps and structures in good condition?	NG	G	A	R		Buildings are well maintained externally, there is evidence of repairs, toilets were in good condition. General park infrastructure was satisfactory (taking into account damage caused by storm Arwen). A new fence was in the process of being erected
		✓				
12. Is equipment used by the public and staff in good condition?	NG	G	A	R		Yes, the skate park / play equipment and MUGA are in good condition. I did not see equipment used by staff.
		✓				
Environmental Management						
13. Is there evidence that the site is managed to have a positive impact on the environment?	NG	G	A	R		Yes, there is. A wild flower area has recently been cut down, rainwater is collected for irrigation of the bowling green. Areas of uncut grass could be increased particularly on the boundaries. Response – the idea of longer boundary edges is being looked into, often people are
		✓				

					not always on board and see them as untidy
Landscape and Heritage					
14. Are heritage and/or landscape features in good condition?	NG	G	A	R	N/A
		✓			
Community Involvement					
15. Is there evidence of community involvement and engagement?	NG	G	A	R	I did not see any evidence of community involvement / engagement on site with the exception of people being encouraged to join the bowls club. The notice boards require relevant information placed in them and information about community users / opportunities.
			✓		Response – the notice boards will be updated as and when we have community notices to put in
16. Is user feedback positive?	NG	G	A	R	Yes generally good about the physical park, stating that they have seen it improve over the years. The exception was users said the permanent member of staff had been removed from the park which meant a less responsive and slower action when such things as broken glass are reported.
		✓			
Marketing and Communication					

17. Is there evidence of marketing and promotion, including events? e.g. notice boards, in buildings, website & social media.	NG	G	A	R	I did not see any evidence on site.
		✓			
18. Is the correct year flag flying and certificate on display?	NG	G	A	R	Yes
		✓			
Overall Result (✓)	Is the site of Green Flag Award Standard?				
	Green				
	Amber				
				Red	
Additional comments: It should be noted it was evident the Park had been seriously hit by the recent Storm Arwen. Trees were down, fences had blown over and there was standing water. This has been fully taken into account while writing the report. It is good to see the Park had been made safe, work was being carried out to make the Park good again and it was being very well used.					

5.7 Staff Structure



Contact Information – General enquiries to Northumberland County Council on

0345 600 6400

Green Spaces Manager – Jimmy Reith contact as above

